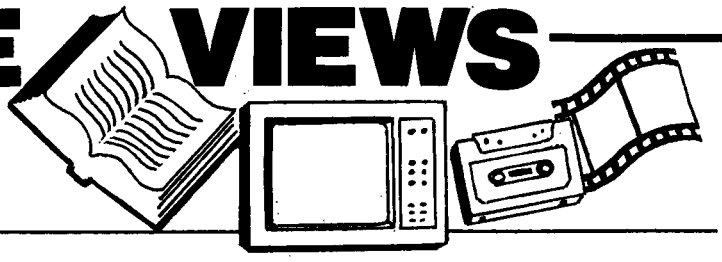
REVIEWS



THE ANATOMY OF BEREAVEMENT

Beverley Raphael, Basic Books, New York, 1983, £22

This perceptive book covers a wide range of different bereavements. It analyses how they are dealt with, understood and adapted to in everyday life. It is based on sound research and clinical experience, and is poignantly brought to life by frequent refe ence to case studies which provide excellent illustrations of the processes described.

As a starting point, the nature of human bonds and attachments is summarised. The meaning of death is reviewed, as it has been understood by various cultures and at different points in history, together with the associated rites and rituals practised. The fear of death in its many forms is discussed in relation to the 'coping' responses which have variously been adopted.

Bereavement is seen as the reaction to the loss of a close relationship. A detailed description is given of the interchanging phases of this reaction—from the initial shocked, numbed disbelief through the acceptance of reality and experience of separation pain to the psychological process of mourning, of relinquishing the bonds and reviewing the relationship. There is careful consideration of the events associated with the death—both those factors which facilitate mourning and those which may render the bereaved person 'at risk'. The importance of rebuilding the disrupted network of the family and the social system is stressed and the need for supports from family, friends and professionals is seen as crucial.

One of the great strengths of this book is the description of children's responses to the death of a significant figure. In the past children's needs have often been neglected and their capacity to mourn and grieve underestimated. Death is a frightening and painful event for the child, not only through the loss of a loving relationship but also through the anxieties produced by lack of understanding and the disruption of the family unit. Beverley Raphael provides a clear and detailed description of how children react to the death of a parent at different stages of their development and in varying circumstances. Particular attention is paid to the adolescent who is undergoing many stresses and changes in his life the stress of bereavement being superimposed on these. Although conceptually most adolescents understand the nature of death, the magical thinking of childhood is easily reawakened and the emotional stress is hard to bear. The adolescent is often expected to be 'strong', and to take over idealised memories. so that mourning can progress appropriately. Here the description of the various stages in mourning, together with the illustrations provided by case studies, should prove very helpful to those involved in caring for the bereaved. Specific intervention programmes with individuals and families are described, and counsel ing for up to eight to ten sessions, timed over the period three weeks to three months after the bereavement, is seen to be extremely helpful in most cases.

Overall, I found this a very comprehensive book, easi'y read and covering a wide range of bereavements. It is perhaps a little repetitive, but this does mean that each section can be read alone. It should prove useful and informative to all those concerned with the bereaved, in whatever capacity.

MARIANNE URBANOWICZ
Educational Psychologist

OF TIME AND WIDOWHOOD

H. H. Hyman, Durham, N. C. Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983, $29.50

This book describes, and presents findings from, a new approach to the study of the social and psychological effects of widowhood—the secondary analysis of national sample surveys whose primary concern was something quite other than bereavement. While this approach undoubtedly has the potential for contributing much to our knowledge of the effects of widowhood, and overcomes many of the problems inherent in previous studies (such as the use of small and often biased samples; the relatively short time span within which effects have been examined; the likelihood that widows and interviewers alike have held expectations as to how certain questions should be answered), it should obviously be seen as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, more in-depth clinical approaches.

In contrast to the often gloomy findings reported in the literature hitherto, the results presented in this book, of secondary analyses of 9 sample surveys carried out in the U.S.A., suggest that, in the long term, the majority of widows adjust surprisingly well to the loss of their spouses; better, in fact, than the divorced. No severe social or psychological effects of widowhood were found; protracted depressing effects were rare, and this despite the fact that the majority of widows continue (in the U.S.A. at least) to suffer from severe financial deprivation.

Negative effects were, however, more prevalent among widowers, but they too fared less badly than their separated or divorced counterparts.

Though probably of limited value to bereavement counsellors, this lucid and scholarly monograph will prove of great value to researchers seeking to establish the facts concerning the effects—both short and long term—of widowhood. Findings from this, and future studies employing a similar approach, could well have relevance for social policy makers.

SUSAN HENLEY
Dept. of Psychology,
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BITTER, BITTER TEARS

Paul C. Rosenblatt, University of Minnesota Press, 1983, $25.00

Diaries can give us an almost uncannily direct insight to other lives. The ones used in this book show us nineteenth century Americans and Canadians, whose lives seem to reflect attitudes in common with our own great grandparents, though the references to long separations and missionaries reveal a continent not yet fully explored by western Christian culture, and huge distances not yet covered by telephone or aeroplane.

The restraint and the poignancy of the entries on grief are immediate and moving. "Alas how changed is all now, she gone home to rest while I, sad and lonely, plod along the journey of life!" Indeed maybe the most striking contrast over the century revealed in this study is the style and the simplicity of their writing.

Education was literate, with no television or radio, and from childhood people of all backgrounds were taught to express themselves in diaries and communicate with each other by letter. We have perhaps lost this means of unselfconscious expression, particularly about emotions and personal feeling.

By comparison the commentary and main body of t e book seems obscurantist and prolix. For example "that one must be close to some people appears to be a special characteristic". The diaries are studied for statistical products; extensive quantitive analyses and graphs show the number of grief entries in relation to the months passed, and the intensity of the grief over the years. With the material which has been studied surely a more empathetic assessment would have been appropriate? Certainly counsellors would probably learn more from the diaries direct than from the analyses.

There certainly are lessons to be learnt. Our nineteenth century ancestors had to meet and deal with death and separations more frequently and more directly than we have to. Most deaths were at home, most families lost small children, many lost mothers in childbirth and fewer achieved old age. So the chapter on the control of grief, for instance, is a revealing one. We have fairly recently relearnt that we must express grief fully to heal it; maybe we should acknowledge the part which bravery has to play alongside the grief, and, too, when the bravery can be laid aside. They had an almost universal faith to help them, which we no longer can expect, but dignity is still our support.

"I have meandered here and there and have engaged in exciting business away from home and all those thousands of reminders there of my irreparable loss, hoping that time would assuage in some small degree the sorrow of soul, but it is of no avail tonight. The hurt bleeds and the tears flow. I try not to murmur or complain."

LIBBY INSALL
Cruse Counsellor

GRANGE HILL

Episode 7. 20th January, 1984. BBC 1

GRANGE HILL, the comprehensive school TV saga, tackled the subject of death with sensitivity and authenticity.

Jeremy, a snob and attention-seeker, recently arrived from a private school, drowned in the swimming class. Rumours abounded. and blame and guilt were omnipresent. The girl whose bangles he had dived to rescue was particularly grief-stricken and guilty. The boy who dragged Jeremy out stayed at home the next day with stomach-aches, and he was not the only absentee. The West Indian pupils dispensed phlegmatic good sense: "My mum says you just have to accept these things", "People aren't always what they seem" and "It's better to talk about it". Jeremy, who apparently had a bad heart,

unknown to the staff, was not liked and that made both teachers and pupils feel worse about his death. All the teachers behaved as one would have wished, especially the art teacher—comforting, encouraging open discussions, acknowledging the universality of guilt, providing an explanation for the death, and returning the class to the task of getting on with life. There was a nice vignette of the girls trying to comfort Mr. Baxter, the swimming teacher, who was very low, and had offered his resignation—guilt occurs in teachers too.

The writer and producers are to be congratulated for tackling a difficult subject so courageously. What was its impact on the young audience it seeks to influence? Simon, a young patient of mine, was very much affected. He is due to move from private school to comprehensive soon, and saw Jeremy's fate (to be hated and to die) as potentially his. Others will identify with those who teased and ostracised Jeremy, and will perhaps modify their cruelties. Unfortunately the next week's episode made no reference at all to Jeremy —it was as if he had never existed. I hope his death will continue to have some impact on the lives of Grange Hill's pupils, and that we will be allowed to share in the experience.

DORA BLACK

LIVING WITH LOSS

Liz McNeill Taylor, Fontana, 1983, £1.75

Liz McNeill Taylor was widowed at the age of 40, and left to bring up four children. Her book is an extremely moving and at times devastating account of her experience. Immensely readable, it also contains down-to-earth advice on children, money and sex. There is special emphasis on the importance of expressing and sharing grief, and allowing children to mourn too.

There is a strong ring of challenge throughout the book, and Cruse in particular comes in for some harshly dismissive comments. The author forgets that without a firm support base, renewal and progress (both major Cruse aims) are difficult to achieve. An alternative name for "a collection of outcasts", as she describes us, might be a mutual support group!

Liz McNeill Taylor undoubtedly comes across as an immensely warm, humorous and interesting woman, with obvious talents. My main reservation is that some widows who read her book may be made to feel inadequate, or even guilty about their own rather more frail ability to rebuild. Equally, there will, I am sure, be many others who will be uplifted and energised by her positive approach to widowhood.

WYN ROSS
Newcastle Cruse

COPING WITH A DYING RELATIVE

Derek Doyle MacDonald Publishers, 1984, hardback £5.95, paperback £2.95

The fundamental thought behind the working of this book is that, given the choice, most people would prefer to die at home with their families. Many relatives, however, do have an unspoken fear that they will not be able to cope. either with the practical nursing needs or the emotional strain.

The book is written to help relatives with all the problems, in the hope that the task will become less daunting, and families will also know where to ask for help. The author also hopes that the experience will even be deeply enriching for some families.

There is an inspiring foreword by Dame Cicely Saunders.

THE COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIP

Susan Oldfield, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983, £5.95

Susan Oldfield's book is the result of the careful monitoring of the work of the Isis Centre in Oxford which was set up in 1970.

Only a handful of the 140 cases in the book presented with bereavement difficulties, but the relevance of the book to Cruse and other bereavement counsellors lies in the clear definitions of the presenting problems, of the sessions offered, and of the outcome of the work done. The definitions of the work done were made both by the counsellors and the clients, who were asked, when counselling ceased, to give their own assessment of the value of the sessions to them.

WHEN PEOPLE DIE

Guinevere Williams & Julia Ross, MacDonald Publishers, 1984, £3.50

When People Die is a carefully written book for older children, with black and white illustrations. It could be a real help to children who are fearful of the rituals, of their own alarming feelings, and of the strange words adults use, like "condolence" or "taboo". The book admirably covers the customs followed by different religious and ethnic groups, and could well be used in schools as a start to discussions.

LIFE & DEATH

Association for Sp'na Bifida & Hydrocephalus, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HJ, 1983, 75p & 19p postage

The Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus (ASBAH) has recently produced a booklet which should be of considerable comfort to families faced with the death of a child or young person from one of these diseases. The seven short chapters include some from parents who have been through such an ordeal. Other supportive chapters come from Dr. Lindy Burton, Consultant Psychologist, Rev. Sydney Callaghan of the Samaritans, and Colette Welch of ASBAH. The booklet could also be extremely valuable to health care and social workers who come across these diseases and their tragic implications; it indicates many detailed ways in which these families can be helped at every stage.

CONFERENCES & COURSES

Lisa Sainsbury Educational Foundation Conference

St. Christopher's Hospice is running a four-day conference at the Strand Palace Hotel, on 18th, 19th, 20th & 21st June, 1984. It is for nurses working in hospitals, hospices and the community, covering all aspects of the needs of terminally ill children, adolescent and the elderly and their families. Speakers will be drawn from Britain and overseas. Table and open discussion will form an important part of the proceedings. Each day's programme will be an entity in itself, and separate days may be booked.

There may be limited funds available to assist nurses to attend. Accommodation at concessionary rates may be booked at the Strand Palace Hotel.

Detailed programme & application form from the Study Centre, St. Christopher's Hospice, 51/53 Lawrie Park Road, London SE26 6DZ. Please enclose an sae.

Westminster Pastoral Foundation

The Foundation's Summer Short Course programme includes four experiential evening workshops about *Being on your Own*, weekend workshops on *Is Counsellor Training for You? Communicating with Greater Effect*, and *Towards the Second Half*, and Saturday workshops on *Cancer & Counselling* (14th April), *Step-Parenting* (12th May), *Good Grief* (5th May) and *Understanding Group Therapy* (16th June).

The Foundation's summer full-time course in pastoral counselling is from 9th-20th July. There are also regular part-time introductory counselling skills courses, and part-time specialist training in group-work and family and marital therapy. For details send a large sae to: Westminster Pastoral Foundation, 23 Kensington Square, London, W.8.

The Search for Meaning

An International Conference on Pastoral Counselling and Spirituality.

The conference will be held between 22nd & 28th July, 1984 at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 1AF.

Pastoral Counselling and Spirituality share a common interest in man's and women's search for meaning. Although much of their language and jargon seems so different, they both, like theology, draw upon the sense of sight to express the essence of their search. For theology it is revelation, for pastoral counselling insight, and for spirituality contemplation.

The initiative for this conference came from a group of American pastors, counsellors and their sponses. The British Association for Pastoral Care and Counselling was pleased to respond.

The conference will provide a unique and timely opportunity for participants from different countries, traditions and interests to look more deeply and broadly at their own and one another's words, activities and beliefs.

The presentations during the conference will follow a life cycle theme: Birth—beginning; Childhood & Adolescence—becoming; Adulthood & Vocation—deciding; Mid-Life—losing & keeping; Death—dying & living. The presenters include Carolyn Reinhart of the Post Green Community; Dr. Peter Bruggen, adolescent psychiatrist & family therapist; John Austin Baker, Bishop of Salisbury, Chairman of 'The Church & the Bomb' Committee; Barbara & Duane Parker of Rhode Island State Hospital & American Association for Clinical Pastoral Education; Derek Nuttall, Director of Cruse.

For further details and an application form, please apply to Lorna Brockett, 123 Blythe Road, London W14 0HL. enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.