



Chapter 7

The Healing Power of Creativity

It is a good time to reflect on our journey thus far. We have assembled 3 giant stones in the archway of Grace...



Gratitude requires us to become “glass half full” not “glass half empty” believers. We must become thankful for what we still have and not dwell too long on what we have lost. It is an attitude of Gratitude that sees us through hard times.

Resilience, tenacity, and grit must be our constant companion if we are to move from grief to Grace. If we do not bounce back quickly, we sink further into our own sea of tears. In life, we all get knocked down. How quickly we get back up determines the quality of our life remaining.

Authenticity requires that we look at our lives exactly where we are right now, not through rose colored glasses to a life we fantasize it to be. It reminds us to look into the mirror, check in with our soul, and decide who we will become as we traverse from grief to Grace. If who you are is not who you aspire to be, grief can give you that big “wakeup call” you need.

Now our discussion turns to the capital C in Grace – Creativity.

As it turns out, this is elemental to moving from grief to Grace. It is the building block that makes us look at our circumstances differently and choose which crayon in the box we will use to fill in the missing colors in our paint by numbers dreams.

As a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, executive, and author my advice is simply this:

Follow your creative passions.

Creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others.

Creativity is more about *seeing* and less about *doing*. But to Grieve With Grace, we must do both: *See and Do*.

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things."

~ Steve Jobs

As Jan continued her death spiral it became abundantly clear that my life, and the lives of our entire family, would never be the same. We were all facing the no win scenario—with no hope that our “old” normal would remain normal.

And yes, as hard as it may seem, the loss of a loved one requires us to get damn Creative, damn fast. Otherwise, depression sets in and grief wins.

None of us can afford the price we must pay to live in grief forever.

It is natural to know we will mourn then grieve. It is not natural for us to think about creative ways to shortcut our grief or grieving process.

Which is why I am writing this book, especially this chapter on how Creativity heals. It is my creative attempt to help others replace endless grief with Grace and to make sense of my own issues while doing what I do best, find a way up and out of the morass of negative emotions I face—as quickly as possible.

And that pathway to our new normal, indeed, our new life, is dependant on how Creatively we look at the way things are, and search for new ways to get our lives back on track and move forward to follow our passions.

We must, as Steve Jobs so eloquently pointed out in the quote above, “connect experiences and synthesize new things.”

Because I have written and co-written so many books on this subject, I need to advise you up front that it will seem like I am coaching, mentoring, cajoling, demanding, advising, and generally prompting you to respond.

It may seem that I am being pushy, but this is the chapter that requires us all to push the stone uphill if we must.

I will be using parts of our best-selling system, *Success On Purpose*, to help you understand the big issues at play. A brief “warmup” exercise is found in the Appendix section. Read this chapter on Creativity for the big ideas and take 30 minutes to connect personally with the exercises. (Go To Page XXX)

If you find you need help in this area, you might consider reviewing *Success On Purpose* at ThinkTQ.com/SOP.

I said it before and will say it again now, there is always an easier way to do something if you are willing to seek it out. With almost 100 million data points I can assure you that every word I am about to tell you is not only true, it is proven 20 different ways until the cows come home!

In short, Creativity is critical to overcoming grief and for us to move towards Grace...

During Jan’s plunge into the darkness of an untreatable cancer, I tried to find Creative new ways to express my love for her. She loved her family, so I maintained a constant flow of communications with all of them. She loved gardening so I made sure she counted the new blooms on the flowers outside her window. She loved Christmas so we decorated her room like we would our home back on the pond. Doing this was beneficial to them and cathartic for me.

It was in these daily posts that I became engrossed in the psychology of grief and the grieving process. Never having experienced a series of life or death decisions before meant that I had to remain open to new ideas, while trying to make sense of my current reality.

So, in my case, I did what I know to do: take notes, and write!

To actually see and record what I saw and what I felt.

To look at each day as an opportunity to celebrate Jan's life, not the steady death march it was becoming.

I could easily write 500 pages on this but Creativity during a crisis is not exactly the same as being Creative inside the tomb of grief with all your hopes and dreams crushed.

My attention became focused on what happens *next*, not just getting through the maze unfolding before me.

This is the fight we all must fight.

Finding a way to creatively get through to the other side, where grief no longer would remain manifest in our daily lives. And then purposefully and passionately ascend the wall of grief to a life of Grace up high above the valley of doom and dread.

It may seem a daunting task to creatively address giant words like denial... anger... depression... bargaining... to reach some form of accepting our lot in life.

And yet, Acceptance of your loss is not all you want.

Grace is our target.

And in a time of depression and anger, only Creativity can set you free. Following your creative passion is your truth behind personal freedom.