7 Reminders during Grief

Throughout Dad's illness and death, I knew one thing. I would learn. God has given me the gift of experience. Yes, gift.

C.S. Lewis said it perfectly:

> *"Experience: that most brutal of teachers. But you learn, my God how you learn."*

This post is a reminder to me. I need to remember this experience as I engage with others who lose a family member or a close friend. Here are observations I've jotted down in my journal as a reminder of the universality and distinct uniqueness of those who grieve.

1. **Realize that my energy level is very low.** I won't suddenly be able to do all the things I used to do with the same verve and passion that I did before my loss. I'm trying to catch up. Lots of things hit all at once during Dad's homegoing and I'm just trying to hang on. I have no doubt that everything will be back to normal. I will be better than I've ever been. There will be a depth and a drive that I didn't have before. Just keep in mind that I'm messy right now and your grace is love personified.
2. **Please try your best not to "should" on me.** It's counterproductive. In other words, don't say *I **should** be thankful that my loved one is in heaven, not suffering* etc, etc… I know that. But I'm not handling the "should"s of life very well these days.
3. **There will be glimpses of life before loss but, at first, they will be short and they're not maintainable.** You'll see me laugh and you'll think I'm fine. In those moments, I do feel fine but also there will be periods of deep anger and disappointment. Unless you spend a lot of time with me you probably won't see the snot, and

sweat and existential angst. Let's both thank God for that but please keep in mind that it is there.

4. **Realize that I struggle with remorse and regret.** It's crazy, but I am reliving every care decision and have haunting notions that if I could have done this or that, that I would not be experiencing the loss. At a recent event, I ran into an old friend of the family. She hugged me and whispered, "You did good." It was the most healing thing for me because I struggled for days about what I could have done better.
5. In the same sense, I've had to make a ton of decisions over the past few months. **My decision-making muscles are fatigued right now.** So if I seem to have lost the ability to give you a straight answer, well then… there's your reason.
6. **If I didn't respond to you during the funeral, I truly am sorry.** I know that I didn't recognize some people right off the bat during the funeral or visitation. I'm a scattered person on a normal day. Royally scattered was I during those first few days.
7. **Death, grief and responsibility have no finish line or period.** Keep in mind that just because one parent died, we're still struggling to care for the other parent who is struggling too and to a much greater extent than we are.

And the journey continues. I'm so thankful for connections that guide me through times of exhaustion and malaise. I'm also thankful for a Savior who is there every step of the way even in our times of unknowing.