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The Growth of the Dead Ones

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Introduction

There is an assumption that death is the end of all growth. This is predicated on belief systems that have prevailed throughout time. Since there is no empirical data to examine in the matter of after-death, the material presented in this essay is for conjecture and thought without "proof". The Family Word Finder states, "Only the body dies; the soul is deathless, immortal, eternal, perpetual, everlasting, not subject to death." (NY 1977) Ulsamer, in his book, *The Art and Practice of Family Constellations*, (2003), says, "Sometimes the dead can't find a peaceful place in a constellation. Then it may be useful to include other dead people from the family for the restless one, or ones to turn to. It seems to make it easier for them to find a good place." The implication is that, at least in constellations, there is movement among the dead and also the potential for growth and change even though death is an "unalterable fact." (Ulsamer, 2003) To further this point, Hellinger states when writing about a constellation where a family had dead children, "This brought some peace to the dead children - they felt sad as though they were still alive." (Insights, 2002, page 128) In this passage Hellinger writes extensively about the needs and wishes of the dead in a manner that continues to suggest that through constellations there is the assumption that the dead have the potential to affect living family members and to move toward a more tranquil place in the process.

The importance of this position, that the dead still grow, is evident in that constellations that must make use of movement and change of the dead in order to bring understanding and resolution to the living. In addition, a possibility exists that death may be a restless state of being that can be altered through constellations. Albrecht Mahr, MD., in a lecture at ZIST (Penzberg, Germany, 2003), said, "Mourning that exceeds more than one year, inhibits the dead from leaving." The implication here is that states of being in death can be altered by the actions and emotions of the living. With this basis, I present some ideas on the growth of the dead ones.

The Restless Dead

In traumatic deaths, EMDR recommends that the survivors wait until the trauma is sufficiently in the past in order to be able to re-experience the effects of the trauma. The person needs to grow and recollect and solidify himself to be able to face it again for healing. The hypothesis is that this may be what the dead person is doing also; that is,



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growing away from the trauma and into a peace. When the soul energy of the dead ones are manifested in constellations, they sometimes can be agitated but are not experiencing the trauma as when it originally occurred, thus the possibility is that they, too, like the living, have grown, recollecting themselves, and are more at rest. This meeting between the alive one and the dead one at the thin door that separates us is usually one of reconciliation and love and is deeply moving and healing.

After the death of a loved one, the mind creatively makes them appear to the living on the faces of strangers on the street or in dreams. The dead seem to want to communicate and do so through the mediums and psychics that bereaved people seek out in attempts to maintain contact, as if the dead ones still exist in another dimension. This serves to maintain a bond between the dead and the alive in a manner that continues the interaction and defies the reality of death.

The Stages of Death

From following constellations, examining the beliefs related to "life after death", and from listening to the comments of the living, it seems as if in death there are three stages. The first one appears to be Pre-Peace, followed by Peace, and ultimately by Deep Eternal Rest. Pre-Peace, is the first stage for the newly dead person where it is experienced as a shock realizing that, in reality, life in the physical realm is over. There is some denial and an attempt to believe that one is still alive and in contact with relatives and friends. The energy of this attempt co-creates dreams in the alive ones and a desire to remain in contact which is attempted by consulting a psychic through whom they can aspire toward communication with the dead one.

There are several levels of experience in this Pre-Peace state. It depends on the age at the time of death and the circumstances of dying. An old person, who believes life has reached a "natural" end, struggles a bit less with this stage of death, as death is somewhat expected and perhaps welcomed, albeit unwanted. However, when death is untimely, there is no acceptance of it. A person who dies in an accident struggles mightily to be not-dead. The individual is in a state of shock and disbelief and refuses to accept the death. There is more recognition of matters left undone, experiences not encountered, and opportunities not taken. This results in a resistance to what is, death, and an opposition to the reality of not living. Similarly, someone who dies from suicide or an overdose of drugs who didn't intend lethality is also stunned, thinking that death is a mistake, and questions why the act can't be undone resulting in a state of restlessness; without peace. Any early death is a difficult one -not only for the alive ones, but also for the dead one, as there had previously been



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expectations of a normal, long life, so the devastation, because of the blow to the prospect of more years alive, is powerful and haunting for both the alive ones and the dead one. As time goes on in death, more and more peace is gained, as a consequence of the dead one accepting that there will be no returning to life. With this realization comes a movement toward final, deep Peace, and then totally into Deep Eternal Rest. The final stage of life includes the ability to look forward to a full death as a natural consequence of having lived a full life. The elderly are prepared for this, even though they may resist for a time. The young, unless they have a debilitating illness, are rarely prepared for this eventuality.

In the case of untimely deaths, the dead ones are ambivalent about the move towards acceptance and peace. There is a complication in some circumstances when the control of the route to death was taken over by a suiciding person or by someone who murders or accidentally causes the death of another. This leads to more restlessness that is not the state of the dead ones alone. There is so much angst, guilt, and regret about the untimely death, that the alive have a yearning and desire to join the dead, in part to understand, and to complete the interrupted sequence of life. There is a longing to follow the dead ones into death. However this is not the case with the dead. The dead one wants the alive ones to live as long as they can, and does not want to be co-responsible for a death. In the case of someone who is profoundly affected by the death of a loved one, to the point of joining the partner by committing suicide, the alive one actually interferes with the movement of the dead one into the stage of Peace. There are some assumptions that the dead have difficulty accepting the fact of their death. This is particularly true in the case of an accidental death. Through acceptance of death, the dead one, who died in an accident, can get out of the stage of Pre-Peace and move towards Peace. There will be movement into the final stage of death, the Deep Eternal Rest, when fate as a dead person is accepted. In constellations, Dietrich Klinghardt, MD, claims that the leader can facilitate this process by having the client describe the details of the death to the dead one, for example, telling the date, time, and year of the death and how the death occurred and where the alive ones are today.. (Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, "Toward Peace in the Soul" August 12-16, 2002).

Premature Deaths

Premature deaths are most painful. Dreams, expectations, futures are all lost. The difficulty for the newly dead young ones is that there are no parents in death, so the newly dead young ones tend to float around, very frightened and dizzy, and this is so similar to an alive feeling, that it leads to the illusion of being still alive. A strikingly large number of parents, whose children die, cannot continue the marriage. Almost in compensation for the death of



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their child, the marriage dies also. They cannot reconcile their relationship with the loss. This complicates the situation for the newly dead young one, as it in some way implies responsibility for the death of the relationship. If, for example, the newly dead young one aborted, there is almost nothing but a sense of comprehensive rejection by life and by death. This is a function of there being no support in death and no parents in death. The floating dead ones may transform themselves into ghosts. These ghosts, are seemingly neither fully dead, nor, of course, fully alive. They can be seen as retaliating, punishing the living by frightening them. There is the possibility that these ghosts also anger the other dead through this illusion of being almost alive. This state of turmoil results in many, many years of the dead ones remaining in a state of Pre-Peace. What needs to transpire is growth toward an acceptance of being dead. Through this agreeing to what is, the restless dead can move into Peace and then Deep Eternal Rest. Sometimes this process/movement may require decades to realize completion.

The question of what happens in organ transplantation is interesting. If the organs are taken from one who died, the dead person is, in some form, alive as well. If, as I believe, attaining Deep Eternal Rest is the goal in death, the difficulty lies in the dead person needing to die two times; the first in his or her own body and the second in the body of the person receiving the organ. This keeps the dead person from growing out of Pre-Peace as he or she awaits the arrival of a kind of completeness or other energy. The ironic part is that the transplanted lives longer than the dead person, so that on the death of the transplant recipient he or she meets a part of itself that is older and has had more life experience. The integration of these two "parts" within the dead person might cause conflict. After all, this person achieved what no other dead can achieve - to have gone on in life while also dying. This is what the living want mostly - to stay in life and not become a dead one. Consequently, the reconciliation of the dead person to his or her completeness might not occur without some resentment from the other dead people. Initially, I postulate that this dead person, would be experienced as different and incomplete and could possibly be excluded from the other dead. Also in the case of transplantation, the representative of the dead person in a constellation may feel incomplete because the mixed soul energy of the transplanted dead person is confusing, misleading, and not grounded. However, through a family constellation the dead person could progress to Peace and with this there is a potential that, in time, Deep Eternal Rest could be achieved.

The Dead Ones in Family Constellations

In family constellations, when the dead are represented, it is possible to experience how aborted, miscarried, stillborns, and young dead people are unsettled by this brief welcome



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into the living. They clearly need to be honored and respected and included in order to return to the realm of the dead and move from Pre-Peace to Peace. The expression "Now he may rest in peace," is common in constellation work. It implies that the individual was not previously resting in peace and something has transpired to allow for movement to occur.

The ghosts that have been made from the "floating" little ones become grounded in/during the family constellation and they return to the realm of the dead with acceptance of their state of non-being. They then can focus on death and moving to Peace. The living help the dead move to the next stage. For the living, the process of revisiting the fetuses and dead infants is supportive and liberating as the process of achieving resolution in death is completed. The visit allows the living to look at the dead and to be seen by them, too, and then to move forward into the future with a recognition of the support and backing of the dead. When the family constellation focuses on this process, there is an immediate and deeply felt experience of peace and emotional tranquility for all concerned. I believe that the aborted children, once given a place in their biological mom and dad's heart, are then free to return to death, grounded, reconnected and reparented.

In family constellations, those who die in an accident or from a drug overdose, can be freed by allowing them to move toward Peace. This occurs when the constellation is structured to allow them to be granted respect and honor. They may need assurance that their death was not in vain and that the family welcomes their support. When the dead are invited to be present in a family constellation it is helpful to consider in which stages of death they may be residing. When the soul-energy takes longer than usual to arrive in the representative, it may indicate that the dead one is in the Peace or the Deep Eternal Rest stage, and further away in death. Those who have been dead for quite a while, such as ancestors, seem to take a much longer time to arrive.³ When they come into the room there is often an experience of them bringing something with them. Often a profound peace comes over the participants in the room². (Albrecht Mahr, MD, ZIST, Hellinger Intensive, Penzberg Germany, 2003). In contrast to this, the energies of those who died prematurely, for example, accidental deaths, abortions, miscarriages and drug deaths, seem to come into the representatives fairly quickly. They arrive accompanied by slightly agitated, restless energy. This indicates that they may need grounding and validation. In this model, we could say they are in the stage of Pre Peace. When the constellation includes an experience of honor, respect, care and support from the living, these dead are able to return to Pre-Peace. Through this work, the dead are strengthened, their process is completed and they feel whole. In the same constellation, the living can feel the strength of the support of the dead to go ahead in their own lives and look toward the future. The dead can then move



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into Peace and eventually into Deep Eternal Rest.

A Case Study

I offer the following case study, involving a family constellation, as a clarification of the thoughts and ideas that form the conceptual ideas described in my model of the growth of the dead. The constellation took place in a public workshop.

Maria, a 43 year old woman, social worker and mother of 3 children, asked to do a family constellation. She began with an issue about her husband but after talking with the facilitator to clarify her issue, she reported that her son had died in a car accident when he was sixteen. He had been out with some friends and they were drinking and driving a Jeep with the top down. They went off the road and into a ravine and all three boys were killed. When Maria heard of the tragedy she said she wanted immediately to die in order to be with her son. She also profoundly believed that it should have been her who was killed, since she had lived longer than her son, and it would have been more fitting for her to die. She even went so far as to take an overdose of medication in the attempt to join her son. She reasoned she could bring love to her son in the realm of the dead. Her beliefs included a recognition of peace in death at some point, but she was not sure about love being there. In the constellation, the representative she chose for her son began to tremble and quiver and feel flooded with fear. It was obvious that he was not at peace; he was representing a soul in the stage of Pre Peace. The representative was demonstrating the restlessness that occurs to a young person who dies in an unexpected and violent manner. The desperate wish and longing to be alive is the energy the dead manifests through the representative.

Maria began to sob at the arrival of her son's energy in the person of the representative. After working with and resolving the dynamic that occurs when living person says, ³I will follow you², three things became apparent. First, Maria realized that her son did not want her to follow him into death, as he would then be burdened by the responsibility for her death. Instead he wanted her to go on living until it was her time to enter the realm of the dead. Second, she could see how pained he was, how restless he was in death and she wanted him to be in Peace. Therefore, she needed to validate his life, recognize and accept his fate, which was to die young and tragically, and to allow him to look into her eyes as her dead son. Third, there was a distinct recognition of her son slowly being at ease as he met his mother and saw her resolving her issues around his death. A calmness settled over him and with that an acceptance of himself as dead. It was as if he recognized his fate. Now he could begin to be in death in a different way. He could now begin to rest in Peace. Meeting his mother at the thin door between life and death and having his mother see his pain



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allowed him to move in that realm in a new way. Clearly, for Maria, it was a profound constellation and very moving. She felt deep resolve and peace and was able to turn to her life with a new energy and optimism. Conclusion

As Bert Hellinger says in *Love's Hidden Symmetry* (Zeig Tucker, 1998, pg.186), "When they (the dead) have their appropriate place in the family, deceased persons have a friendly effect. Otherwise, they cause anxiety." My conclusion is that for some amount of time the dead are not fully dead until a resolution occurs. When they are given their place in the family, the dead are content, restful, and at Peace. After many generations, when they no longer have any effect on any living individual, I believe it is as if they never existed. The dead are in Deep Eternal Rest.

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