

Heafey Hoffmann
Dworak Cutler
MORTUARIES & CREMATORY

7805 W Center Road
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Community service program
of caring for individuals and
families who are grieving the
death of someone they love.

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7805 W Center Rd
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THE
Journey
2025
HAPPY NEW YEAR

From The Heart

Dear Readers:

Rituals and routines. Here's my food shopping favorite. First, a list of items from the pantry whiteboard, then arranging it by the aisles in the market. In the parking lot, grabbing that perfect space near the cart-return, fetching the bags from the back and into the store (with a quick stop at Starbucks for a venti dark roast, extra cream, and sugar), then to the deli for the weekly order of Swiss and on we go. Same routine, week after week...a pleasure.

Then along comes 2020 and the pandemic. And that was the end of that. Like everyone else – routines, rituals, *friends, and family* – were lost.

Rituals are a wonderful thing. They don't have to be religious in nature (although religious rituals *can* be a wonderful healing tool). They can also be thought of as just...routines or habits. Rituals are, by definition, familiar and comforting, repetitive and calming. In a world that's always changing and increasingly chaotic – they are blissfully predictable and constant.

With the death of a loved one though, personal rituals and routines are among the "secondary" losses that often aren't even noticed at first. Maybe it was breakfast with Mom every Thursday morning. Or the birthday card that arrived without fail from the high school buddy. Dad's chili on game day. Or the kiss at midnight on New Year's Eve. Gone.

Experts offer the following advice when one of these losses hits you.

1. Recognize the lost ritual and its place and importance in your life;
2. Acknowledge the very real void it has left – and the hurt – and give it its due mourning.
3. Decide if the missing routine or ritual is one you'd like to try to keep, and how you'll need to change it to do so.

4. Or – if saving it isn't possible or desirable – what new ritual might be created to take its place?

Here's an interesting aside. Sometimes it's the little routines (like their turning off the lights at bedtime), that are missed more acutely than the "big" ones (such as their organizing the tax info for the accountant). The little rituals we took for granted can hit the hardest when they're gone. You will recover.

Some routines will change quickly, almost by themselves. For instance, if you don't learn promptly how to pump your own gas, well, you're not going anywhere. But, if you don't haul out the seasonal decorations and put them up, there's a chance it won't happen at all. And that's okay too...a break in ritual can help you decide if it's one you really enjoyed, one that nourished you, and whether you want to continue or replace it, or just let it go. You decide.

By the way, a change in routine can sometimes result in a better one being formed. A few years ago, a friend decided that, instead of trying to keep up the complicated family ritual surrounding her spouse's birthday, she just planned a day trip out of town and totally (well, almost) distracted herself from the occasion. This is the third year she's done so, and she reports looking forward now to a quiet day to herself and her memories. Again, you get to decide.

As I wrap up this writing, I'm about to move on to another favorite ritual, namely a cup of Earl Grey, hot, with honey and Walker's shortbread on the side. Life's little pleasures can be very comforting. Here's hoping a few are waiting to happen in yours.

Peace to you in the New Year,
Nancy Nilsson-Samson, Aftercare Director
aftercare@heafeyheafey.com
402-391-3900

OPPORTUNITIES
FOR

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1* New Years Day 11:15 a.m. Lunch at Tanner's 1202 S 119th St	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 11:15 a.m. Lunch at Tanner's 1202 S 119th St	9	10	11
12 4:30-5:30 and 6:00-7:00 Grief: The Basics	13	14 9:30 and 10:45 Emotions	15 11:15 a.m. Lunch at Tanner's 1202 S 119th St	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 11:15 a.m. Lunch at Tanner's 1202 S 119th St	23	24	25
26	27	28 9:30 and 10:45 More on Emotions	29 11:15 a.m. Lunch at Tanner's 1202 S 119th St	30	31	

Heafey-Hoffmann-Dworak-Cutler
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ALL SUPPORT GROUPS
meet at
Heafey Hoffmann
Dworak Cutler
7805 W Center Road, Omaha

For more info contact
Nancy Nilsson-Samson (402) 391-3900



Coming Soon...
Poetry, quotes
and other items
contributed by group
members – including
some original work!

• • • Join the Lunch Bunch • • •

Stop by any Wednesday for good food and friendly conversation. We meet at Tanner's Bar & Grill, 1202 South 119th Street (and Pacific), 11:15. All are welcome, no reservation needed and feel free to bring a friend! (Dutch treat)

Caring Thoughts

After reading Nancy’s article, I wondered about the difference between a routine and a ritual. So, as usual, when questioning something, I consulted Google and came up with this explanation:

A routine is something done repeatedly, often mindlessly, and without significant meaning attached. A ritual is repetitious but it is performed thoughtfully, with meaning, emotion, or purpose. Rituals provide pleasure, satisfaction, or enjoyment.

Applying this distinction, Nancy’s shopping scenario seems more ritual than routine. In the final sentence, she writes, “Same routine, week after week...a pleasure.” The simple routines associated with shopping merged into a ritual, done thoughtfully and with pleasure.



A few months after my husband, John, died I began the daily routine of making a to-do list. I hoped it would encourage me to organize my day and get some things done. The routine was helpful and two years later I still make a daily to-do list.

John was a great animal lover. His obituary included a paragraph about the rescued pets that were always part of our family and concluded with the following:

“He also loved animals in the wild and enjoyed watching birds and other critters, which gathered on the patio to take advantage of his daily birdseed buffet.”

Every day John routinely changed the water in the birdbath (heated in the winter) and put birdseed and sunflower seeds on the patio. The task was done without much thought, but watching the birds, squirrels, and other critters, that gathered on the patio brought him great pleasure.

After his death “feed birds” became a daily entry on my to-do list and a comforting *ritual*. As I dumped yesterday’s water from the birdbath and refilled it with fresh, scattered the birdseed, and made little piles of sunflower seeds for the squirrels (as he had done), I felt his presence. It became an important connection with him—my daily *ritual of remembrance*—and a lovely reminder of the caring and gentle man he was.

Bert Jackson

Healing Thoughts for 2025

We stand in life at midnight, we are always on the threshold of a new dawn.
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Write it on your heart that every day [can be] the best day in the year.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

No matter how hard the past is, you can always begin again.
The Buddha



Aftercare Support Groups

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sunday, January 12, 2025

Sojourners I (Newly grieving) 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Topic • Grief: Back to the Basics

Sojourners II (1-2+ years toward healing) 6:00-7:00 p.m.
Topic • Grief: Then & Now

(Facilitated by Nancy Nilsson, Aftercare Director, & Dr. Bert Jackson)

**This Support Group meets at Heafey Hoffmann Dworak Cutler
7805 West Center Rd.**



Sneak Peek: Tuesdays This Month

This support group meets the second & fourth Tuesday each month.

9:30-10:30 a.m.
(newly grieving)

10:45-11:45 a.m.
(2-3+ years later)

- Jan. 14 –** Emotions of Grief – Where’s Your Focus?
- Jan. 28 –** More Emotions – Helpful or Harmful?

“Rituals [and routines] can provide comfort in many ways, including:

- Sense of control*
- Sense of belonging*
- Comfort in familiarity*
- Stress reduction*
- Symbolic significance”*
(Scientific American)

What rituals/routines might you create or re-create in this new year?



IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER: If Omaha public schools are closed, Heafey support groups and the Lunch Bunch gatherings are cancelled. If in doubt, just call us at 402-391-3900 at 8:00 a.m. that day and the receptionists can give you current status!