

The Briefing

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The Emotional Hell of Unresolved Grief

The woman's voice cracked with emotion as she began, "I kept your number. You said I could call anytime. It's been two years, two months and two weeks today." The caller continued by recounting the tragic tale of her son's death.

The fog began to clear for me as I remembered the chaplaincy call and even officiating at the young man's funeral. I tried to console the caller by explaining that grief is a process and a complicated emotion.

"It's not grief," the woman exploded. "It's anger! The police killed my son! I hate them!"

When the call eventually ended I

was left to reflect on the emotional carnage of suicide. Delusional thoughts of the police killing her son were easier to maintain than embracing the painful reality of suicide. Two years, two months and two weeks of misplaced anger had kept the woman trapped in the emotional hell of unresolved grief.

At times a chaplain's role is simply to serve as an emotional outlet for victims. In this case it was also to serve as an emotional buffer between the police department and a grieving mother.

Grief is a complex emotional process



Tom Stewart is the 6th Lakeville Police Officer for whom I've had the honor of officiating at their wedding. Tom and Natasha were married on December 11 in the chapel at Northwestern College. An adrenaline filled two and a half hour drive through blizzard conditions that produced 18 inches of snow and scores of stranded vehicles preceded the joyful event.

Other notes from Chaplain Bellows

- "What if?" is a question that must haunt officers. A Lakeville officer recently approached a vehicle during a routine traffic stop when the driver shot himself. An officer's training and instincts take over at that moment but in more reflective times they have to wonder what might have happened.
- A photo of Sergeant Brigham Strole who passed away in September was unveiled and placed in the station during a ceremony commemorating his 20 years of service.
- The continued work of LPCS is made possible by the financial gifts of others. LPCS is a 501c3 organization. Your tax deductible contribution can be mailed to 9623 162nd Street West, Lakeville MN 55044.

