



Chapter 1

Grieve

My mother-in-law died on President's Day. Ten days later a coven of somber faced morticians sealed her platinum colored coffin and lowered her remains into oddly chilled Florida dirt. Later that night my wife and I tried to get some sleep...on my mother-in-law's bed (I knew she was gone, but the bed still felt like it belonged to her); but sleep was as elusive that night as were the right words to say earlier that day. The only thing that came to mind, that stayed on my mind, was...*I may not have gone through a funeral, but I know how my wife feels.* Yeah, I know. It's weird what will come to mind when we're trying to sleep on dead people's beds.

As I watched my wife and her siblings begin to track slowly through the grieving process for their mother I began to realize that I have been in a similar place for a long time with no casket, memorial service, limo ride, patch of dirt, or monument to locate or frame it. It had been more than five years since I had spoken with my parents. Even though they were very much alive in the Sunshine State, our relationship was dead. And just like my wife and brothers-in-law, I was mourning my loss, too. But unlike them, I was unaware that I had been in mourning all this time. My



mother-in-law's funeral was the event that jarred this reality into my consciousness.

I've been mourning the loss of my parents for more than two decades. And each time I would get an angry phone call or voice-mail or e-mail from my mother it felt like a visitation from a ghost interrupting the grieving I tried to pay little attention to. Prejects have a harder time grieving their parental losses because we are reluctant to esteem the losses as real and complete until we can read the names on the death certificates and tombstones. It's so much easier to hold onto hope for a miracle recovery.

Part of becoming a PRO is accepting that the relationship with your parent/s is over, like getting a divorce or burying a loved one, and that you will be okay and whole and a blessing to someone else, not in spite of, but because of what you have experienced.

You can't have what you want if you're afraid to let go and release what you have. For many of us, what we think we have (a relationship with our parent/s) is keeping us from what we want (the freedom to fully invest in the important relationships in our lives without shame or fear of loss).

So, how do you turn a certain loss into a gain? By becoming a cutback runner, reversing field, and running against the grain. That is the goal and effect of biblical grieving, to produce turnaround.

How to Grieve:

1. Prejects must **become aware** of their prejection to **heal**.
2. One cannot really be **free** in **ignorance**.
3. Applying **the truth** makes us **free**.
4. **Wound-aware** prejects must pass through **grief**.

Everyone starts the grieving process, but not everyone finishes it. We don't have any say over when, or if, we start it; but it *is* up to us alone to decide if, or when, we finish it. I'm here to tell you how to finish what you've already begun, even if you don't realize it. Bad, ineffective grieving drains you of the vital inner resources

you need to excel in life.

Prejects must become aware of their prejection before they can begin to heal. Robert Chojecki walked around Germany with a bullet in the back of his head for four years, not knowing he had been shot at a raucous New Year's Eve party with a .22 until he began experiencing headaches and went to a doctor to get it checked out.¹ This kind of thing happens often in combat...adrenaline blinds soldiers to suffered wounds until others point it out to them. It also happens in more innocuous, everyday ways, like when you go to the mechanic and find out you'd been driving around with a damaged part or a dysfunctional system; or when you go to the doctor and find out after test results come back that you have a disease that went previously undetected. This was the case with me after visiting my primary care physician for my annual check-up and learning through a routine EKG that I had been walking around with atrial fibrillation for some time. Often we learn to adjust to dysfunction so well that life feels 'normal' when in fact there is something terribly wrong.

- Valid question: if a preject can function in ignorance, why alert him to his condition and risk pitching him into dysfunction?
 - Because one cannot really be free in ignorance
 - Because it is knowing and applying the truth that makes us free (*John 8:31,32; John 17:17*)²

For people who think you shouldn't look back and dredge up things that can't be changed anyway: How safe would it be to drive a car with absolutely no side view or rearview mirrors? It would be a huge disaster waiting to happen if you ever tried to change lanes. If you can't or don't look back, it's hard, even dangerous, to change.

¹ <http://www.wvlv.com/news/strange-news/Man-didnt-know-he-was-shot-in-head-until-4-years-later-101579018.html>

² *John 8:32* (NIV) Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
John 17:17 (NIV) Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.