

TRANSITIONS

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the power in suffering

by Andrea Ruggieri



If a survey were given asking the question, “Would you willingly like to suffer?” I’d bet my last dollar the overwhelming answer would be no. Why would anyone choose to suffer? What could be gained?

We’ve all experienced some level of suffering in our lives. Whether it was a simple paper cut or a debilitating illness, suffering causes distress. It also can ambush us mentally, giving rise to feelings of loss. When things happen in our lives that we have no control over, it can leave us asking *why?*

With billions of movies streaming these days the struggle is real to find one worth watching. Recently after a prolonged movie surf I found “Father Stu.” I liked actor Mark Wahlberg, so I was intrigued. He had learned about a beloved priest from Helena, Montana and decided to make a movie about him. The description did more for me than the last 15 trailers so I thought this might be the one. I really had no idea what I was in for but was tired of searching and I do love a real life drama, so... I pressed *play*.

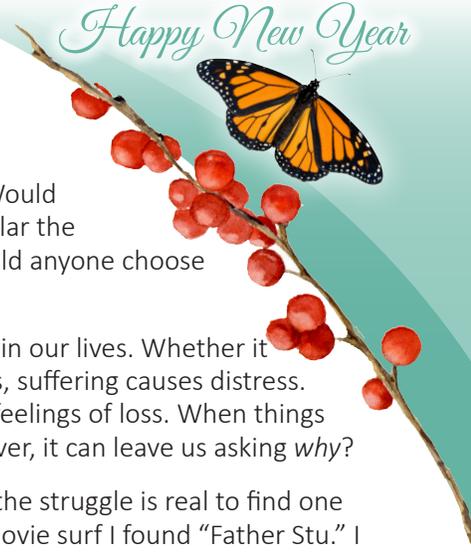
Stuart Long is a colorful character; outgoing, charismatic, funny, and madly driven. Long story very short, he was a boxer who became a Catholic priest. Without spoiling the story for those who still haven’t seen the movie, a whole lot happens in between (you’ll have to watch to find out). On his journey to fulfill his aspirations he faces joy and great suffering. He battles through his suffering to inspiring transformation. Ultimately, he discovers power and purpose despite the conflicts that life had brought him. Huge thumbs up on this movie!

The premise of it all is that we don’t always recognize that suffering can be quite powerful, even beneficial. Sounds crazy, huh? Here’s a quick example I *can* share that won’t crush an unseen flick. Several years ago, about a month before my daughter was building up to her first year in college, she played her last scheduled soccer game in her summer league and was hit sideways, unleashing an ACL tear that sent her to college in a wheelchair. To say the least, it was disappointing. All the excitement of flying from the nest to the first true taste of independence suddenly came crashing down. Obviously, she suffered through the pain of surgery and rehabilitation, but more importantly she had to face the despair of not being able to truly enjoy that independence in those first weeks of freshman year.

The exasperated phone calls came... Not being able to do simple things easily and the mentality that she was “different” than the other students was her cross to bear. But... (there’s always a but) in spite of it all, and once she was back on her feet, she had recognized what it was like to be handicapped. Through suffering she gained a different perspective and new empathy. She was always a kind person, but this suffering affected her future goals and overall growth as a human. I’m pretty sure it helped with her decision to become a Physician’s Assistant.

Each person’s suffering is different, and it may be hard initially to see how you can evolve positively from it. With adversity, time does more than heal wounds, it shapes and helps define you. Suffering can unveil more unexpected potential and new insight than you thought possible. Work hard to get through the hard times and allow yourself to uncover these gifts!

Happy New Year



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sustainability in funeral & burial practices



With movements to environmentally “right-the-ship” for future generations, sustainability has become an ever-present objective in all areas of life. This is true, even in death. Re-thinking how our bodies are handled after we have died has become a hot topic across the globe. Many are considering non-traditional options that are more natural and reduce ecological impact.

Natural, or “Green” burial practices are becoming a popular trend. In a 2022 report prepared by the National Funeral Directors Association, they found that “60.5% of those polled would be interested in exploring a green funeral; up from 55.7% in 2021.” Beyond the obvious environmental benefits, green funeral practices align with certain values and sometimes religious beliefs. There are cultural groups that have been historically green. Orthodox Jew and Muslim burials have traditionally used environmentally friendly means.

In reference to preparation and final disposition of the body, sustainability can be influenced in a number of ways. Forgoing chemical preservation (embalming), using biodegradable materials for burial, and eliminating burial liners or vaults (if cemetery allows) are the overarching funeral/burial modifications for green burial. You may have to do some research to find a cemetery or other managed burial grounds that maintain natural burial guidelines. At this time in the Rochester area there are three hybrid cemeteries. Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, White Haven Memorial Park and Mt. Hope Cemetery all support green burials as well as conventional burials.

Not all Green burial grounds are the same, they fall into one of three categories:

Hybrid cemeteries offer both conventional and green burial.

Natural burial cemeteries practice exclusively green burial methods.

Conservation burial grounds could be mistaken for a well-kept park and are owned by public agencies. Burials here are strictly integrated into the natural landscape with no memorial stones.

You may wonder if cremation is considered green? Though traditional cremation seems fundamentally green as it uses far less resources than most dispositions, it is not green in its true definition. This is mainly because of the excess energy that is used in the cremation process making it unsustainable.

Many of us are accustomed to what we’ve been brought up with and have a set vision of what a funeral should look like. Making greener steps often means certain sacrifices, but depending on your outlook they may be worth making. Keep in mind that there are many ways to contribute to a cleaner funeral footprint. There is much more information and detail about Green funerals and burials. Bartolomeo & Perotto Funeral Home is committed to exploring whatever options you may be interested in. We will answer all the questions you need to make the decision that is right for you. If this is something that is important to you, call us at 585-720-6000.

To find more information, visit the Green Burial Council’s webpage at: www.greenburialcouncil.org.

Credits: mbg Sustainability, “Why Deathcare is Actually a Sustainability Issue + An Intro to Green Burials,” by Emma Loewe, <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/green-burial>

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helping your grief by helping others



The pilgrimage through grief takes many twists and turns and takes you to places you never imagined you'd be. Finding your way through the void of where someone once was and the haze of emotions can be disorienting and confusing. Grief takes time to reconcile and no two have the same journey.

But it's your grief and like it or not, it is connected to someone that means a lot to you. How can you counteract it? There are plenty of ways. Consider one that veers the center of attention away from your grief to a meaningful purpose... volunteering your time. This simple concept can provide enormous relief.

Volunteering can shift your focus and even before you are aware it's happened, your perspective has done an about-face. Paying it forward is an incredible coping mechanism that can help to lessen your feelings of sadness, anxiety, or loneliness. You may be surprised to find how much changing your mindset to helping others can be healing to you. Volunteering can help fill a void and nourish your soul.

Bartolomeo & Perotto Funeral Home is pleased to introduce you to a worthwhile volunteer program.

The Generation Two (G2) Volunteer Program

If you like the idea of providing meaningful relationships with children to help them learn and grow, the Intergenerational G2 volunteer program might be right for you.

The mission of this program is to strengthen young children's social and emotional development. This happens by using child-directed play, which empowers empathic, trusted adults to understand them. Child-directed play allows children to make the rules, and change the rules.

They lead during play sessions. Just think, by using your positive energies you can make a difference to a whole new generation!



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Volunteers that are already in the program have found it to be two-fold, where as much as you give, you get back!

- 90% of G2 volunteers return to participate again every year
- Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds: retirees, college students, lawyers, police officers, PTA members, and more

What do volunteers get from experience?

- **JOY** – working with spirited children who need you!
- **PURPOSE** – you are making a difference!
- **PLAYFULNESS** – the simple delight in play is remarkably meaningful!

So you like the idea, but you still have reservations and many questions. See the outline below of what you can expect as a G2 volunteer:

- No previous experience is needed, you will be trained before you start
- 2hr commitment per week
- 20 – 25 sessions per year from October – May
- Predictable schedule and an assigned site (schools or community sites)
- Brief journaling about sessions
- Debriefing sessions

Want to learn more?

Explore website – Register your interest:
www.g2rochester.org/volunteer/

Email:
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Take a step to healing by volunteering!