

Key to life is meaningful beliefs

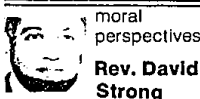
Thursday, September 12, 1985 O&E

(O&E)

A FATHER was accompanying his son's class on a trip when a young boy asked the father how long he had been married. The father answered, "20 years." To this the boy replied, "Haven't you been divorced yet?"

Practically every person has either personally experienced divorce or has someone in their family who has been divorced. Of the people I know who have been divorced, many have known tragedy. Most have experienced hurt. Few divorces have ended without scars.

Divorced or widowed persons are "single again." They find that they need to adjust and replace many of the things which they have lost. Often this includes replacing many of their friends who find it difficult to relate to them now that they are again single.



moral perspectives
Rev. David Strong

For many years, I have worked with divorced and widowed persons. They tell me that there are many adjustments. There is loneliness. There is also usually an abrupt loss of meaning in their lives.

A WOMAN HAS BEEN taking care of her husband for 12 years through a serious illness. He dies. Now she no longer feels that she has reason to get up each morning. In many ways her

meaning for living has been torn away. Such meaning is difficult to replace.

How does a person create new meaning in their life? This is an essentially religious question. Yet, like most deeply human issues, it can be addressed as much outside as inside religious institutions.

It is the proper function of religious institutions to foster groups in which people can search for new meanings. Most important of all is the opportunity to talk with persons who have experienced similar crises who are also seeking new directions.

Reading helps in the search for meaning. Jerome Ellison's book, "Life's Second Half," is a helpful guide for those who seek new meaning in later life. Ellison emphasizes the importance of mutual support in the attempt

to create new life. Biographies, such as "Mother Teresa of Calcutta" or "Dag Hammarskjöld's 'Markings,'" are good to read.

Churches and synagogues should constantly be in the business of creating new groups for those who seek new meaning in their lives. One widow adds, "Helping others is the way I have helped myself get out of my troubles."

IN RECENT YEARS there has been an abundance of books and groups which focus upon happiness, self-development and the great process. They often fall short in addressing this issue of the loss of, and the building of, meaning in life.

meaning. Finding a meaningful set of beliefs and living and giving in these terms is still essential to human life.

Computer class for beginners

Registration is still open for Easy Introduction to Computers, a four-session, non-credit course starting Thursday.

but not necessarily technical expertise.

Lectures are 7-9:30 p.m. Thursdays, Sept. 19 and 26. Hands-on work runs, 1:30-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21 and 28. Tuition and materials are \$40. For registration information, contact, OOU's Continuing Education office at 370-3120 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays.

Offered by Oakland University's Division of Continuing Education, the course is intended for those with no previous computer experience and for managers who need background

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Counselor needed for family rift

Dear Jo:

I read your column about devoted parents — I have a problem with my daughter (and her husband) that has been upsetting me for over two years now.

When I retired, I sold my home and accepted an invitation from my daughter and her husband to live with them in a very small room in their home. At the same time, I also settled in Florida. I intended to spend six months a year in the north and the other six in the south.

At first this (in the north) went pretty well. I tried not to inconvenience them, so I spent most of my time away from their place returning late in the evening. Our agreement did not include meals, but nevertheless I paid them about a \$1,000 a month.

After awhile I felt like a stranger in my own daughter's home — a home on which I paid the large down payment. My last day was a sad one indeed when my son-in-law said I had overstayed my visit, and it would be best if I left right then.

I left immediately (bag and baggage). My will,

gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

with my son-in-law as executor, has been changed.

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and some help I'm sure you will be able to come to terms with your life and will feel better.

By working through your problems, I mean that you should seek help from a professional who has expertise in counseling older adults — i.e. your minister or rabbi, your doctor, a nurse or social worker.

You need to take time to sit down with this person on a regular basis over an extended period of time so you can be helped primarily with your communication with your daughter, as well as "working through" the death of your best friend.

As I reread your letter I see that you are in distress — it must be very hard for you to get "through the day." I am not surprised that you are also having health problems.

I would rather not comment on your financial arrangements with your daughter, nor her unkindness toward you. When different generations of a family live together, many problems can evolve — but so can many joys.

I hope you will take my advice on getting some counseling. Please let me know how you make out. Good luck.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at PO Box 68, Postal Station G., 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau has a file of volunteer opportunities for more than 200 agencies. Non-profit organizations needing assistance may list with the bureau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings, call the bureau at 642-7272.

OPEN HOUSE — The bureau will hold open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19, second floor, First United Methodist Church, 1559 W. Maple, Birmingham. Let volunteer interviewers match you with a volunteer opening.

RECEPTIONIST — Cheerful, unflappable and competent volunteer is needed by Birmingham Community House to answer phone, take messages, direct callers and walk-ins. Four hours once a week. Phone 642-7272.

INFORMATION SPECIALIST — Michigan Cancer Foundation needs many volunteers, 18 years and up, possibly with some medical knowledge, to man phones and respond to mail at Detroit office. Four hours per week, daytime. Training. 642-7272.

NURSES — Volunteer R.N.s and L.P.N.s are needed by Henry Ford Hospital's West Bloomfield and Sterling Heights centers for blood screening programs. Once each month. Sterling Heights can use medical assistants. Phone 642-7272.

JOB COUNSELOR — The Offenders Aid and Restoration of Oakland County needs volunteers, over 21, to help clients with job applications and other job-related assistance. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Also one-to-one assistance. 9 to 9. Need volunteers for speakers bureau as well. 9 to 5. Phone 642-7272.

ARC AIDES — Male and female volunteers are wanted by American Red Cross for desk duties at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Pontiac. Weekdays, five or six hours. Orientation. Phone 642-7272.



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