

OPINION

RIVERSIDE TIMES

News editor: Kari Barnett, 561-228-5560, kabarnett@sun-sentinel.com
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Bereavement support group helps heal the heart

When my friend Doris passed away, I worried that her husband, Shelly, would fall apart.

The two, married for 59 years, raised three children and built a productive life together. Since Doris had been ill for over a year, Shelly felt he had time to prepare for life without her. Not so, he later admitted, “the finality was like a kick in the head.”

The days were not too bad, he said, but the lonely nights were endless. And since Doris died during the early months of COVID-19 when friends and family were not available for personal support, he felt lonelier than most. A friend suggested he contact the Ruth and Norman Rales Jewish Family Services in Boca Raton to join a bereavement support group.

Shelly was hesitant. “I’m not the kind of guy to air my feelings in public,” he said.

But after a few weeks of intense loneliness, he decided to give it a try.

The group he joined met together on Zoom. At his first meeting, Shelly just listened. This is not helpful for me, he thought. But luckily he gave it another shot and learned how to bring joy back into his life.

Recently Shelly and Sharon, a friend from his support group, shared with me what helped them move on from their devastating losses.

“You think you are the only one going through the pain,” said Sharon, whose husband passed away two years ago. “When friends ask how you are doing, you often put up a good front and respond that ‘everything is fine.’”

But in a support group, explains Melissa Alter, a professional facilitator for JFS bereavement support groups, “It’s OK to take off your mask and reveal your many confused and often conflicted feelings.

“Everyone understands what you are going through,” she adds, “because they have gone — or are going through — the same grief process.”

Studies show that social support is one of the strongest determinants of bereavement outcome.

Over these many months, the members shared suggestions on how to transition from a couple’s world to being single.

Guilt is a common feeling when a loved one dies, said Alter. (Did I do enough; did I get the best medical advice?) But, she explains, “We know saving them was not in our control and we need to learn to forgive ourselves and let the feelings of guilt float away.”

Many in the group questioned when it’s OK to start dating again. Some wondered when it’s OK to remove your wedding ring. The answer to both, Alter explained, “is when you are ready.”

Grief is like a thumbprint — no two are alike. But sharing thoughts and ideas with others in the same situation can ease the painful initial stages of loss and how then to move on.

For information about Rales support groups, visit bit.ly/3bn3p74.

Bea Lewis is a journalist, author and public speaker who lives in Boynton Beach.



Bea Lewis

As COVID-19 looms, workers turn to real estate careers

During the second surge of the pandemic, the trend of people reevaluating their careers continues.

Nowhere is this more prevalent than in South Florida, where people are exploring real estate as a career due to the historically hot market.

During the last year and a half, we’ve seen people leave jobs with new priorities. Many people are simply tired of another “lockdown” and the uncertainty of being forced to “come to the office” and putting their health at risk.

Others are seeking more work-life balance that comes with not having to commute and sit through interminable meetings. They like the freedom that comes with working at home or hitting the road in an RV and getting in a solid day from an oceanfront site, a national park, or many other locations that could only be visited during a two-week vacation.

Recent surveys clearly indicate that this freedom and independence is preferable to higher pay. In the not-too-distant past, securing the corner office with a great view was a priority. Today, we can still have the great view, but it is frequently in a location of our choosing.

Basically, we’ve seen the rebirth of entrepreneurial pursuits, a desire to go back to school, and a focus on family. These are all healthy reactions to a health care crisis in that people seem to be acknowledging that quality of life — for many — is preferable to the corporate rat race.

As real estate coaches, we are in contact with many aspiring entrepreneurs who are seeking this freedom and new lifestyle. It’s important for them — regardless of the new career they’re seeking — to evaluate the move. Some considerations include:

- Are you really cut out for being an entrepreneur?
- Don’t quit your current job — if you have one — until you can earn a healthy living in your new venture. Set a number that you must earn to make ends meet before leaving current position. This will give you peace of mind and reduce stress.
- Learn from the ground up. What type of investing works for you? Learn to use technology to build a virtual business.
- Do you have the discipline to work from home, without a boss?
- Set short- and long-term goals.
- Can you sell?

Real estate investing is one of many entrepre-



Liz Klingseisen and Laura Alamery

neurial pursuits that check the boxes when it comes to finding independence with significant income opportunities. But it comes with hard work.

Our students seem to be attracted for a number of reasons:

- The diverse nature of investing. Some want to “fix and flip.” Others want to buy a multi-family unit and live in one unit and rent the other.

Many of our students like renting to have cash flow.

- You don’t need a lot of money to purchase a property. Many leverage their equity in one property to purchase another property.

- There can be significant tax deductions.

- You have a tangible asset with value, as opposed to paper assets such as stocks/bonds.

- Over the long haul, real estate usually appreciates. A recent study shows that from August 2020 to August 2021 multi-family properties grew in value by 12%.

But perhaps the most appealing aspect is that real estate investing allows people to work remotely and consider purchasing properties in other parts of the country. Technologies such as ZOOM and FaceTime allow them to assess properties for purchase in other states. Likewise, they have the ability to market them for sale to a worldwide audience of potential buyers.

This is just one of the many avenues people can pursue as they re-assess their career goals. The pent-up demand and desire to try something new will likely continue.

There really is not silver lining to this health care crisis. Most of us have been touched by this virus in some way. We know someone who has died or survived the illness.

We will get through this situation, but it depends on how we react to hardships. Reevaluating our careers and seeking security as entrepreneurs has many benefits such as safety, freedom, more time with family and flexibility.

These are all noble pursuits that will serve us well today and once the pandemic has passed.

The mother/daughter team of Laura Alamery and Liz Klingseisen are owners of Real Estate Investing Women, a firm that provides mentorship, coaching, and classes on how to initiate a career in real estate investing. Visit realestateinvestingwomen.com/.



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