

Supporting Attachment in the Mourning Process

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ABSTRACT

UPDATED—23 June 2017. This paper focuses on mourning emotions and attachment in the mourning processes. Looking into objects, emotion, and memories involved in the mourning process. Also, there was a look into the cultural differences. Next, to this, there was a sub focus on funerals. In a funeral and how it could affect one's emotion and feelings. Mourning in a funeral may help people to look forward and live positively. Meanwhile, certain objects have a significant influence on the life people, whether increasing their sorrow or help them remove the pain. In general, mourning is similar globally however subtle rituals will differ in (small) regions.

Author Keywords

Funeral; Mourning; Attachment; Emotion; Culture;

INTRODUCTION

Everybody will encounter mourning at one point of his or her life. Mourning is a universal process of grieving over a loved one. However, how people deal with mourning is different to all of us. Also, All cultures deal differently with the process of mourning, but they all have some kind of funeral or other rituals around a passing. [5]

The basis of understanding of mourning comes from the work of Freud, in his work "Mourning and Melancholia"[2] In this work he describes the goal of mourning is to detach from the lost object. Dealing with grief is a human experience. Our responses in the mourning processes are based on the disruption of attachment.[4]

"Mourning is a situated interpretive and communicative activity charged with establishing the meaning of the deceased's life and death, as well as the post-death status of the bereaved within the broader community concerned with the loss."[3]

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This attachment to a loved one and detachment in the mourning process is described. However, much information about how to support this process in during mourning. Are there ways to get this detachment processes of mourning started. Are there processes or objects that can help in this mourning processes? Are there cultural influences on this mourning processes?

The main research question addressed in this paper is "How could the detachment to the deceased be supported, throughout the process of mourning?" All mourning processes of individuals are different. However, they all make use of objects, encounter emotion and memories. Next, to this, we did this research in three different continents, so also the cultural aspects in this processes are looked into. Therefore the sub-questions are: "How can objects, emotions, and memories be supportive in the mourning process?" and "Are these supporting factors different in other cultures?"

BACKGROUND

Death as a biological event is defined as the cessation of all biological functions that sustain a living organism. However, for humans, it is more than the end of a process. Across different cultures around the world, it is considered a sad or unpleasant occasion, due to the affection for the being that has died and the termination of social and familial bonds with the deceased. Therefore, it has been considered an "event" which transcends the boundaries of the biological world, permeating the spiritual and emotional dimensions of people's life. Every person reacts differently to such event, but all of us, as humans share the same feelings and emotions facing this moment, which has been defined as the mourning process.

From different psychoanalysis perspectives, the mourning has been defined as a process of "detachment of libidinal ties from the deceased love object" [1]. According to Freud, people facing the loss of a loved one, have the to goal to detach those feelings and attachment to the lost object. When the mourning process is complete, the ego becomes free and the person is ready again to start building new bonds and attachments to a new living person [1]. Based on this, Melanie Klein (1940/1975b) has conceived the mourning as a process of reparation which consist in more than a simple let it go. For example, Shuchter (1986) [6] and Zisook and Shuchter (1986)[7] conducted a comprehensive study of mourners (widows and widowers)

“asking about ways in which they continued their connection to the deceased spouse. They found that a significant percentage of these bereaved individuals developed ways to continue their ties to the spouse, either through dreams and memories, by keeping some of their personal possessions, by taking on some of the behaviors and traits of the deceased, or by experiencing some type of continuing contact with the deceased individual.” Whereby, the purpose of this article is to center the focus in such activities and rituals which help and ease to overpass the mourning process in different cultures and people.

METHOD

The research process could be divided into three stages: 1. Online research; 2. Empathy game; 3. Interviews. The first & second is to try learning the feeling of loss which is beneficial in learning empathy. The third stage is using the empathy and knowledge we acquired previously to investigate the feelings of the target group through conversations and try to find insights for design.

Empathy game

The role of empathy in design is to feel, to understand, and to resonance with another person about his/her feeling without having identical experience (Katja Battarbee, Jane Fulton Suri, and Suzanne Gibbs Howard, Empathy on the Edge). Empathy game played a starting point and an important role since it would be impossible and impractical for researchers to lose close families to learn the feeling and experience of mourning.

We decided to build a pyramid with poker cards which symbolized the effort and emotion devoted for bonding, and the collision of pyramid meant the end of a relationship (death). The higher the pyramid, the deeper the relationship.

The involved would have two main procedures to go through. The first step was building a pyramid, which was followed by mourning afterward. The first section was set in the interior space while the second was set in exterior space. During the game, testers could only use poker cards to build the pyramid, and they have to do this on their own (no extra tools or help). All the process would be recorded by a camera.

When a people are building around with another one, (s)he may be natural or numb or skilled at socializing (represented by the method of building a pyramid). Meanwhile, natural influence (e.g. wind) was also taken into consideration which was a metaphor of accidents and disasters that one may encounter. To avoid too much disaster and accidents in one's lifetime (it was very windy on test day), the game was set in the interior space. In the second part, the context was set in a place with plants and soil so that the scenario was closer to a funeral and subtle personal ritual habits could be discovered and studied.

Through this game, the focus was mainly on emotional changes and the rituals occurred. People would have various changes of feeling and emotion before, during and

after they lost someone, which was the main focus we eager to figure out. On the other hand, they would express their feeling through certain behavior and interaction with items in a ritual that worth studying and highly related to further design. Since three testers were from different culture and background, it could also be interesting to probe into cultural differences.

The entire process was filmed and the analysis was based on video observation and interviews. In video observation, the analysis would be based on emotion shown on faces, while in interviews the analysis would be how they feel in several stages. In this way, we would learn what specific feeling we had in those stages and try to use that to empathize with mourners.

Semi-structured interviews

Six interviewees were selected in the research who were the relatives of designers in the team. The reason behind was that close relatives were more likely and willing to share their views and feelings about mourning if compared to an interview with a stranger or a friend. On the other hand, with the same experience, designers were easier to understand and empathize with their relatives. Participant 1 till 4 were mourners who lost their at least one of their parents. Participant number 5 lost the partner. For an expert viewpoint, we interviewed participant number 6. Participant number 6 is a social worker, working with families facing mourning, or are in the process of losing someone. In total 3 female and 3 male participants were interviewed.

As a multicultural team, the interviews were conducted in three different languages (Chinese, Spanish and Dutch). The first step to analyze the data was to translate to English all the gathered information and quotes. When analyzing one of the interviews, we started to find topics we could use in order to cluster and open code the outcomes according to their nature and relevance. Using the coding we found in the first interview analysis, we analyzed the rest of the interviews in order to define whether they contained the same insights and categories or new categories to add. We clustered and categorized every topic we found across all the interviews to come up with the main topics about the mourning process and its characteristics.

Started with looking into rituals and experience in funeral rituals, we decided to concentrate on the influence of funeral in mourning, and came up with our research question: What does the funeral ritual contribute to the process of mourning? Based on this topic, we came up with multiple themes that may help to answer our topic. During a funeral we thought one would be affected by these elements as followed and decided to come up with questions with regards to these points:

- The meaning of funerals and the essential part
- Emotional reactions during funeral mourning
- Meanings of certain objects in funerals
- Special memories of the deceased

- Cultural differences in mourning

In this round of interviews, there were participants from 3 different continents. Two participants from China could represent the Chinese funeral and mourning rituals(P1 and P2), while two Dutch participants could stand for that in Netherlands(P3 and P4) and two for Colombia(P5 and P6). In this case, the cultural factors (funeral process, the influence on live people, significant items in the rituals, etc) could be compared and studied. This method was to learn what mourners thought was significant in mourning, and if there were connections between objects and mourners, how the objects influenced people, and if we could draw a common point from studying cultural differences.

Design and Evaluation

After all the insights were gathered, a concept was created with this. To gather more insights based on this concept this was evaluated using co-constructing stories method. In this method, a sensitizing story is presented to introduce the situation the concept will be used in. In this case, a story about a lonely mourning man was shown. After this story the participants were asked questions as below:

Do you recognize the story?

What was your last encounter with mourning?

What do they do in such kind of situation?

After the normal situation was clear the visionary story was presented. This story described the design as envisioned and help to set the scene. After this, the evaluation of the concept was started? Questions were asked as:

What do you think about the concept?

Would this help?

How would you imagine it to work?

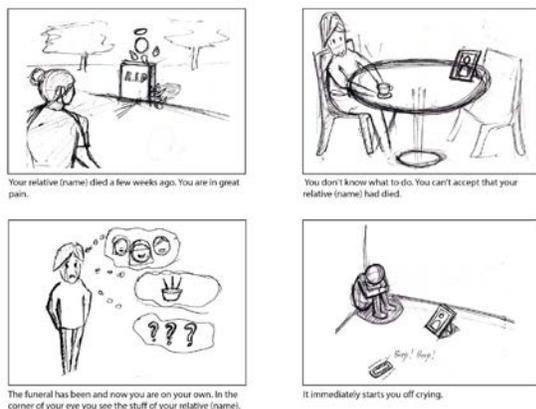


Figure 1. Sensitizing story

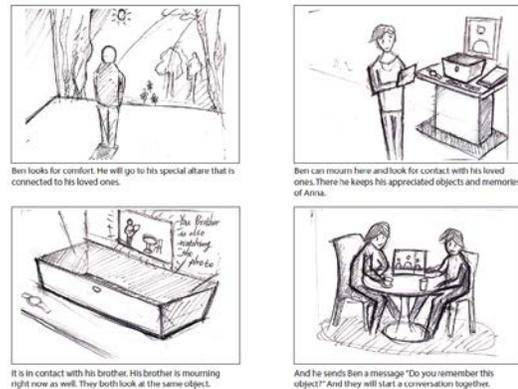


Figure 2. Visionary story

RESULTS

Empathy Game

During the game, the group realized that they all had a different way of reacting and behaving with facing the loss. Building the card house already worked in different ways. This was also a nice metaphor for everybody this own different life and everybody having different life paths and face loss in different points of time. After the card houses broke down and the loss was face everybody responded differently. Neatly organizing the cards or just leaving the cards as they were.

The team questioned how to respond to get rid of the cards. In that point the ritual became acting. There were completely different ways to face the loss, but also different ways to say goodbye. One would start burning the cards, others decided to bury the cards. One of the team members put more effort in making a remembrance spot that the others.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The meaning of mourning

Overall mourning is a process of detachment. Or defined by the aftercare expert. "In the mourning process, one of the goals is to help the people to overpass such attachment and 'release the load...Is not the same to face the mourning alone than with company and support. This factor can determine whether the person will successfully complete the mourning process or not" - P6

The interviews show that mourning process is highly depended on the circumstances the mourner and the loved one who passed were in. The mourning aftercare expert stated: "The type of the relationship with the person who died defines the nature of the mourning process; the effective relationship and antecedents with that person." - P6 Also, a lot the participants mentioned this, and next to this they also mentioned the condition the deceased was in. Was it a sudden death or was somebody ill for a very long time.

People described what the mourning process meant to them. Some described some things that happened others described the feelings or not knowing how to handle it. For the one, it was very hard feeling “most painful feeling arrived at my heart”- P5. However, others did not have hard feelings of mourning, looked to the future or “just let it overcome me, You never know how you would react and what will happen” -P3

How grief varies throughout the mourning

Conditions of the person who deceased have great effects on the mourning process. On the factors of the relationship, emotional connection, the age of deceased and prior illness versus a sudden death. The processes the mourner has to go through can be felt in many different ways. For the one passing it is a very tough process as for the other the process of mourning already started as the loved one was already ill for a long period. For example of the case of P4 here mom was suffering from dementia. So she was already saying goodbye and mourning about her mom.

"The circumstances of the death and the age of the deceased influence the feelings and thoughts of the people around. It is not the same to talk about a young person who had the whole life ahead of an elderly person who was supposed to be in the natural end of the life." - P6

One of the participants lost his wife after a long period of marriage this feeling of grief are still very present, he goes through a strong mourning process. His wife died three years ago and still said: *"I am still keeping her ashes on her night table. I know I should take them to the crypt but I can't. I'm not ready to say goodbye."*- P5 In fact, saying goodbye is the main goal of mourning. Saying goodbye in a proper way means to reach a “peaceful state of mind” where the person who remains alive has time to realize that the loved one will die. According to the aftercare expert, this process is called the pre-mourning process. *"This simple act is relevant in the mourning process, mainly because those people who could not say goodbye, are prone to feel more pain and a more difficult mourning process."* -P6

The funeral and its meaning

In most cases, the funeral is the start point of saying goodbye. However, this is just the start of the mourning. And also the funeral is arranged in such a rush that there is no time for the real mourning yet. *"The relationship between funeral and mourning is like that between a farewell ceremony in a high school and reunion parties afterward. The funeral is not always the end."* -P2

Next to the statements of saying goodbye there was a high emphasis on the rituals and a lot of things were shared about this subject. Discussing the funerals some cultural differences were encountered. This was the only point the cultural differences became so evident. Here we can see differences in the ritual around the funeral. And the Here it can also be seen that there are different aspects that are

important to the cultural background. *"My mom had a "West-Fries" style funeral (West-Friesland: Region in the northwest of the Netherlands), this is more of a static ritual, I really liked this"... "Also, my mom loved Latin Choir music in the Catholic church, so she had this during her funeral"* - P4

"The farewell ritual was set on a small hill in our village. During the process, all the participants (our relatives and close friends) would dress in white, with a black shoulder badge individually, accompanying the passed in the coffin from our home till the hill. Throughout the journey, fire cracks would be lit, as well as the play of some instruments of horns, trumpets, etc. The crowds, the fire cracks, and the music were all necessary to tell him (the one in the coffin) that he was not alone" -P1

Overall the meaning of the funeral was that people gathered together, showed respect to the deceased and family and a beautiful ritual to say goodbye. However, the ritual of the funeral itself all different with the culture and person who was buried. *"The meaning of funeral is that the people, creatures, and God are the witnesses of the farewell ceremony of the passed one, appreciating and acknowledging the joy and gifts (s)he gave and witnessing the responsibility his/her loved people going to take."* - P2

Rituals during mourning

Next to the funeral as a big starting ritual of the passing, there are other rituals that people create to cope with the mourning and give comfort. Some seek this in church, or at remembrance spots. *"The religion and beliefs act as a protection. The deceased remains spiritually alive, in a better 'place'. The beliefs help the people to keep the hope and a positive attitude about the lost."* - P6

Examples of these religious rituals are for example lighting candles in church, letting names being called in religious services. *"If I go to church to sing, I will light a candle, do my prayers and say rest in peace mom, dad and Piet"* - P4

People also have different remembrance places, like a tomb, graveyard or another special place, like a Maria statue at home. These remembrance places gave them some space to remember and to process the mourning. *"Mourning doesn't necessarily mean that you have to go to the tomb to mourning someone. However going to the tomb is the best way because it shows the greatest respect to the deceased and that you still remember the root you belong to."* - P1

Besides the nature of the rituals related to religion or beliefs, there are also rituals to say goodbye, to detach and continue. Some people usually keep some of the deceased's objects in order to remind him/her but also as a sign of attachment and no acceptance. The moment when the mourner is capable of giving away some of those objects can be considered a ritual and healing experience where the detachment starts.

“Last year I started to give away some things she used as cooking magazines and sewing books to people who could use it. It was difficult, somehow she was in that things. But it helped me to finally realize she wasn’t with us anymore, I mean the body because she is in my mind every second.” - P5

Objects and Memories connected to the deceased

Like the aftercare-expert said: “Humans are easily attached to different things, circumstances, people, places, and objects. When people have to face a lost (not only talking about death), the attachment is the main cause of pain and suffering.” -P6 People mentioned different objects that were important to them. With these objects often comes to memory. “For me, the condolences book is important to have, this has the memory about who cared for this person.”...“If I am dusting the photos of my parents I say, “Hi Mom, Hi Dad”.- P4 “All the things in our home remind my of her, it is difficult to throw them away, but also to stay at home surrounded by all that stuff.”- P5

For others, the objects were less important, but they put more emphasis on the memories that come to mind. Like: “After my father passed away, the memory of that day would always come to my mind that he was standing outside the high school on a cold night (below 25 degrees), waiting for hours just to collect me and didn’t move to a shelter unless got me in sight. I was very touched at that moment. And his image has been a man wearing a light gray coat, with a leather hat riding a bicycle that was exactly the same on that night.” -P2

All these objects and memories were all very different. This could say that these are all very personal and different for every person.

DESIGN: CONNECTED ALTARE

The design is focused on the detachment support, mainly focused on losing partners. As shown in the figure the main mourner, who lost the partner, will work on the detachment supported by the design. However, the artifact of the main mourner is connected to sub mourners, this could be the mourner his/her children or siblings for example. The sub mourners have a small artifact that is connected to the main artifact. These artifacts would become altars to go to for mourning. These artifacts have space for collecting memories and objects of the deceased. Also, these artifacts are a connected system to offer each other support sending messages and conversations

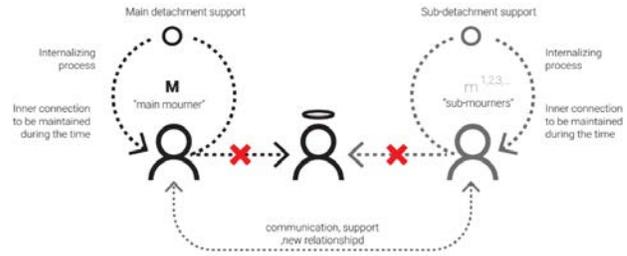


Figure 3. Concept diagram

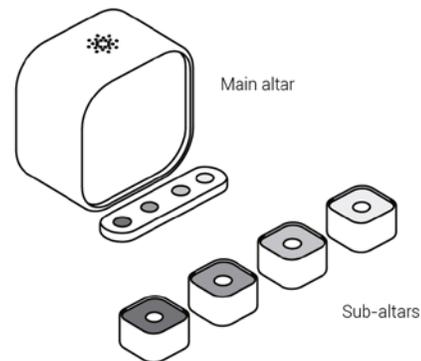


Figure 4. Concept visualization

EVALUATION DESIGN

People overall reacted positively about the concept. They could imagine that it could be used. Some families did already do something like that. Not everybody thought about what kind of things could be in the altar. Not everybody is very attached to personal objects of the deceased but cherish the memories more.

“I think a lot more people look for that kind of spirituality nowadays” - P3

However, some people would think it would be hard to see these objects at the beginning of the mourning process. A container would be helpful store items so that people would not see that in the saddest moment. And will be valuable to give the items back to people once they move on.

“I would not have many of stuff from my dad, but one as a souvenir. Now I would not feel painful seeing my dad’s photo.”... “In a short term after his death, it would be very sad to see his belongings.” - P2

“Instead of viewing the objects as something to convey sorrow, I think it would be an honour to have these objects to remember the dead people.” - P1

Only talking about the concept started most people bringing up a lot of memories of their loved ones. In these memories, for example, there was referred to an object as a representation of the loved one. Without having a real altar

at home. However, this object has the same kind of function.

“The house was (are) plenty of embroidered pictures made by her, in every wall we had her presence, but I cannot say it was negative, it was her legacy and we were happy to have that things to remember her with love, as the artist she was.”... “When I decided to have a look at my mom's bandola, I noticed something really important for me in that moment. I realized the last fine tuning of the instrument was made by Her. In that sense, somehow if I played the instrument, it would be possible for us to hear her, so we decided to keep the strings in the same tuning, even if they would not be in the “proper” one.” - P6

A lot of people were already building some kind of altar or remembrance place. Putting stuff that brought up memories of the loved ones together to one place in the home.

“What I have seen at a friend of mine, that lost her husband a few years ago. She has all kind of pictures standing. She lights a candle there. And she has a collection of this stuff”... “Also, my mom had a Maria statue for her parents where she lighted a candle”- P4

“Our parent's house was always full of things which we did not pay a lot of attention to, but since she died, everything has meaning or memory behind. My dad decided to put some things on her night table as candles, small pictures, her wallet and embroider tools to remember her every day. I kept one of her favorites blouses and my son keeps her scissors for threads and textiles”... “My dad decided to put some things on her night table as candles, small pictures, her wallet and embroider tools to remember her every day.” - P6

In China, the remembrance is different because a lot of stuff is burned during the goodbye ritual. However, most of them do keep photos. In the Netherlands and Colombia people tend to hold on objects longer and keep it in their houses or create a remembrance place with this.

“In China, people would have a box containing ash of burnt body of the dead which will be stored either at home or at a funeral company. Meanwhile, they will also have a tiny tripod, on top of which 3 sticks of incense would stand there which symbolize a tool to convey a message to another world.” - P1

If they were asked about what would they put in this kind of altars. Most people spoke about pictures or objects that were closely related to the person, such as jewelry.

“Maybe a driver license or a photo of the family and jewelry.” - P4

“I will put in her jewelry” - P3

“His photos, however, would undoubtedly be reserved instead of being burnt.”... “Talking about what objects I wanted to have, there wasn't such item according to my memory, because all his items and experience were mainly

about agricultural work (like hoes) that had little connection with my life experience (that I won't use).” - P1

“Though most of the objects were burnt, I still have his photos.” - P2

CONCLUSION

In this paper about mourning focusing on attachment. Researching for answers to the questions how to support the mourning processes. How could objects, emotions and memories can be supportive? And are there cultural differences in these supporting factors.

The general process of mourning is quite similar to all people. Mourning is a universal human reaction to the attachment of the deceased. However, the emotions felt through the process of mourning are very different. The feelings that come with the mourning are really dependent on the circumstances the deceased was in. Also, the relationship between the deceased and the mourner really depends on how strong the mourning process is. Support could be offered in the processes of detachment.

Objects are very important to the mourner. The personal or mutual belongings carry a lot of memories. They are hard to get rid of and are kept as a memory of that person. However, cutting in the objects of the deceased is very hard, this is detaching. These objects could function as a tool of communication between people to support one's feeling and help ease the sorrow. Memories of a speech of the deceased are important to the live people since it is a conclusion of one's life. And it may have a positive effect to motivate people to live better.

The biggest cultural differences could be seen in the “goodbye” ritual, which is present in all different cultures. However, these rituals are different per culture and even per region in one country. There were big differences to be seen between the rituals in China and the more “Catholic” funeral (the Netherlands and Colombia). However, these rituals also contain regional specific elements.

Other rituals encountered were mainly connected to personal rituals or a religious ritual. These personal rituals are created over time and can be very different. However, the religious rituals had more overlap. For example, some cultures have a regular festival to mourn their families or relatives or friends. This custom may symbolize a will to communicate with the dead people in another world and have time to remember them, which also contributes to the mourning process.

We suppose that the concept of a connected altar would offer support during the mourning process. However, we ought to be careful handling the relationship between the objects and when to present those in mourning as they could either remove or increase pains. In all cultures questioned they do have object's, memories and photos they keep from their loved ones. Often they are already broad together or function as a representation of the deceased.

This helps them to have a conversation starter and help them to detach.

To get the detaching process started can be hard. Making the altar ready can be very confrontational to people. People were wondering if they could deal with the building of the altar and seeing the stuff of the deceased of a somebody that recently died. However, this probably could help to start the process and start detaching.

Another limitation of the altar is that in for example China people most often have not a lot of valuables left from the deceased because this is being burned during the funeral. However, they do have pictures to put in the altar.

Also, it is not clear if the notifications of the altars will work in supporting the mourning process. it would remind the people unwantedly or maybe not often enough. Especially also in the early phases of the mourning this can be hard. Here is room for extra research into the use of notifications to support the mourning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX A – PERSONAS

Conny Bak- Oud



AGE
55 years old

DESTINATION
Edam, the Netherlands

STATUS
Married, two children

OCCUPATION
Voluntary work, for several organisations

"If I dust the photos of my mom and dad, I say "Hi mam, Hi pap"."

"If I go to church to sing, I will always light a candle and do my prayers"

BIO:

I come from a big farm, with a big family. I love to do my voluntary work. I enjoy being with all the people and help people. Do something, I am a real doer and organiser. Next to this I sing in two choirs. Not that I am a very good singer, however I like being with the people. And of course I also like the drink afterwards.

Years ago my mom was in a horrible accident and she needed a lot of recovery time. I and the rest of my family focused on the care of my mom. Not knowing my father was getting ill. Months later he was diagnosed with Cancer and from the diagnoses till he died went quite fast. This was hard, he was still very clear in his mind, but his body gave up on him. The years after this my mom got dementia. Over the years I was already saying goodbye to her. This mourning process started already during her illness. However, for my dead this all went way faster.

Jorge Villamizar



AGE
87 years old

DESTINATION
Medellin, Colombia

STATUS
Widower

OCCUPATION
Retired, living alone with his dog, taking care of the garden

"Last year I started to give away some things she used as cooking magazines and sewing books to people who could use it. It was difficult, somehow she was in that things. But it helped me to finally realize she wasn't with us anymore"

BIO:

I come from the country side, from a small town. I had a small market during the last 50 years in front of the school of the neighborhood. That's why I really enjoy to talk with young people, it makes me feel younger. I take care of my garden and of the birds I have in the backyard. I am living with my old dog, which is my permanent company. We walk together to the supermarket or around the neighborhood every day.

A couple of years ago, my wife got sick suddenly and she had to go to the hospital. I did not think it was serious, she was a healthy person and younger than me. Within 2 weeks, she got worse and die. I was in shock because I had no idea what was happening. I could not say goodbye. She was my company for everything, we lived together more than 50 years. It has been a difficult time without her. In the beginning I thought I would die soon after her death because the pain and grief, but all my sons, family and friends have supported me to keep positive and enjoying the life.

Shenchu Wang



AGE
52 years old

DESTINATION
Canton, China

STATUS
Married, one children

OCCUPATION
A staff in ABOC (Agricultural Bank of China)

"A speech could not only provide a general and comprehensive judgement of one's achievement and loss, reputation and guilt, success and failure, but also acts as a spiritual power to motivate those who are still alive to live a better and more positive life."

BIO:

I am from a village with 2 brothers and a sister. We families are closely united and support each other. Though has moved to the city to live, every year I will come back home to mourn my dad that supported the family for a hard long period of time

When I heard the news my father passed away, I was in total shock and sorrow. It was literally unexpected since he was just 50 and still got a strong body. He should live much longer if not because of the accidental electric shock. I never really have a chance to feed back my dad since I was still fighting for a living in the city. And when I was able to I realized that was too late. The accident was literally unexpected. After the sad time what I learned was that I should treasure the people around me, especially my mom, more because no one knows if (s)he would go away the next moment.

APPENDIX B – DISCUSSED THEMES

The result of the questions asked would be analyzed in 6 themes as followed:

The meaning of mourning: According to some conversations and videos, different age group of people could have a totally different understanding of mourning. Therefore we would like to know if it could also differ among different cultures and individuals. By learning this an empathy may be built and several directions for research may be found.

How grief varies throughout the mourning: The level of sorrow and pain could vary in many people even mourning the same person. On the other hand, the extent may alter with time passing. By studying this we may know different stages of emotional change and which may be the best moment to implement the design.

The funeral and its meaning: A funeral is a significant occasion of mourning which is seen as a farewell to the deceased. On this occasion, a variety of objects and rituals and feelings would be presented as a rich source of the database for research.

Rituals during mourning: During mourning a complex combination of rituals would exist to support conveying respect and sorrow to the dead people. And it seems that different people may consider differently of what would be the most important ritual. They also have their own reason for that. This could be helpful in learning the deeper link between a custom and an individual that may help in interaction design.

Objects and memories connected to the deceased: Certain objects (photos, etc) would represent the deceased from a spiritual perspective with which people in mourn would often interact with. And the behavior seemed simple however also seemed to be unfinished that would have a lot more to come out if the people have a clear idea what to do with the items. Therefore we want to know what they want to achieve through manipulating these objects.

Cultural influence: Eventually the mourning would be studied, by comparing the identities and differences in three different culture, to see if there would be a general design that could adapt to different cultures globally.

APPENDIX C - IMPORTANT QUOTES PER THEME

Mourning overall

“In the mourning process, one of the goals is to help the people to overpass such attachment and ‘release the load....Is not the same to face the mourning alone than with company and support. This factor can determine whether the person will successfully complete the mourning process or not” - P6

“The type of the relationship with the person who died defines the nature of the mourning process; the affective relationship and antecedents with that person.” - P6

Also the other participants spoke about these elements. “If somebody is ill for a long period of time, the mourning process already starts. Because, you actually already know that it is coming.” - P4

“Depends strongly on the circumstances. If somebody all of a sudden dies, this is totally different if somebody is ill for a very long time.” - P3

“In the mourning process we families as well as the guests invited would stand in front of his body quietly, heads down, for three minutes. And then we would go around his body to pay the last visit to him after which he would be cremated.” -P2

“when she died, the most painful feeling arrived to my heart. I think it will be there the rest of my life, it is not possible just to forget and keep walking, the only thing I can do is learn to live with this. It is hard, it is...” “When you share your life with somebody else, your life is not yours anymore, it is divided, and when she died, part of my life was gone, and now that part is. I am happy because the family is still together trying to fill that space” - P5

“I don't really think about mourning. I try to let it overcome me. You never know how you would react and what will happen”. - P3

“When he (grandfather) passed away, I would always think of him as a real man, supporting a large family which is literally a tough task to fulfill. And now I want to treat my family and my mum (grandmother) better as a way to mourn him.” - P1

Strength of mourning process

“The circumstances of the death and the age of the deceased influence the feelings and thoughts of the people around. It is not the same to talk about a young person who had the whole life ahead of an elderly person who was supposed to be in the natural end of the life.” - P6

“I am still keeping her ashes on her night table. I know I should take them to the crypt but I can't. I'm not ready to say goodbye. She is still there, somehow I feel better to keep them close.”...“I never expect to live without her, I mean, we were together - sharing everything - during 53 years. Somehow, we became one and for us was not an option to live in a different way”...“I couldn't say goodbye

to her. I had hope, I was sure she was going to be ok, but it didn't happen. That was the most difficult part, to accept she wasn't here anymore, and the chance to say goodbye was gone.” - P5

Funeral influence on mourning

“it is the start of saying goodbye.”- P3

“The relationship between funeral and mourning is like that between a farewell ceremony in a high school and reunion parties afterwards. The funeral is not always the end.”... “The meaning of funeral is that the people, creatures and god are the witnesses of the farewell ceremony of the passed one, appreciating and acknowledging the joy and gifts (s)he gave and witnessing the responsibility his/her loved people going to take.” - P2

“I think the rituals in a funeral today has lost its essence which is lack of a respectful speech about the dead. A speech could not only provide a general and comprehensive judgement of one's achievement and loss, reputation and guilt, success and failure, but also acts as a spiritual power to motivate those who are still alive to live a better and more positive life.” - P1

“My mom had a “West-Fries” style funeral (West-Friesland: Region in the north-west of the Netherlands), this is more of a static ritual, I really liked this”...“Also my mom loved Latin Choir music in the catholic church, so she had this during her funeral” - P4

“The farewell ritual was set in a small hill in our village. During the process, all the participants (our relatives and close friends) would dress in white, with a black shoulder badge individually, accompanying the passed in the coffin from our home till the hill. Throughout the journey fire cracks would be lit, as well as the play of some instruments of horns, trumpets, etc. The crowds, the fire cracks and the music were all necessary to tell him (the one in the coffin) that he was not alone, he still had us in his last journey. In this way, he could leave peacefully. And then, he would be buried beneath the earth with us standing there quietly accompanying him.” -P1

Rituals during mourning

“The religion and beliefs act as a protection. The deceased remains spiritually alive, in a better ‘place’. The beliefs help the people to keep the hope and a positive attitude about the lost.” - P6

“Let the name being called during religious services over the years”...“If I go to church to sing, I will light a candle, do my prayers and say rest in peace mom, dad and Piet” - P4

“Mourning doesn't necessarily mean that you have to go to the tomb to mourning someone. However going to the tomb is the best way because it shows the greatest respect to the deceased and that you still remember the root you belong to.” - P1

“At home I don’t mourn. However, my mom had a maria statuette in the home she lighted a candle there.”- P4

Objects and Memories connected to the deceased

“Humans are easily attached to different things, circumstances, people, places and objects. When people has to face a lost (not only talking about death), the attachment is the main cause of pain and suffering.” -P6

“For me the condolences book is important to have, this has the memory about who cared for this person.”...“If I am dusting the photos of my parents I say, “Hi Mom, Hi Dad”.- P4

“All the things in our home remind my of her, it is difficult to throw them away, but also to stay at home surrounded of all that stuff.”...“Last year I started to giving away some things she used as cooking magazines and sewing books to people who could use it. It was difficult, somehow she was in that things. But it helped me to finally realize she wasn’t with us anymore, I mean the body, because she is in mind mind every second.”- P5

“No memories except for great pain and sorrow didn’t actually come to my mind when I knew my father passed away. ” -P2

“After my father passed away, the memory of that day would always come to my mind that he was standing outside the high school in a cold night (below 25 degrees), waiting for hours just to collect me and didn’t move to a shelter unless got me in sight. I was very touched at that moment. And his image has been a man wearing a light grey coat, with a leather hat riding a bicycle that was exactly the same on that night. ” -P2