How (Not) to Care: Lessons from Job and His Unhelpful Helpers

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Human Responses to Trauma

Characteristics of traumatic events

- threat of annihilation
- inescapable and unmanageable
- perception grounded in real event
- individual, communal, and generational

Brain Detour: Structure

Brain Detour: Trauma

Brain Detour: “Window of Tolerance”

How (and How Not) to Care
Silence: a ministry of presence, a gift of witness

Why do we start talking?

Beyond Trauma to Grief

- **Stage models (e.g., Kubler-Ross)**
  - Denial
  - Anger
  - Bargaining
  - Depression
  - Acceptance

- **Task models (e.g., Worden)**
  - Accept the reality (Believe)
  - Process the pain (Feel)
  - Adjust to the changed environment (Grow)
  - Find enduring connection while embarking on a new life (Move forward)

When Good Grief Goes Bad

- Can’t think of deceased without intense pain
- Relatively minor event triggers intense pain
- Themes of loss appear frequently in conversation
- Inability to change the environment

Three Little Words

Then what happened? I don’t know
I’m so sorry I can’t imagine
I love you
God is here

The Power of Lament

The Power of Humility and Wonder

- The multiplicity of forms! The hummingbird, the fox, the raven, the sparrow hawk, the otter, the dragonfly, the water lily! And on and on. It must be a great disappointment to God if we are not dazzled at least ten times a day.

Mary Oliver from “Good morning” in Blue Horses

The Power of Humility and Wonder

- What kind of community allows authenticity?
- What kind of community hinders authenticity?
- What kind of sufferer is willing to risk?