

*"All endings require inner work."* Emotionally Healthy Leader, Peter Scazzero

In a crisp July breeze off the North Atlantic Ocean, I stood shaking, watching our beautiful daughter walk toward the arbor she and her dad crafted for her wedding day. A month later on a balmy Houston day our son beckoned with his eyes his bride to the altar. Then a short few months after that another son longingly awaited the love of his life's hand in the December beauty of Rome, GA. Within 6 months 3 of our 4 kids married! (Our second son had found his love 5 years before and was expecting our first grandchild.) These poignant life moments were at the same time exhilarating and disorienting. The endings this year for me have been weighty.

These events meant the end of family as we had known it. The end of assumed holiday gatherings as they had been. The end of an era of coming alongside our adult single kids finding their way. Though many sweet beginnings are embedded in these, I had to let the losses sink in.

We recently handed over our 10-year leadership position to a great and competent colleague as we sensed God's leading, pulling us toward deeper local involvement. The hand-off took place over a month ago. The lives we were part of leading, the feeling of being in the know, the beautiful and brutal (as one friend puts it) issues at hand in our region, are now off our radar. Though we felt the relief of a new, energetic leader in place, we also felt the dizziness of the change. Who are we now? How do we relate to those we previously led? How do we best steward the things God has entrusted to us? While these are being answered in the process and in community, we flounder a bit as we stay in place geographically while leaving our position of leadership.

We also said good-bye to my Father-in-law. His death hit me like a scowl. I wasn't close to him yet respected the godly and stalwart life he led. I did see after wading through, with my husband and his siblings, the relics of his life, there was so much more to him than I knew. I felt ashamed of having somewhat put him in a box; regret that I didn't find out more about him, though ambiguous as to how I could have. The expressions on faces in old pictures felt piercing and questioning. It became a wandering ogre of thought mulling how things could've or should've been; thinking of our absences and lack of engagement in each other's lives mostly because of a half-a-globe of distance away. The creep of regret was subtle and spreading, wanting attention. So, I wrote and prayed and talked and cried. And handed the mess to the One who redeems messes. The One who sits with us in the mire and rearranges us as He holds out his hand to walk us out. I think I'm still on that walk. But very thankful that even in the mire we can still have His Shalom.

And in that Shalom I'm seeing His surrounding invitation, like to the exiles in Babylon, to embrace where I am with everything in me; the stage, the age, the limits and opportunities. To engage with Him in new and deeper ways. That's my new name. Engaged.

As you encounter losses, what regret is trying to take you captive into its mire?

Jacqueline Scott



I grew up in the US in a Catholic family, was captivated by God at age 12; My husband & I started our cross-cultural career in 1986 in South America. We now live in Central Asia where the disillusionment of ministry hit home in 1994. We have 4 adult kids with the kind of spouses you pray for, and 1 newborn granddaughter. I love walking with others through their inner workings in small groups, on-line and face to face. I blog occasionally at <https://www.soulfit.us/>