

Created for Thoughtful Engagement

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Summer Memories



There is a change in the smell to the air at the end of the summer. You might start to notice that some maple trees have taken an interest in designing their fall plumage. The parks and beaches are not as crowded with swimmers, picnickers, and treasure hunters who spent their summer bent over looking for the perfect shell or stone, as they are all gone.



Turning to the new season, it beckons us to enjoy its offerings as our interests turn to new activities. You can sense how the change of season reminds us all that there are now important things to do that need attention. The end of summer has always brought with it a sense of solemnness, as if a very precious time is now ending. The wild sunny days of running free, going to ice-cream shops, visiting family and friends is coming to a close. Thoughts turn towards the next season and the responsibilities that come with it. The end of summer could possibly bring to mind memories of getting children ready for the start of school with the purchase of supplies and new clothes. Working to prepare gardens for the coming frost. Perhaps canning and storing food that was grown in the garden. We might find ourselves packing away summer clothing, toys, boats, etc. and pulling out sweaters, warmer jackets, exchanging sandals for sneakers or shoes.



I love the change of season, living in New England we are blessed with four seasons: summer, fall, winter, and spring. Each brings with it a newness and a reminder that this time is precious and will come to an end. Buddha noted, “Know that everything has a beginning and an ending and all will be well”. This reminds me to be present in the beauty of right now. To be honest, it isn’t always beautiful, but taking a mindful stance, I can find pieces of beauty in whatever I am experiencing.



Mindfulness begs us to stay present, which means we keep our thoughts on the here and now. Without judgement. That is very, very hard for most of us, as we are steeped in making decisions on whether something is good or bad. To be present is such a beautiful practice. It allows us truly absorb what is happening now. It tasks us with keeping our minds from straying into the future with the thoughts of things not yet to come. This doesn’t mean that we don’t prepare for the future, only that we live in the here and now.

What are your favorite summer memories? What are your favorite memories of the change of seasons? Working with your client on processing their favorite memories is a lovely way to spend the day. Be aware that some memories may bring up sadness. It is always appropriate to meet your client where they are – you can express kindness, empathy, and compassion by listening and responding with a reflective sentence and then redirect, such as, “I hear that you enjoyed your summers very much and I hear sadness that those times are now over. Can you tell me how that memory shaped your life? It sounds like it was very important to you.”

You might work with your client to start a journal on summer time memories, or a picture journal, or a genealogy that includes all the family members that visited in the summer months. Some clients might have favorite summer recipes that they would enjoy reliving and possibly sharing with family. Reminiscing is such an easy and often used psychosocial intervention that asks you, the caregiver, to listen and use reflective listening skills. Your task is not take on their sadness, which is difficult, but to sit with it, holding space for it, alongside your client.

