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# An exploratory qualitative study on how adults experience the death of a parent

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## **Abstract**

Grieving parents, during adulthood, is a natural rite of passage. However, there is a gap in the scientific literature with regards to understanding how adult children are impacted. This qualitative study aimed at capturing the subjective experience of a non-clinical sample of individuals by exploring their vulnerabilities, coping mechanisms and well being when confronted to the loss of a parent. In order to do so, ten semi-structured interviews were carried out with adults who had lost one or both of their parents between the ages of 17 and 65 years old. Our findings confirm that losing a parent is a specific type of bereavement, constituting a unique experience. Coming to terms with it is a lifelong process, which induces personal transformations. Identities change with the development of empathy as well as the taking on of new responsibilities and leadership roles. Individuals grow from adult children into self-parented adults. Also, an existential awareness develops as individuals integrate the shift in the generation line. Positive health implications were identified with adult children adopting lifestyle changes. Furthermore, adaptive coping mechanisms appeared beneficial among others, such as keeping a continuing bond with the deceased parent and developing meaning about the events. However, the findings indicate that the grief process may get hijacked due to demanding professions and busy everyday lives. Further explorations are required in order to understand why some individuals are more resilient in processing the death of their parents than others. Among many topics to investigate in this field, understanding the function of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies appears crucial to better support individuals that experience difficulties in this transitional stage of life.

**Keywords:** parent death, adult children, identity, vulnerability, coping mechanisms, well being, post-traumatic growth, generational time

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this exploratory study is to attempt to understand how people experience the loss of a parent when they are adults. When researching this topic, most findings related to the bereavement process through a child or adolescent perspective (Silverman & Worden 1993; Sood, Razdan, Weller & Weller, 2006). According to Winsborough and colleagues (1991), one in ten children loses a parent by 25 years old, when at the age of 54 years old, 50% of individuals have lost both of their parents and at the age of 62, 75% of adults have lost both their parents (Winsborough, Bumpass, and Aquilino 1991). These statistics were carried out for the population in the United States and are not the most recent. However, they establish that it is most likely for individuals to experience the loss of a parent during their adulthood in Western societies. Surprisingly enough, the loss of a parent at a later stage in life has little research available. We can imagine that this might be due to the fact that grieving parents during adulthood is, in a typical life trajectory, a natural process that is inherent to our species. Indeed, losing a parent is a fact of life; it is commonly referred to as a universal experience. However, while some people demonstrate resilience when faced with grief and may carry on their lives without any major implications on their health and well being in the medium to long term, losing a parent may also trigger a crisis for some individuals (Horowitz, Weiss, Kaltreider, Krupnick, Marmar, Wilner & DeWitt, 1984). According to Birtchnell (1975), "*the death of a parent in adult life should be a significant precursor to psychiatric breakdown*" (p.379). In order to understand how this might be so, it seems necessary to pursue investigations in this field to understand what happens for individuals when they lose a parent. Peter Fonagy (2019) expressed the need for further scientific studies to follow non-clinical populations to try to understand which are the protective factors that prevent subjects from developing psychiatric conditions. Considering our field of research, building an understanding of how people experience the loss of a parent and investigate the validity of grief models, as well as coping mechanisms of adaptive functioning may provide some insights as to why some people are impacted in their life trajectories while others are not.

In order to study this topic, we will first present a literature review, which will define the semantics of grief, bereavement and mourning as well as the central concepts of vulnerability and coping mechanisms. We will then present the main Western grief theories that have been developed before concluding this section with findings from studies on adults grieving their parents. We will then detail the

methodology we applied for this qualitative exploratory study, for which ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. Information will be provided on the framework we opted for, as well as a description of how the study was built and carried out. We will then present the results, organized by themes before discussing them in another section. Last but not least, we will address the limitations of this study as well as the future research perspectives before concluding.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Clarification of concepts**

#### **1.1. Bereavement, grief and mourning**

The terms of bereavement and grief as well as mourning are subtly intertwined but refer to different definitions, which explains why they are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature. Bereavement has been defined as *“a broad term that encompasses the entire experience of family members and friends in the anticipation, death, and subsequent adjustment to living following the death of a loved one”* (Christ, Bonanno, Malkinson & Rubin, 2003, p. 554).

The most common reaction observed by a bereaved individual is referred to as grief. According to Aranda and Milne (2000), grief is defined as a reaction to a state of loss, which can impact cognitive, emotional, physical, social, spiritual, philosophical and cognitive dimensions. It is also referred to as a multidimensional process which confronts a variety of dimensions such as despair, panic, behaviour, personal growth, blame, anger, detachment and disorganization (Hogan, Greenfield & Schmidt, 2001). The distinction between typical and pathological grief remains debatable to some extent. According to the American Psychological Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), experiencing a range of contradictory emotions after having lost a parent is considered healthy. Those emotions range across sadness, anger, rage, anxiety, numbness, emptiness, guilt, remorse, and regret. Also, it is considered typical to withdraw from friends and activities and to throw oneself into work for up to 12 months following the loss of a parent (Krisch, 2019).

Whereas, mourning refers to the expression of grief in a social and cultural context with behaviours and rituals associated with a period of loss (Neil, 1990).

## **1.2.Vulnerability**

As we set ourselves in a life course perspective, vulnerability is apprehended *“as a life condition in which an individual functioning suffers from a weakening process triggered by a lack of resources in one or more domains”* (Struffolino, Bernardi, 2017, p.2). It has been qualified as *“multidimensional”* as resources and stressors may diffuse in one or more domains such as family, health, sociability and employment (Spini, Hanappi, Bernardi, Oris, & Bickel, 2013, p.8). And also, as *“multidirectional”* as there is a dynamic component inherent to the concept, as individuals experience processes of rising and falling during which subjects may be weakened and find ways to recover by going through their resources (Spini et al., 2013, p14). However, those challenges may also be a source of empowerment as a consequence of adaptive coping strategies (Struffolino & Bernardi, 2017).

## **1.3.Coping mechanisms**

The need to cope with a situation arises when the psychological homeostasis is in disequilibrium. Losing a parent may mobilize strategies to resolve the stress and negative emotions that emerge from bereaving. Our study refers to coping as the concept developed by Lazarus and colleagues (1984) as a response to perceived stress defined as *“constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person”* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 178). Coping involves the individual’s personal and environmental history; as the definitions point it out, it is the result of complex multifactorial equations. Indeed, according to Haan (1977), coping involves *“purpose, choice, and flexible shift, adheres to intersubjective reality and logic, and allows and enhances proportionate affective expression”* (p. 34).

## **2.Impact of bereavement on health**

According to the World Health Organization, WHO (1948), health is a tri-dimensional concept, which implies physical, psychological and social aspects: *“Health can be defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity”* (p. 1). Grieving may expose some people to health risks, including cardiovascular diseases, cancers, psychiatric symptoms, suicides and accidents. Indeed, many authors have studied this phenomenon and contributed to explain how grief can be a major risk factor for people’s health (Bacqué, 1997; Hall & Irwin, 2001; M. Stroebe & W. Stroebe, 1993; M. Stroebe & W. Stroebe, 1989). Indeed, health is not only the result of a combination

of individual elements but is also defined as a social feature that can be influenced by the relationships of an individual. The scientific community has qualified parental death and the short term period following those events as a traumatic life event that could contribute to exposing children, whatever their age, to an increase in stress levels which could trigger health issues (Perkins & Harris, 1990; Marks, Jun, & Song, 2007). Indeed, some studies have shown a higher tendency to thoughts of suicide, an increased rate of attempted suicide, and higher rates of clinical depressions among adults who had lost their parents (Osterweis, Solomon, & Green, 1984). Indeed, grief may sometimes become pathological. According to the DSM 5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), this occurs when individuals are so disrupted by the event that they cannot function in their everyday life. The healthcare implications are serious, from a financial standpoint, as well as a therapeutic and pharmacological treatment approaches. We did not find any studies quantifying the healthcare implications specifically for filial bereavement. However, it is also common knowledge that most individuals demonstrate resilience when faced with grieving their parents and may carry on their lives without any pathological implications on their well being in the medium to long term.

### **3. Western grief theories**

Researching the literature, we were able to assess the array of grief theories available within the Western cultural context. According to Stroebe and Stroebe (1991), "*empirical bereavement research is often contradictory with conceptual ambiguities*" (p. 479). Indeed, an array of literature exists and does not often carry enough empirical evidence. For the purpose of being concise, we have selected the theories that seemed the most relevant both historically and conceptually speaking.

#### **3.1. Stage theory of grief**

Historically, the process of grief was first theorized as a linear process in five ordered stages, which demonstrated how individuals adapted when facing grief. The stages were: denial and isolation; anger; bargaining; depression and last but not least acceptance (Kübler-Ross, 1973). So far, only one research was identified to support the stage theory of grief (Maciejewski, Zhang, Block & Prigerson et al., 2007); however, there are controversies about the methodology used as well as the interpretation of the results. Indeed, acceptance, which is supposed to be the last stage reached, was actually present at every single phase of their study. Following that publication, the order and linearity of the stage theory were questioned (Bonanno & Boerner, 2007). Those stages had already been criticized in the past as linear and rigid

therefore simplifying the complex process of grief (Corr, 1993). Since then, Kübler-Ross (1973) has communicated that her model was misunderstood as the stages she proposes are not linear and may not necessarily all be experienced by the bereaved. There is little empirical data available concerning the explanatory value of stage grief theory; however the concept of stages while experiencing grief remains popular among the general public.

### 3.2. Growing around grief

This theory challenges the fact that grief may be organized in different stages; it states that although grief will become smaller over time, it will never completely disappear. However, the intensity and space that grief takes in an individual's life will diminish over time. The bereaved person has to evolve around their grief, which will remain an unresolved affair (Tonkin, 1996). At first, the individual is consumed by his grief, and then the bereaved develops an acceptance towards the loss that becomes more manageable in their lives. Although the grief remains, a readjusted life expands around it, the bereaved may even experience growth around it (Figure 1). Although this theory supports the necessity for individuals to adapt, it doesn't provide any specific strategies on how they are supposed to do so. We have not identified any empirical research that validates this theory; however the concept of an on-going grief process seems pertinent for the exploration of this specific type of bereavement.

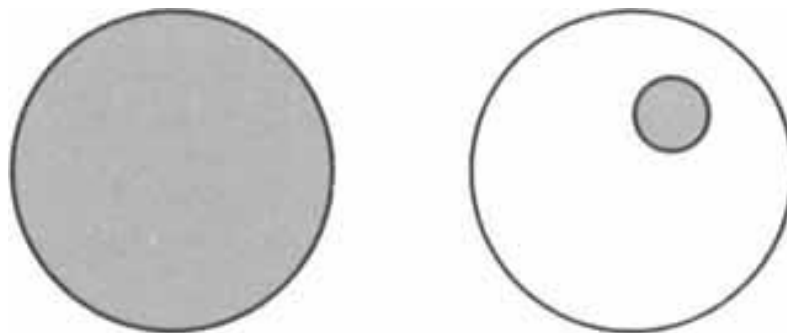


Figure 1: Representation of the growing around grief theory (Tonkin, 1996)  
This figure illustrates how the intensity and the size of grief (represented by the grey area) diminish over time.

### **3.3.The grief work hypothesis**

The concept of grief work was first encountered in Sigmund Freud's research (1924) and has since then emerged into a working hypothesis. This concept rests on the assumption that an individual should go through the process of grief work by directly confronting the loss in order to adapt and come to terms with it. Thus, avoiding any negative consequences on one's physical and mental health. This hypothesis integrates three processes: expressing one's emotions, reflective capacities as well as using avoiding strategies. Although grief work has been extensively researched in order to explain people's coping mechanisms, it is also the subject of criticism (Stroebe, 1997). Indeed, the notion lacks a clear definition, it is complex to operationalize in research and has little empirical studies to back the fact that confronting one's grief enables to adapt. Last but not least, it's application lacks universality as it does not exist across all cultures (Stroebe & Schut, 1998) and is experienced differently according to gender (Schut, Stroebe, de Keijser & van den Bout, 1997). Also, the need for confronting one's feelings has not been observed for all bereaved individuals, indeed, avoidance or memory suppression does not necessarily lead to pathological grief. However, those limitations have contributed to the emergence of new theories, which attempt to theorize how individuals adapt to grief.

### **3.4.The dual process model of coping with bereavement**

Since then, grief has been modelled as a dynamic course of action which goes back and forth between processes of restoration and loss as developed in the dual process model of coping with bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). Historically, this model emerged following studies on the loss of a spouse; however, it may apply to all contexts of bereavement. Following the death of a loved one, an individual's activities and feelings may be defined as either loss or restoration. Both categories are required to come to terms with a loss. The loss-oriented coping refers to efforts to resolve the loss experience itself and restoration-oriented coping refers to efforts to master the challenges associated with life-changing circumstances that result from the death. Individuals will oscillate between the two doing their grieving process (See Figure 2). Indeed, the authors developed the idea that oscillation is crucial for a successful adjustment over time. To establish this model, the authors incorporated the limits of the grief work hypothesis as well as the stress appraisal and coping model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980) as well as the stress-responses syndrome model (Horowitz, 1986).

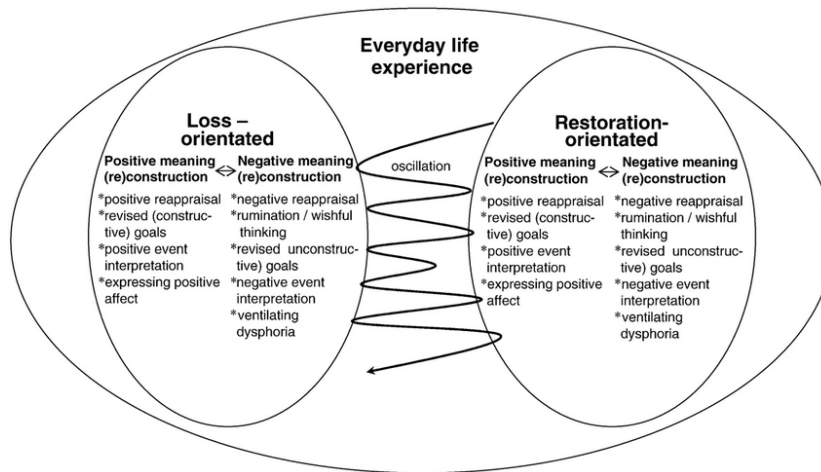


Figure 2: The dual process model of coping with bereavement  
(Stroebe & Schut, 1999)

### 3.5. Continuing bonds theory

According to Klass and colleagues (1996), bereavement consists of renegotiating the meaning of loss over time rather than letting go. As such, bereaved individuals remain connected to the deceased and create dynamic *continuing bonds*, which are viewed as a successful adjustment strategy within the grieving process (Klass, Silverman & Nickman, 1996). Stroebe and Schut (2005) have defined an ongoing bond as “*the presence of an ongoing inner relationship with the deceased person by the bereaved individual*” (p. 477). Although the continuing bond’s theory is well documented as a positive coping strategy, the functions of the bonds are debated in the scientific community. Indeed, some authors argue that they may also be part of maladaptive coping mechanisms during bereavement (Field, Gao, & Paderna, 2005). Indeed, when the connection was maintained with the deceased as an avoidance strategy, then it was perceived as an obstacle to resolving the loss. According to Root and Exline (2011), the role of the continuing bonds as either an adaptive or maladaptive strategy still remains unclear.

### 3.6. Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss

The assumptions of a standardized emotional sequence, experiencing an actual ending to the grief process, as well as experiencing a feeling of detachment from the deceased are also challenged in this model. On top of mobilizing emotions and cognitive processes when grieving, bereaved individuals are exposed to a sense of themselves and their place in the world in this perspective. A process of reconstructing one’s identity is necessary so as to discover new purposes and meaning in life. According to Neimeyer (1998), who founded this theory, re-ordering the world and

one's self in it is key to adapt to loss. Indeed, "*adaptation to loss involves the restoration of coherence to the narrative of one's life*" (Kauffman, 2013, p. 178). Within this theoretical framework, individuals are suggested to elaborate about their experience of loss so as to extract meaning out of it. From our understanding, the dual process model of coping with bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999) integrated this approach into their restoration processes.

### **3.7. Disenfranchised Grief**

Disenfranchised Grief is not a model per say but rather a concept to qualify when "*a person experiences a sense of loss but does not have a socially recognized right, role or capacity to grieve*" (Kamerman, 1991, p. 3). A loss may be characterized as disenfranchised when there is a failure by the society to recognise that the death had been experienced as a significant loss.

## **4. Grieving the loss of a parent during adulthood**

Our research has not led us to finding any specific theories or models that were built from empirical research with adult subjects grieving the loss of a parent. However, we have identified some studies, which have researched this specific type of bereavement for non-clinical populations

According to Hayslip and colleagues (2015), who carried out a study with 400 subjects, middle-aged adults were less affected by their parent's death than young adults. This was often due to the fact that the subject's parents died from unexpected deaths or earlier in time than average. The possibility to prepare one's self to the death of a parent was established as a protective factor in their findings. Also, being a woman or single or separated; qualified as risk factors in developing a grief disorder (Hayslip, Pruett, & Caballero, 2015).

According to Marks and colleagues (2007), the combination of genders of the deceased parent with the child's can create further negative effects. Indeed their results indicated that sons had more negative effects from the loss of their fathers and daughters had more negative effects from the loss of their mothers. Those effects were measured through several dimensions of psychological well being (depressive symptoms, happiness, self-esteem, mastery, and psychological wellness), alcohol abuse and physical health (Marks, Jun & Song, 2007). However, other studies suggest that adult children suffer more from the loss of their mothers than their fathers,



possibly due to their nurturing caretaker role (Horowitz et al., 1984; Umberson & Chen, 1994). According to Leopold and Lechner (2015), “*there is a lack of longitudinal research into gender differences as daughters and sons move through different stages of filial bereavement, including anticipation of and adaptation to the loss of mothers and fathers.*” (Leopold & Lechner, 2015, p. 749). These authors carried out a comprehensive investigation to understand the moderating effects of gender and age on the well being of adult children who experienced the loss of a parent. Their results confirmed that the impact of losing a parent on an individual’s life satisfaction is a “*highly gender and age-dependant process*” (p. 755). Looking at the age factor, the death of the first parent at an adult child’s younger age had more negative effects on individuals’ life satisfaction than on those who lost their parents at a later stage of their adulthood. To provide more details on what the authors consider to be a younger and older age, they referred to the life course perspective concept of *off time* and *on time* to describe the age at which individuals lose their parents (Elder, 1977). For instance the age of 30 years old qualified as an off time, when the age of 46 years old qualified as an on time age. The age effects were similar for sons and daughters. Furthermore, their findings confirmed the existence of a gender gap when studying the moderating role of gender. Daughters had twice as much decline of life satisfaction when losing a mother than sons. The results were statistically significant for the year before the loss, the year after the loss and mildly significant for a period of time of up to five years following the loss of a mother. However, their results did not indicate any significant negative effects on life satisfaction for sons having lost a father. Last but not least, their results indicated that daughters who lost their mothers off time demonstrated the “*deepest drops*” in life satisfaction (Leopold & Lechner, 2015, p. 757). Their findings corroborate Hayslip and colleagues (2015) results’ on both the age and gender factors.

Evidently further research is required in order to understand the impact of parental loss on adult subjects, specifically the mitigating and accelerating factors and how they interact on and with an individual’s health and well being.

## **RESEARCH PARADIGM**

The scientific community has established several theories on bereavement and conceptualized them into models, however we found little research analysing the experience of non-clinical patients losing their parents in their adulthood. With that in mind, it seemed appropriate to use the inductive approach and to start from the field to collect data, in order to see if our results concur with our findings in the literature. We have been attentive to all stages of this research process, which will be described later on in detail. As this is an inductive study, there are no formal hypotheses, however we designed five questions to guide the exploration process for this particular type of bereavement:

- What is the subjective experience of the adult child?
- Are there feelings of vulnerability? And if so, how do the participants describe those experiences?
- What type of coping mechanisms do people develop?
- Are there any health implications?
- Do people come to terms with this loss? If so, how?

By opting for a bottom-up approach, we intended to start from specific observations from the data collected to develop broader generalizations that might enable us to build bridges with the theories and previous findings presented in the literature review.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this methodological section, we will provide a description of the research process. First, we will explain why we opted for a qualitative approach for this study. Following that brief introduction, we will describe the procedure we carried out, by providing information on the participants, the interview process, the data collection tool and the data analysis before concluding with the ethical considerations.

### **1. Why a qualitative approach?**

Qualitative methods are generally used when trying to better understand people's experiences, through the meaning, attitudes or perspectives that individuals develop when confronted to specific events. Applying a qualitative analysis seemed adequate with regards to our study, as there is little prior information or knowledge

about this particular field (Hammarberg, 2016). Also, this method provides some flexibility as further research questions, new hypotheses, data collection methods and tools may be solicited during its deployment, which is also an element that was required for this type of exploratory study (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

## **2.Data collection**

### **2.1.Recruitment**

Participants were recruited by word of mouth through the researcher's network. Recruiting participants took six weeks. Time was required for contacts in the researcher's network to discuss the study with their own friends and colleagues internationally as participants had to speak English. Several criteria were mandatory in order to be eligible to participate. Subjects had to be over eighteen years old, fluent in English, to have lost a or both of their parents in their adulthood. A six month time gap since the loss was mandatory in order to ensure that subjects were not in an acute phase of grief. Potential participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the study with elements pertaining to the confidentiality, data processing as well as practical information such as the set up and the duration of the interview. Individuals who agreed to participate were provided a consent form (Appendix B) and returned those signed to the researcher. Interview dates were determined via email exchanges and phone calls. Three participants thanked the interviewer for addressing this topic of interest in the study.

### **2.2.Participants**

A total of ten subjects participated in full to the process. The group of people interviewed was composed of eight women and two men, all Caucasians and from European decent. Participants who had dual nationalities always had at least one European nationality (Table 1).

N°	Age (at interview)	Gender	Nationality	In a relationship	Children
1	68	F	British	Yes	Yes
2	34	F	Filipina/French	Yes	Yes
3	34	M	French	Yes	No
4	57	M	New Zealand/Serbian	Yes	Yes
5	67	F	British	Yes	Yes
6	66	F	Irish	Yes	Yes
7	35	F	French	No	No
8	69	F	Canadian/French/Irish	Yes	Yes
9	70	F	French	Yes	Yes
10	33	F	French	Yes	No

Table 1: Overview of participant's profiles

As this is an exploratory study, we wished to have a heterogeneous group in terms of the age at which the participants lost a or both their parents. This criterion was successfully met with participant's ages ranging from 17 to 65 years old when they experienced the loss of a parent. According to the results of Leopold and Lechner's (2015) study, three participants qualify as having lost a parent *off time* and seven lost both parents *on time* (p 757.). Seven subjects lost both parents; three lost one of their parents. With regards to the latter group, all the participants had lost their fathers. The table below provides a sense of time since the participant's parental loss (Table 2).

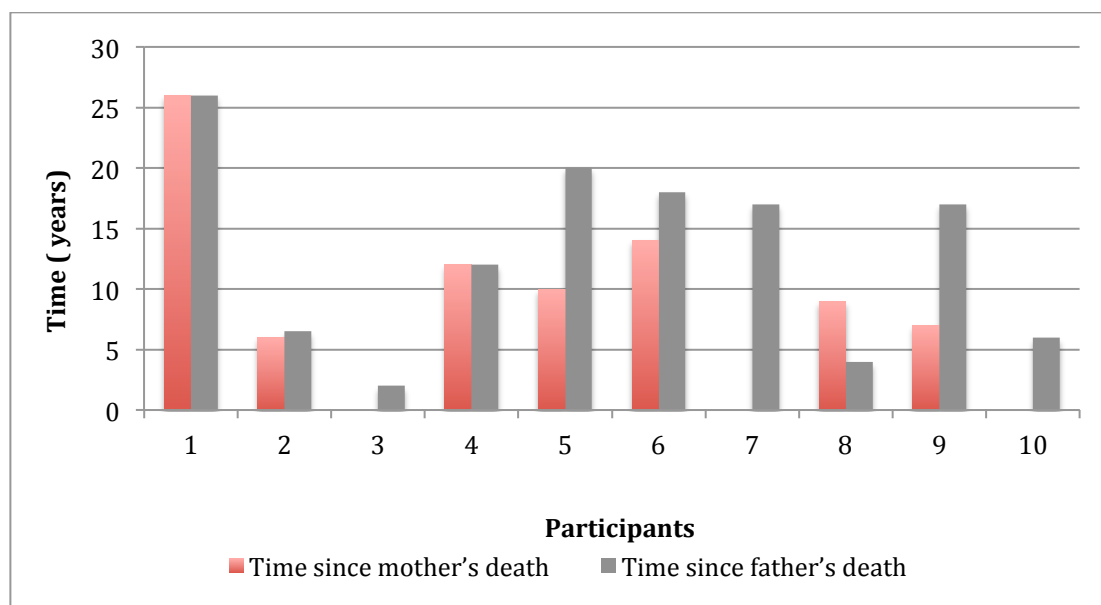


Table 2: Providing a timeframe for the participant's parental losses

Also, participants filled out a questionnaire to provide us with additional background information. The content of the questionnaire is detailed in the data tool collection section below (Section 3.3, p. 25).

Also, we wished to get a sense of the quality of the relationships between the subjects interviewed and their deceased parents using a clinical tool. Which brought us to use the *Quality of the Relationship Inventory for Bereavement* (QRI-B; Bottomley, Smigelsky, Floyd & Neimeyer, 2017); it provides two scales assessing *closeness* and *conflict* in the relationship (See section 3.3.1 for details on the questionnaire, p.26). Out of the seven participants who lost their mothers, six of them demonstrated a close relationship above the QRI-B closeness average. Only one of them had a high conflict score with their mother on the conflict dimension (Table 3). Out of the ten participants who lost their fathers, half of them had high scores for the closeness dimension and nine participants had above average scores on the conflict dimension (Table 4). The results are also available in a numerical format (Appendix C).

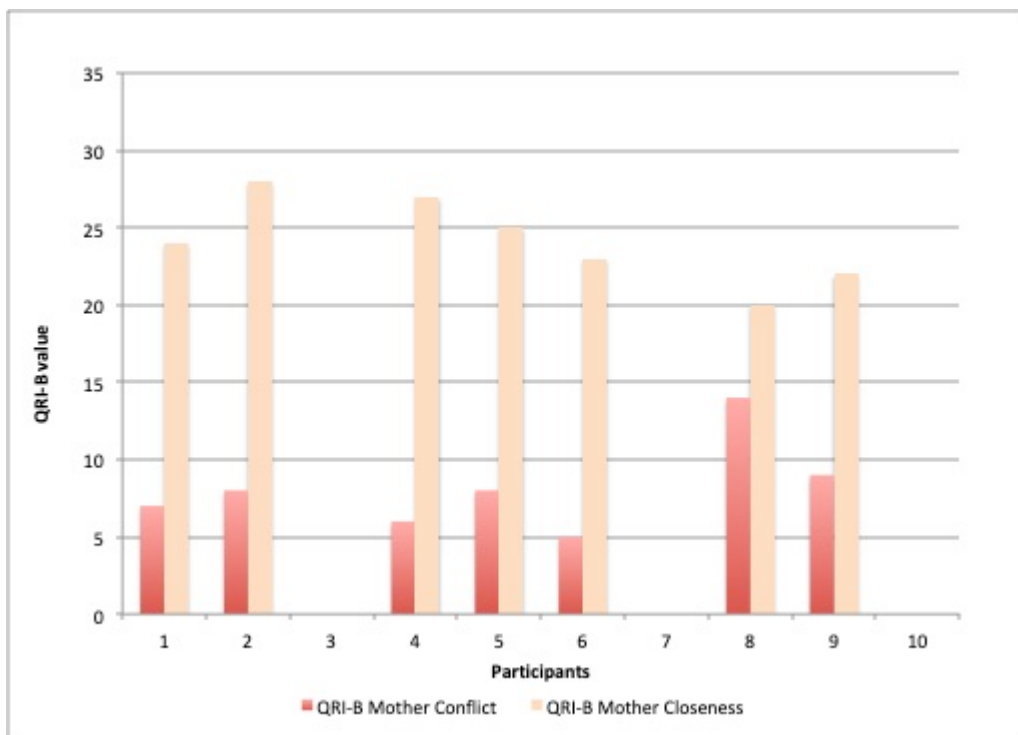


Table 3: Results for QRI-B (Mothers)

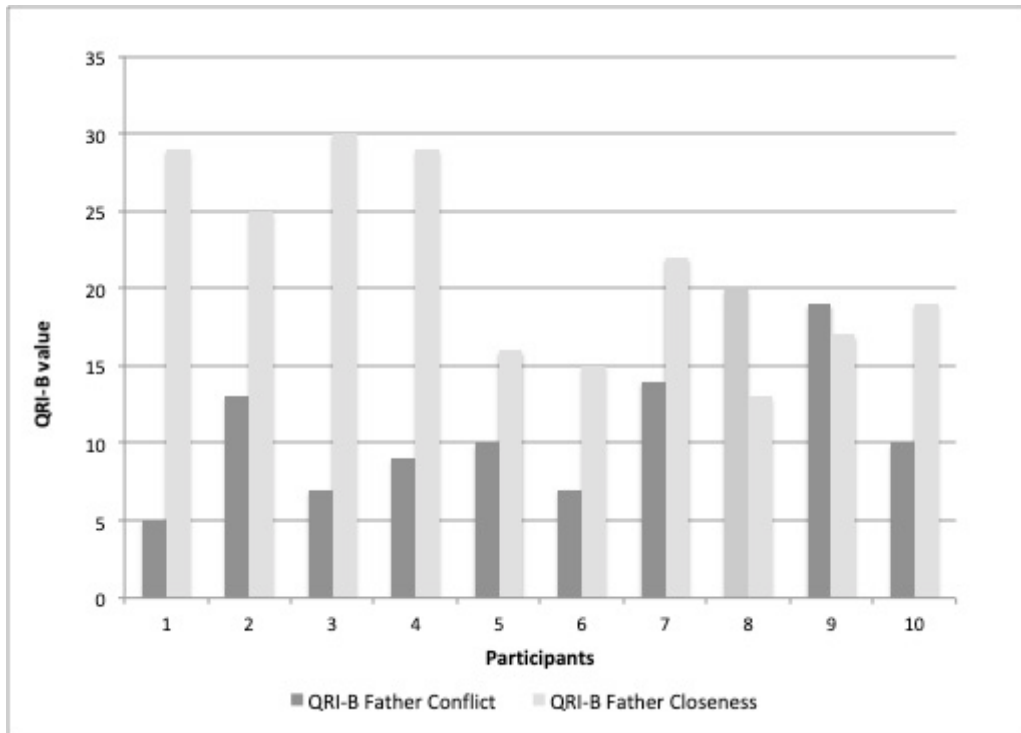


Table 4: Results for QRI-B (Fathers)

In order to facilitate the understanding of the subsequent analysis, it seemed necessary to provide a brief overview of participants, as well as a bit of context about the loss of their parents (Appendix D).

### 2.3.Set-up

As all the interviewees live abroad, the set up of the interviews were done according to their wishes and technical possibilities. Out of the ten participants, seven agreed to carry the interview over the Internet using applications such as Skype and WhatsApp. Within this group, one participant spontaneously set up the video, whereas all the others requested not to have the video switched on. The three remaining interviews were conducted over the phone.

### 2.4.Process

The interviews began with a reminder of the purpose of the study as well as general instructions. As the nature of the study is a sensitive topic that could trigger emotions, participants were notified, at the beginning of the process that they were to set the pace of the interview and that breaks could be taken at any time required. The main purpose of the interviewer was to promote the speech production of the speaker, while showing evidence of a “non-judgmental” and “active listening” (Kvale &

Brinkmann, 2009, p 138). During the course of the interview, some participants asked clarifications on questions, the interviewer deliberately repeated the question and invited the participants to respond, as they felt best suited. At the end of the interview, the participants were warmly thanked and informed that they would receive a link to the study once the supervisors approved the final draft. All the participants went through the full interview process by answering all the questions. None of them withdraw their consent. Interviewers have a responsibility to both manage being in the present moment with participants during the interactional event (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interviewer's subjective experience was collected in a logbook (Appendix E), which we will discuss in more detail in the ethical considerations section (Section 6, p. 28).

The ten participants that partook in the interview process also agreed to fill out a questionnaire following the completion of the interview. All the questions were answered in full to the best of their knowledge after the interview, to limit any induced suggestions to their original answers. The questionnaire was created using the Google form application; a template of the document is available for review (Appendix G). Considering participants had already been generous in providing some time for the interview process, we constructed a relatively short questionnaire that would not take more than five to ten minutes to fill out. It consisted of 78 to 91 questions based on the participant's situation of having lost either one or both parents. Apart from two introductory questions, all the other ones were closed questions measured with two types of categorical scales of Likert.

## **2.5. Transcriptions**

The voice recordings of the ten interviews were all transcribed, in full respect of each speaker's discourse. The transcription is a necessary and essential step for two reasons. First, it allows building a data set that can be subsequently analysed. Secondly, it enables the researcher to familiarize herself with the discourse of the interviewees so as to try to capture how they experienced those events and their representations. We applied the coding standards from Azevedo and colleagues (2017) in order to account in writing for certain linguistic and communicative peculiarities. An open source HTML 5 application called Otranscribe was used to facilitate the transcription process (Appendix F1 to F10).

### **3.Data collection tool**

In the field of qualitative research, several tools may be considered to collect data. Considering the exploratory context of this study as well as its aim, conducting semi-structured interviews seemed the most appropriate course of action.

#### **3.1.Semi-structured interview**

The semi-structured interview is a tool that focuses on the participant's discourse as well as on the way people described their personal thoughts and experiences. Its specificity lies in the fact that the way the researcher carries out the interview is of great importance; as he or she is, required to intervene as little as possible so as to not bias the participants discourse, while intelligently guiding the individual so as to collect the data on the topics of interest. Indeed, the interviewer has "*to carry and be carried*" (Hartmann, 2016). Researchers have to demonstrate respect and openness even when their opinions differ from the interviewee's ones. Participants should be able to share their point of view, personal thoughts as well as express themselves freely (Del Rio Carral, 2017). In the context of this study, the use of the semi-structured interviews seemed relevant to answer our research question. Indeed, this data collection tool enables to capture subjective experiences, in an intimate setting; free from external influences (Blanchet & Gotman, 2007).

#### **3.2.Interview canvas**

Having a canvas for the interviewer is quintessential to carry out the semi-structured interview as it allows the researcher to adapt to the participant's speech without losing the thread and the purpose of the study. The supervising team validated the canvas after providing some suggestions (Appendix G). A general introduction kicked off the interview by asking the participants to present themselves, to detail the loss or losses they experienced as well as the circumstances of those events. Then the core part of the interview relied on questions that were elaborated around thirteen thematic axes. The themes were open enough but made sure to address what the study investigates (Blanchet & Gotman, 2007). Finally, the subjects were asked general questions pertaining to recommendations and the interview process so as to conclude the process. A table below provides the links between the main themes investigated and the questions directed towards the participants (Table 5).



Questions	Theme
7. Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, was it your case?	Vulnerability
8. Did this event change you as a person? Could you explain why?	Identity
9. Did you feel that it was difficult to open up, talk about your grief, about your difficulties when you lost your parent?	Social recognition of grief
12. In your opinion, is there something special that happens when you lose a parent?	Generational shift
13. Have you made any sense or found any meaning in your parent's death?	Meaning building
14. Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your parent? If so, how so? Do you think it helps you to cope or, on the contrary, does it make it more difficult to move on?	Ongoing bond
15. Do you think that your view on losing your parent has changed over time?	Changes in personal narratives
16. Did you come to terms with losing your parent? (If answered yes: what helped you to overcome this experience? Where did you find support? If answered no: could you describe what was hard for you to come to terms with?)	Coming to terms & Coping mechanisms
17. Did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since you came to terms with losing your parent?	Health & well-being

Table 5: Main themes researched through interview questions

### 3.3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was built in three sections. First there were eleven introductory questions to gather general information about the participants. The second part consisted of the *Quality of Relationships Inventory, the Bereavement Version* (QRI-B) (Bottomley et al., 2017) that consisted of thirteen questions for each parent, mother and father. Participants were instructed to leave the question unanswered depending on which parent they had lost. The third part of the questionnaire was based on Fonagy and colleagues (2017) fifty-four-item version of the *Reflective Functioning Questionnaire* (RFQ), a recently developed, empirically

validated self-report measure of mentalizing for clinical populations (Fonagy, Luyten, Moulton-Perkins, Lee, Warren, Howard, & Lowyck, 2017). We decided not to use the results of the RFQ, as they were inconclusive due to the small size of our community-based sample.

### 3.3.1. *Quality of Relationships Inventory, the Bereavement Version (QRI-B)*

The *Quality of Relationships Inventory, the Bereavement Version (QRI-B)* is a thirteen item self-report instrument that assesses the pre-death relationship quality between a bereaved and the person who died. It is a recently developed tool, empirically validated (Bottomley et al., 2017). The instrument provides two scales assessing the relationship over the dimension of closeness and conflict. Our purpose in using this tool was to get a sense of the relationship between the participant and their parents before they died.

The data for the QRI-B questions were transferred and analysed via a Google spread sheet in order to calculate the two dimensions of Closeness and Conflict for each parent for which the table below provides descriptive statistics. The authors did not provide an official scale to interpret the results; therefore we qualified the scores above the average mean as high by default (Table 6).

	Items	Minimum	Maximum	M (SD)	$\alpha$
<b>Model 2</b>					
Closeness	13	13.00	52.00	32.28 (11.77)	.96
Conflict	10	10.00	40.00	14.43 (5.93)	.89
<b>Final model (QRI-B)</b>					
Closeness	8	8.00	32.00	21.00 (7.76)	.95
Conflict	5	5.00	20.00	6.96 (3.11)	.88

Note. QRI-B = Quality of Relationships Inventory–Bereavement version.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Two Proposed QRI Subscales (Bottomley, Smigelsky, Floyd & Neimeyer, 2017, p. 9).

The methodology of the study remains purely qualitative, as there were no formal analyses performed from the content of the questionnaire. Indeed, the size of the sample was too small to investigate any data triangulations. Only the answers of the QRI-B were used in a descriptive manner to contextualize the participant’s relationships during the qualitative analysis.

## **4.Data analysis tool**

### **4.1.The tool: Atlas.ti**

The data from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using the computer program Atlas.ti. The transcriptions were uploaded into the program, which was then used to facilitate the thematic analysis. The software was of great help in providing tools to select and organize the content by themes and sub-themes, referred to as code groups and codes in the program. The findings could therefore be weighed, visualized and evaluated.

### **4.2.Thematic analysis**

We began the analysis of the interviews only once all the interviews had taken place in order to minimize any confirmation bias. The primary data were first all read once in order for the researcher to get a first sense of the material. Then, each interview was worked on in depth, respecting the order in which they took place to facilitate the organization; this stage generated a preliminary list of codes. Another round of reading the interviews and selecting quotes and attributing the codes was carried out to be as thorough as possible. The next stage focused on creating code groups in order to organize the codes into themes so as to establish a “*framework of thematic ideas about it*” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 42).

## **5.Quality criteria**

To carry out this thematic analysis, we based ourselves on the quality criteria of Bardin (1977). The criteria of mutual exclusion and homogeneity have been respected. Also, careful attention was paid to make sure no overlap between themes and sub-themes occurred. Each theme was established and reflected upon careful consideration on the basis of the transcript, so the element of relevance has, in our opinion, been respected. All the themes and sub-themes were thought individually and then discussed during a meeting with the study supervisors to allow a good fidelity as well as to establish their final titles. Considering the large number of themes found and their relevance, we consider that the productivity criterion has been duly respected.

## **6. Ethical considerations**

Santiago-Delefosse (2002) documented that researchers and participants co-construct a better understanding of the researched phenomenon through their dialectical exchange. Thus, despite the measures taken to limit bias, the researcher's subjectivity and perception of the world is indirectly present in this piece of work. Also, the researcher's reactions during the interview may have contributed to influence the responses given by the participants (Dépelteau, 2000). Also, Pascal Antoine (2017) recommends carrying interpretations considering the participants' discourse, but also the researcher's intentions, the role played by the context of production of the documents, as well as the context of its interpretation. Indeed, expectations as well as presuppositions are potential biases that may contaminate qualitative studies. The researcher tried to control these biases as much as possible and to limit their impact, by making sure to interpret the content in itself rather than incorporate what one might believe it to mean (Santiago-Delefosse & Del Rio Carral, 2017). For this particular reason, a logbook of the interviews was kept (Appendix E) in order to record the researcher's impressions and experience and so as to limit any potential bias. This activity also enabled the possibility to carry adjustments from one interview to the next by incorporating the ongoing learning into the process of conducting the interviews. Last but not least, with such a sensitive topic, the researcher respected each participant needs and emotions during the process.

## **RESULTS**

After scrupulously carrying out all the necessary stages of the thematic analysis, ninety-three sub-themes were identified and then organized across seventeen themes. We deliberately remained close to the discourse of the participants in elaborating the titles of the sub-themes. A table is available recapitulating all the themes, sub-themes as well as the participant's quotes (Appendix I).

### **1. Entertaining the notion of death**

The first theme relates to how people get familiarized with the notion of death and mortality through the experience of losing their parents. This category is constructed from the extraction of four sub-themes: building experience with death, generational awareness, imagining death and a reenactment process.

## **1.1. Building experience with death**

Losing a parent is an experience that sheds light on the fact that humans are mortal and that death exists *“it's just like going to a restaurant with death, it's like opening the subject, it's time to talk about it now man”* (Participant 3, line 139). It is an opportunity to build experience with the dealings of death *“I am going to take with me some of the things I learnt from being with people I love who have died”* (Participant 5, lines 88-90). Having that experience enables people to be more sensitive and comforting when exposed to bereaved individuals:

*“It depends on the age of the person you are talking to. If you are talking to a younger generation who has not experienced loss then yes they think your parents are going to reach a certain age and they are going to die. That's a lack of experience. For people of your own age who have already experienced loss then I think there is a lot more understanding and sharing of comfort in that age group”* (Participant 6, lines 263-267).

Out of the total sample, seven participants had a discourse that fitted in this sub-theme.

## **1.2. Generational awareness**

Also, losing one's parents exposes individuals to the fact that all people must die one day including one's self *“It is something you have to integrate in your life, that it will happen to all of us and that at some stage we will go too”* (Participant 6, lines 360-362). Participants mentioned that something special happens when you lose your second parent, there is a full realization that they are now orphans and that they are the next generation to go *“Yes, because you realize that you are next, when your second parent dies, you are an orphan and then you are next on the line, they are not the older generation in line anymore, it's you or it's me”* (Participant 8, lines 105-107). The death of a parent provides an awareness to both the generation line as well as how much time they have left before they die *“All that brings it home to you that you are next in line. So, there is an awareness of perhaps the shortness of the passage that is left to live”* (Participant 1, 68-69). Also, there were references to the fact that there is something that passes down to the next generation, from parents to children that become parents of their own and transmit something of their parents to their children. An intergenerational transmission *“I think it's because of our roots. We come from them and what we give to our own children comes from them. So they are part of*

us.” (Participant 9, lines 145-146). Furthermore, the death of the parents also changes the children’s perception of them as adults *“I sort of saw them as adults for the first time”* (Participant 8, line 109). Out of the total sample, six participants had a discourse that fitted into this sub-theme, which was one of the most prolific with a total of 18 quotes identified. Those candidates happened to be the people who had lost both their parents from their forties and onwards.

### **1.3.Imagining death**

Having sense of one’s own mortality also opened up the possibility for one of the participant to imagine her own death *“so I cling to that story to that sort of belief that at the moment of going it's an experience that you will see the people you have loved very closely in your life”* (Participant 6, lines 242-244).

### **1.4.Reenactment process**

Two participants had several difficult experiences with the loss of loved ones in their families before losing their parents. From their discourse, new grief such as the death of their parents triggered previous feelings of grief for other loved ones *“it's all that re-visiting with death, every time you revisit previous deaths and it depends how close you were to what impact it had on you.”* (Participant 5, lines 88-90); *“even my sister it's still a very deep wound for all of the family in fact, a very very deep wound”* (Participant 6, lines 296-297). Also, there was one mention of the fact that when losing the last parent alive, there was a re-confrontation to the feeling of loss for the first parent, as this one was still present in conversations and sharing of memories while the last parent was still alive *“And I lost my father again when mum died because we use to talk about dad a lot”* (Participant 5, line 69).

## **2.Identity**

During the interviews, the impact of the loss of one’s parents was observed to impact the participant’s identity in three manners: in building strength, developing leadership skills and new responsibilities and by inducing personal change.

### **2.1.Building strength**

Out of the sample, nine participants referred to the fact that losing one or both of their parents made them feel stronger: *“So, funnily enough, I think I was very strong at that stage”* (Participant 1, lines 33-34); *“Maybe stronger, it made me start to really count on myself and not on everybody else”* (Participant 2, line 88); *“you need*

*to be very strong and like, I think I became, I don't know if I became an adult at this time but I was surprised by myself"* (Participant 10, lines 114-117).

## **2.2. Leadership and new responsibilities**

Participants were confronted with the taking on of new responsibilities with regards to administrative decisions *"Just the day after he died, yeah, I was able to decide, because my mother and my brother did not really decide, I decided for them so I think I, yeah I felt like more adult"* (Participant 10, lines 137-138). New roles were taken on by some of the participants when their parent died *"think I took a lead role in her departure"* (Participant 1, lines 23-24). Also, new leadership roles were taken on following the death of the parent *"I remember feeling I needed to be strong now and you know to take the place of my mother in the family, because I am the eldest now of our family"* (Participant 6, line 77). Last but not least, the three participants who lost one parent carried out a new role in taking care of their remaining parent *"I felt vulnerable but at the same time we agreed with my father that I would be strong and that I had to take care of the family"* (Participant 3, line 59).

## **2.3. Personal change**

Nine participants reported having personally changed after losing a parent. They reported having become more calm, sensitive and kinder to others *"I feel that I am a different person, I see life in a different way, I talk to people in a different way, there is definitely something that has changed"* (Participant 3, lines 80-81); *"I think it made me much more sensitive, hmm, I think I became much more aware of all she had brought me in my life and what I wanted to give to my own children"* (Participant 6, lines 89-91). Also, one participant acknowledged that the loss of her father made her who she is today and that this event is part of her personal story and shaped her identity *"Yes definitely, at the beginning it's a nightmare and then you understand it happens for a reason and you are better and after you understand that you are the person you are now because you lost that father"* (Participant 7, lines 242-244).

## **3. Positive feelings**

Although, people qualified their experiences of losing their parents as difficult, both gratitude and relief were expressed as positive feelings.

### **3.1. Gratitude**

Two types of gratitude were expressed: gratitude towards life and gratitude towards their parents.

#### ***3.1.1. Gratitude towards life***

Three participants experienced feelings of gratitude towards life in having lost parents at a later stage in life and having been able to know their parents for a long time “*I was unbelievably fortunate that I lost them as such a late age in their life and mine so being anything*” (Participant 4, lines 376-377). Also subjects were thankful about the circumstances surrounding the death of their parents, especially when they were fast and painless “*I was lucky it was not an illness that dragged on, it was better that it happened quickly for her and for my father well*” (Participant 8, lines 53-54).

#### ***3.1.2. Gratitude towards parents***

During the interviews, three participants took the opportunity to express their feelings of gratitude and a sense of respect towards their deceased parents “*For this I am eternally grateful to them, eternally grateful that they never interfered in my choices in any shape or form*” (Participant 4, lines 316-317).

### **3.2. Relief**

Three types of relief were experienced by the subjects: a reassurance knowing that death provided the end of the parent’s suffering, a comfort to know that the quality of life of the remaining parent would improve and also the consolation of no longer receiving any bad news with regards to their parents dying.

#### ***3.2.1. An end to suffering***

Seven participants expressed a sense of relief when death took away their parent as it put an end to their physical and mental suffering caused by their illnesses “*in some ways it was of course almost a blessing when dad died because you know he stumbled on for another twelve months and not enjoy it at all*” (Participant 5, lines 175-176); “*at the end we were feeding him but he had his mind completely (...) so I think to a certain extent there was a certain relief that he was not suffering anymore*” (Participant 6, lines 149-151).



### **3.2.2. For the life of the remaining parent**

For two participants, the loss of their first parent, both their fathers came as a relief to them with regards to the quality of life of their remaining parent. Indeed, their mother's had become their life partners caregivers *"there was a certain relief that he was not suffering anymore and that the last fifteen years were finished and that my mother might be able to have some sort of a quality of life"* (Participant 6, lines 150-152).

### **3.2.3. No more hospital phone calls**

One participant expressed a sense of relief in being over with dealing with the anxiety of receiving bad news about her parents' death over the phone:

*"We call it in Spanish "Consuelo de bobo" which is a stupid consolation which is well at least I don't need to have that phone call in the middle of the night to say that mum has been rushed to the hospital because I already had it for both. At least, I am done with it you know. I don't have to worry anymore"* (Participant 2, lines 231-234).

## **4. Negative feelings**

During the interview process, all the participants within the sample expressed negative feelings about losing their parents. Those emotions included loneliness, sadness, shock, regret, loss, guilt, as well as feeling lost.

### **4.1. Loneliness**

Within this fourth theme, the most recurrent sub-theme was loneliness. Participants expressed feeling socially isolated as well as having a missing part within themselves, which caused them to experience loneliness. *"It was difficult because of this feeling of absence, this feeling of being a little bit like alone, it was difficult because I felt a lot of love."* (Participant 3, lines 37-38).

### **4.2. Sadness**

Participants expressed feelings of immense sadness *"You are never prepared, it's at the same time a terrible shock and an immense sadness"* (Participant 6, lines 42-43); *"I think I was only sad and with my very close friends and with myself actually (expires strongly)"* (Participant 7, lines 100-101). One participant mentioned her need to cry to relieve herself *"I had moments like this where I would cry driving in the car"*

*on my own, never in front of my children, but driving on my own in the car”* (Participant 1, lines 65-66).

### **4.3.Shock**

Participants reported feeling shocked when the loss of their parents occurred even when they might have been prepared for the eventuality“ *I fell down and afterwards I realized that. But yes, it was a shock for me anyway, even if I had been waiting for it”* (Participant 9, lines 37-38).

### **4.4.Regret**

Regret occurred both at the time of death of the parent and also appears later in the bereavement process, in situations where children would have wished to share an emotion or an experience with their missing parent. Also, unfinished business with the deceased was also a source of regret.

#### ***4.4.1.Deceased missing out on family moments***

Six participants expressed regret on not being able to share their feelings, experiences, or introducing their children to the deceased “*you feel sad that your parents are not there to enjoy our kids”* (Participant 4, line 221); “*I think of my parents and I know they would have loved the house, they would have loved to come there”* (Participant 9, lines 158-159).

#### ***4.4.2.Unfinished communication with the deceased***

Four participants mentioned feeling regret with regards to conversations they retrospectively wish they might have had with their parents “*I wish I knew that person now, I wish I could have some understanding of life, some discussions about life but maybe he could not do that”* (Participant 7, lines 144-145).

### **4.5.Loss**

Two participants described feelings of loss “*It does not matter at what age you lose the people you love, there is a big loss to it”* (Participant 5, lines 62-63). Also, three participants shared that their feelings of loss were accentuated by seeing their own children missing their grandparents “*It makes me see my parents through my sons eyes. It is a different way at looking at people as they see your parents as grandparents.”* (Participant 8, line 225).

## **4.6. Guilt**

Two participants expressed feelings of guilt towards their parents, feeling that they could have done more for them when they were still alive *“I felt guilty because I yeah did not go home more often and so now I try to go home more often just to check that everything is okay”* (Participant 10, line 283-284) as well as when they died:

*“So she took ten days to die, which was very hard and as a doctor I felt we should be able to do things much better. My sister and I have done a lot of terminal care work and I still did not think we had done enough to help her to die with dignity.”* (Participant 5, lines 54-58).

## **4.7. Lost**

One participant mentioned feeling lost when his father died *“It was someone that I really trusted and someone that inspired me so even though I was preparing for that chapter of course the first emotion was feeling a bit lost”* (Participant 3, lines 39-41).

## **5. Vulnerability**

The fifth theme identified was vulnerability. It was enquired about upfront through a question in the interview process *“Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, was it your case?”* (See Appendix G, question 7) for which the results are presented in the sub-theme to be or not to be vulnerable. Also, vulnerability was subtly observed in the participants’ discourses as the feeling of being exposed, by missing emotional support and affection, by not having a family of their own, by feeling unprepared, as well as having their identity disrupted.

### **5.1. To be or not to be vulnerable?**

Within the sample, seven participants expressed that they did not feel vulnerable following the death of a parent, thanks to the support of their life partners and colleagues *“I felt vulnerable but at the same time we agreed with my father that I would be strong and that I had to take care of the family”* (Participant 3, lines 58-59); thanks to their geographical and emotional independence *“And we did not live together for a very long time so that all left relatively minor impact, let's put it this way”* (Participant 4, lines 126-127) or because they felt that they were not aloud *“I was not vulnerable because I was not allowed to be vulnerable, so I got back home and I was like okay let's go, I have to support my mother, to be there for my brother”*

(Participant 7, lines 62-64). On the other hand, three participants stated that they had felt vulnerable when losing their parents *“I suppose there is a vulnerability on two fronts. As a daughter and as a doctor”* (Participant 5, line 65);

*“When you are going through it, you feel vulnerable, it's a terrible experience of, hmm, suffering and waiting for it to happen and wanting for it to happen as you don't know how long you are going to be able to deal with the tension and the fear and when it does happen, there is the shock of it all happening”* (Participant 6, lines 80-83).

## **5.2. Feeling exposed**

A participant related his bereavement experience as lacking intimacy due to the heavy administrative handling that he had to carry out, he described feeling exposed:

*“I had to send so many letters to so many institutions and government bodies, I had the feeling that the thing was becoming public, I had a lot of support from my friends and families. This also made it very public. I had a lot of support from my friends and families which also made it very public”* (Participant 3, lines 83-88).

## **5.3. Missing emotional support and affection**

A participant expressed feeling sad not to have received the help and emotional support from her mother while raising her children *“with my own family and children that I did not have her to help me. So yes, in that respect there was a definite sadness that I did not have the possibility of her confidence and help”* (Participant 1, lines 114-116). Another participant shared the fact that she missed the validation that she received from her parents *“I miss their approval and their pride”* (Participant 2, line 226); as well as their physical embrace *“You know that is what I miss is that part. Being cuddled”* (Participant 2, lines 220-221).

## **5.4. Not having one's own family**

A participant mentioned that she felt vulnerable when she lost her father as she had not yet built a family of her own:

*“And for me it was like too early because I had not built my family yet and you know for those family celebrations, Christmas is with my parents and my brother, when you*

*are older or when you have already your own family, you have also, it's a bit ridiculous but it's the way I see it, you have your own Christmas tree, your own family celebrations but with the family you built actually.*" (Participant 10, lines 92-98).

## **5.5.Lack of preparation to parent's death**

Three participants detailed how they felt that they lacked preparation to face the death of their parents, whether the outcome was unexpected *"You could see it was really heavy so ok we were not expecting, we thought that she was going through a hard period but we did not expect that she would die from it"* (Participants 2, lines 49-51); or expected *"I was expecting it but you are never prepared for the death of your parent. You are never prepared, it's at the same time a terrible shock and an immense sadness"* (Participant 6, lines 42-43).

## **5.6.Identity disruption**

### ***5.6.1.Loss of place in the world***

Two participants expressed the feeling of having lost their place in the world following the death of their parents. Indeed, while their parents were still alive they could be both adults and children *"I miss him a lot also, he was someone who allowed me to be an adult and someone who allowed me to be a child"* (Participant 3, lines 81-82).

### ***5.6.2.Loss of identity***

Last but not least, five participants recognized a vulnerability in the sense of having lost a part of their identity *"of course you need to grow up, I guess everybody says that but you have more questions about your own identity, your own personality, your own family, who you are"* (Participant 7, lines 165-166); *"as I said it was perhaps more of a shock because of the circumstances of my mother's death and also because we were like, it was sort of like a part of me went away"* (Participant 8, lines 85-86); *"all the history is like gone with him"* (Participant 10, line 81).

## **6.A lonely process**

Participants conveyed a sense of loneliness in the process of grieving one's parents. We identified six sub-themes: protecting children from grief, lack of social recognition and support, grieving a private affair, boys will be boys, lack of spiritual discussions and an appreciation for the interview process.

## **6.1. Protecting children from grief**

Half of the participants, all female indicated that it was important for them to not display their grief or sadness in front of their children in an effort to protect their innocence and youth *“the process of growing older as we are now experiencing, I don't want my children to be aware of that because I want my children to experience their lives as fully and, young as they are today”* (Participant 6, lines 91-93). Last but not least, one of the participants expressed the paradox of her behaviour as she expressed that children could also play a role in relieving the grief process *“ being the senior generation as you have to comfort the ones below you and they should not have to be comforting you. That is silly because why would not they want to comfort you.”* (Participant 5, lines 255-256).

## **6.2. Lack of social recognition and support**

Three participants expressed that the environments they evolved in as well as society more generally failed to recognize their individual experience and to provide them with adequate support. Indeed, either the administrative requirements covered up the emotional experience *“Nobody asked me about my grief”* (Participant 2, line 98). Or the professional obligations were as such that there was no space to share with colleagues *“I was traveling back on the plane, he already had passed away and you back here and nobody gives a damn about how you feel or about this or that so I just had to continue as if nothing happened”* (Participant 4, lines 430-433). Also a participant explained that she did not know to whom to turn to exchange about her bereavement *“Talk to whom (forced laugh)”* (Participant 9, line 89). Also, in the case of two participants who lost a parent before reaching the age of thirty years old, friends were not helpful, probably due to a lack of experience with death *“I did not find it difficult at the time, I think it's more the people around you, who do not know how to discuss this kind of topic with you, I mean they are like gênés (embarrassed in French)”* (Participant 10, lines 157-159);

## **6.3. Grieving a private affair**

One participant expressed that age could be a factor explaining that mature people wish to grieve discreetly:

*“Yes, discreet, private, yes, you do not want to show your emotions to everybody either hmm, when you are a certain age, maybe when you are twenty years but when you are at a certain age as I was you have to put a face to a certain extent and let*

*people understand that you are coping with the grief that you are going through.*"(Participant 6, lines 136-139).

#### **6.4.Boys will be boys: gender stereotypes**

One of the male participants underlined the role of culture and gender on how emotions are handled which therefore impacted on the way he grieved *"You know especially where I come from, male kids are encouraged into less, you are expected to shake it off and move on so you don't dwell too much."* (Participant 4, lines 83-84)

#### **6.5.Lack of spiritual discussions**

A participant evoked how he felt there had been a lack of communication within the family on how people processed their feelings as well as sharing thoughts about spirituality *"we never talked with the whole family about emotions and spirituality and beliefs. This is weird"* (Participant 3, lines 161-162).

#### **6.6.Appreciation for the interview process**

Two participants were thankful for the process of sharing their personal stories of loss. They mentioned they had little possibilities to address it in their daily lives, which contributes to understanding grief as a lonely process *"No it is actually the first time that I am digging into it. I really like it."* (Participant 3, line 225); *"I love crying about that because I am opening things so I like speaking about my father but I don't have a lot of opportunities to do it."* (Participant 7, lines 156-158).

### **7.Coping mechanisms**

The seventh theme pertains to coping mechanisms, which can be understood as strategies that participants set up, both consciously and unconsciously, to deal with their parent's loss. Eight sub-themes were identified: keeping a dialogue, developing narratives, by questioning their spirituality, relying on faith, focusing on the family as a source of joy, mentalizing, being patient and by rationalizing.

#### **7.1.Maintaining an ongoing bond**

Subjects maintained an ongoing bond with their deceased parents which could take five shape or forms: keeping a dialogue, by internalizing their parent, by keeping the parent's memory alive, by keeping their parent's belongings as well being linked through financial arrangements.

### **7.1.1. Keeping a dialogue**

Seven participants confirmed that they maintained an ongoing dialogue with their deceased parents, an open conversation which they can kick off whenever they feel the need for it “*And I do still sort of look up and feel as though I can talk to her and she is looking down on me* (Participant 1, lines 217-218); “*yes I still speak to them of course and I really ask them to guide me, especially for my kids, for my marital life*” (Participant 2, lines 269-270); “*Yes I still talk to my mum. And the strange thing of course, every once in a while, I want to pick up the telephone and ring her*”. (Participant 5, lines); “*Yes of course, I think of them, I talk to them.*” (Participant 9, line 157).

### **7.1.2. Internalizing the deceased**

Nine participants referred to having their deceased parent as a part of them, which we chose to describe as a process of internalization. This strategy enabled them to bear the physical separation that death provokes on the short term. However, once the process is established it remains as such over the long term time span, for instance in dreams “*I still think about her a lot, sometimes dream about her actually*” (Participant 5, lines 166-167); or “*I think you have a part of him in you and this part you can call it back sometimes*” (Participant 7, lines 207-208).

### **7.1.3. Keeping the parent’s memory alive**

Three participants saw opportunities in their daily lives to remember one’s parent either through elements of resemblances in a family “*It’s not the same as not being there at all but I see them in my brothers and sisters and it brings them back.*” (Participant 8, lines 134-135); or through values and actions that were inherited and used as a compass in the daily life “*I think more about the things he has said during his life than talking with him now. I think about things but I do not know. More about things that he was doing during his life.*” (Participant 10, lines 216-217).

### **7.1.4. Keeping belongings**

Two participants referred to maintaining a link to their parents by keeping and carrying objects that had a particular meaning for their parent “*I have a photograph of her and I have something in my handbag which never ever left her, rosary beads [...] I have them on me all the time so that’s my way of keeping a close bond with her.*” (Participant 6, lines 250-255).



### **7.1.5. Financial arrangements**

One participant mentioned that there is also an ongoing link with her deceased parents through managing the family's assets *"In terms of financial bond, in terms of assets, I am still managing all the assets that they gave to us. The different assets that they have to us that helps a lot so I am still in contact in the Philippines."* (Participant 2, lines 278-280).

## **7.2. Developing narratives about grief**

Participants went through a process of elaboration around the loss of their parent to make sense of their experience. We organized those narratives across four sub-themes entitled a new chapter, becoming your own parent, the cycle of life, building meaning.

### **7.2.1. A new chapter**

Two participants, who lost their parents before being thirty-two years old, stressed the fact that their father's deaths symbolized the end of their childhood and the beginning of a new chapter in their lives *"It is kind of like childhood becomes memories. It was the start of a new chapter. There was a first chapter and then this is the second chapter."* (Participant 3, lines),

### **7.2.2. Becoming your own parent**

Four participants explained that losing their parents was transformative in turning them into adults. Again only the three participants who lost their parents before thirty-two years old mentioned this idea. The loss of their parents initiated a process of parenting themselves *"So you begin to be your own parent, your own hugger."* (Participant 7, lines 172-173).

### **7.2.3. Cycle of life**

Six participants expressed how they had integrated that death was a natural process in life; this sub-theme was particularly prolific with twenty-one quotes identified. We did not find any link with the age of the participants. *"For me it's natural and there was not a worst time or a better time, it was just the time."* (Participant 3, lines 196-197); *"I think it's just a fact of life. Losing your parents, you get to a certain age and we were lucky ours got to eighty-nine. I think it was quite an achievement for that generation"* (Participant 5, lines 150-152). Their answers in the

interview process demonstrated an acceptance to the fact that death is part of life “*not really, it's a normal thing in life to die and I am not rebelling about that.*” (Participant 9, line 153).

#### **7.2.4. Building meaning**

Making sense of the circumstances and how they fitted in a bigger picture of living one’s life appeared as a positive coping mechanism for some of the participants. One of them built a meaningful story with regards to how their parents died “*He went out in character I would say, he went out with a bang, just like my father was and I would say my mother too died in character, very slow and very gently*” (Participant 1, lines 129-132). Another one, made sense of the death of her father in relation to it’s timing and her passage into adulthood with her eighteenth birthday “*It was during the summer and two days before my eighteenth birthday. I really love symbols and things like this. Why now and why at all?*” (Participant 7, lines 58-59).

Five participants expressed how knowing their parents had had a good life was helpful to cope with their disappearance “*I think the age also helps, he had a good life, I believe, he was a happy man, he did not have problems, he was just a simple and a good man.*” (Participant 3, lines 197-198); as well as knowing they had had a peaceful death “*It was, she died in peace (...) knowing we were all there*” (Participant 1, line 46).

A participant explained that she missed having a father but that she was aware that she did not miss him in particular as she felt she did not know him well enough, she called this process “fake missing”. This is the only quote in this sub-theme, it is probably specific to the fact that the participant lost her father young at seventeen due to an accident “*Of course I miss him but I miss him as a person I don't know. I can't know who he would be now. It's kind of a fake missing, what you miss is just the caring of someone.*” (Participant 7, lines 141-144).

#### **7.3. Questioning their spirituality**

Facing death confronted three subjects to metaphysical thoughts and questioned their belief systems, which helped them to deal with their grief “*I remember the first weeks and months chasing religious and spiritual books and I was wandering more like how do humans behave in front of death.*” (Participant 3, lines

149-150); *“I find it interesting to see if you can understand the spiritual side of things”* (Participant 10, lines 321-322).

#### **7.4.Relying on faith**

Four participants qualified themselves as religious people and felt that their beliefs and practices helped them to cope through the loss of their parents *“I hope and I pray regularly that they rest in eternal peace.”* (Participant 6, lines 209-210). However, that same participant explained her experiences with death also challenged her faith *“After that to describe an afterlife would be very difficult. There are days I believe and there are days I find it hard to believe”* (Participant 6, lines 246-247).

#### **7.5.Focusing on the family as a source of joy**

Turning to the happiness and joy in one’s family appeared to be a positive action that helped two participants to cope with the loss of their parents:

*“Yes because your children are youth and are, you know, projects in life and wonderful things happening, sharing their happiness when things go well for them so that gives you strength as well and it makes you happy. It gives your life a purpose and wanting to grow and prolong that happiness for as long as you can.”* (Participant 6, lines 324-327).

#### **7.6.Introspective capacities**

Two participants articulated how their ability to reflect and observe their mental and emotional processes was helpful for them to be able to deal with life in general, as well as the loss of their parents *“my whole life I try to make an effort. I make a conscious effort not to leave a single aspect of my life unturned, unanalysed.”* (Participant 4, lines 86-87).

#### **7.7.Being patient**

Four participants stressed the positive effects of patience to adjust to the sadness and the loss of their parents. Indeed, being patient with one’s self appeared as a helpful way to cope with the situation as well as accepting that time passing by provided a healing effect to people’s feelings:

*“I suppose it's adjusted through time. Is it as painful, obviously not as there is a distance from it. Thinking now. I don't think it's any less painful, not less painful but*

*maybe I don't think about it much but when I do think about it it's still as painful.”*  
(Participant 5, lines 202-204).

## **7.8.Rationalizing**

We identified in five participants' discourses that behaviours and thoughts through logical reasoning appeared as a useful coping mechanism to deal with the loss of their parents *“I mean we all have to die so it will happen in one way or another. The moment you are born, I guess you are going to die so the meaning is just that the life goes on.”* (Participant 1, lines 173-174).

## **8.Protective factors**

On top of having developed coping mechanisms when confronted with the grief of their parents, we noticed ten factors that protected the participants when they were faced with the experience of losing their parents: preparation; age, emotional independence, financial independence, tight social network, geography, primary family, parental style as well as having a positive relationship with their siblings.

### **8.1.Preparation**

Being prepared to lose one's parents contributed to the participants' bereavement process. We identified four sub-themes: parent's acceptance, receiving comfort from their dying parent, acknowledging death as the final outcome, saying goodbye.

#### **8.1.1. Parent's acceptance**

A participant explained that the fact that her mother had accepted that she was going to die helped her to prepare herself for her mother's death: *“she accepted her lot.”* (Participant 1, line 202).

#### **8.1.2. Receiving comfort from dying parent**

Receiving comfort from their parents before their death also proved helpful in adjusting to the situation for two participants *“So that showed me that she had accepted what was happening, she did not want us to suffer and therefore she was comforting me”* (Participant 1, lines 18-19); *“I think that the fact that we really exchanged and share with my father helped me to be like strong rather than feel left by the side and alone”* (Participant 3, lines 62-63).

### **8.1.3. Acknowledging death as the final outcome**

Being fully aware that the outcome of the situation was death for the cases of parents with terminal illnesses seemed to help participants in getting prepared at living in a world without them *“Well my parents were on maintenance medicine already, the lifestyle that they were dealing in terms of food and drink and you know exercise, you could see it. I mean medically, it was logical.”* (Participant 2, lines 41-42); *“because of the disease, we kind of knew it was going to happen.”* (Participant 3, line 22).

### **8.1.4. Saying goodbye**

Last but not least, being able to say goodbye before their parents died seemed beneficial for four participants *“What is impregnated in my mind is the last time I was able to take to her (...) was when I was literally saying goodbye to her”* (Participant 1, lines 10-11).

## **8.2. Age of child**

Two participants referred to age as having an influence as to how adults experience the death of a parent, or at least how they imagine it to be so *“It must be a shocking affair so I was exceptionally fortunate to lose my parents when I was already in my very advanced age. It made it much easier to cope with.”* (Participant 4, lines 322-323). Indeed, the participant who lost her parents at the crossroads between her childhood and adulthood expressed that she would deal with losing a parent differently at her current age than when she was about to turn eighteen:

*“But you are not old enough to do that after you lose your parent at eighteen. It’s not the same if you loose your parent at the beginning of your adulthood. If I lost my other parent now, it would be completely different as I have yet understood what is my independence towards people and parents and all the people around me.”* (Participant 7, lines 173-176).

## **8.3. Emotional independence**

Two participant mentioned how being emotionally independent from their parents helped them when facing their disappearance *“I think it's hard for people who have not had that separation to be strong enough to leave their parents to go on their own path, strong on their own.”* (Participant 1, lines 89-90).

#### **8.4.Financial independence**

Four participants mentioned how being financially independent from their parents was a contributing factor to cope with their passing *“I did not have this because I left it very early, I am an extremely independent and self sufficient person so there was one contributing factor to having relatively, relatively low impact on the whole thing.”* (Participant 4, lines 123-125).

#### **8.5.Tight social network**

Five participants explained how having close friends was a contributing factor for them to feel connected in their lives and supported through their experiences *“I think I was only sad and with my very close friends and with myself actually (expires strongly)”* (Participant 7, lines 100-101); *“I was not, my friends, my boyfriend were really helping”* (Participant 10, line 161).

#### **8.6.Geography**

Three participants expressed how living at a certain geographical distance whether in the same county or far away abroad, helped them to get through the loss of their parents *“I lived thousands of miles from my parents for such a long time, so they were free, it reduced the impact on the scale of stress.”* (Participant 4, lines 326-327).

#### **8.7.Primary family**

Having a primary family also helped to mitigate the circumstances of losing their parents. Six participants mentioned the support that they obtained from their life partners *“I had a very very loving husband. Of course he did not replace my mother and my father but he was very present”* (Participant 8, lines 64-65).

A participant mentioned how having children of her own helped her to overcome the loss of her parents *“I remember holding C (daughter) in my arms at the funeral, they were very supportive as well, it was a very difficult thing to go through if I had not had my children”* (Participant 6, lines 357-359).

#### **8.8.Parenting styles**

Two participants detailed their belief that the parenting styles as well as the values that their parents transmitted them helped them in overcoming their deaths:

*“Well, one thing that I can absolutely adore about them that is life with them, when it comes to handling themselves and me, came with no, it just happened to them naturally, they did not go through any particular schooling, upbringing this and that, you know, it just happened to them, for them it was natural, they realised they had to let you go.”* (Participant 4, lines 387-390).

### **8.9. Positive relationships with siblings**

Four participants expressed how having positive relationships with their siblings before losing their parents provided them strength and support to overcome the loss of their parents *“I turn to my sisters too. The sister who just came to see me, she is of great support and I support her greatly too.”* (Participant 6, lines 319-320).

## **9. Obstacles to the process of grief**

Some participants expressed that they struggled to find time to grieve and that their professional obligations prevented them from grieving, as they would have wished to.

### **9.1. Struggle to find time to grieve**

A participant mentioned that her busy everyday life as a new mother hindered her grief process *“I was a new mother, I also got caught up in the logistics of that, you can't stop to process anything at all. My mum was really living her grief like a dress, you know, she was living it.”* (Participant 2, lines 192-194). Another participant shared that even though he felt that he took the time to grieve, that time was not enough. In his view, society prevents people from taking all the time that they need to go through that stage in life *“But the society is like, today, not allowing me to go back to that, I had enough time, I missed it. Even though I had a full year, I still feel I have to do some work on that.”* (Participant 3, lines 150-152)

### **9.2. Professional obligations**

Two participants expressed how their professional obligations one as a pilot and the other one as a doctor hijacked their grief process. They explained that giving in to their grief could have jeopardized their jobs and therefore their personal lives:

*“So my profession does not tolerate any, I cannot dwell on anything too much because any erosion of my performance would cost me dearly. I could hurt my career which*

would be unacceptable because I would hurt people who live with me so I had to move on instantly.” (Participant 4, lines 111-114).

## **10. Coming to terms**

We directly questioned participants about their reconciliation with the fact that their parents died “*Did you come to terms with losing your parent or parents?*” (Appendix G, question 16). Some of them shared their acceptance; while others expressed that they could never completely come to terms with those losses.

### **10.1. Acceptance**

All the participants shared that they were reconciled with their parent’s death. Five of them provided details about their acceptance “*Yes, I have because I think that when you lose them and you realize as I said that you are the next in line, well you just sort of automatically accept the order of things so I have come to terms.*” (Participant 8, lines 139-141); “*It’s a bit like healed, that’s how I see things, that is, you have an injury, it hurts you, it was hard, etc. There is a time for it to scar, and now that it’s healed well, it still exists*” (Participant 10, lines 243-244).

### **10.2. Never really come to terms**

However two participants shared the ambiguity of having to accept the loss of their parents and at the same time feel that it is something they will never be fully reconciled with “*Yes, partly because I still want to cry now, even after ten years. When I talk about it, I get very emotional and I have never recovered*” (Participant 5, lines 101-102); “*Even I speak now, I want to cry again as I don’t think I will ever get over my mother’s death [...] so it’s a grief that you never really come to terms with.*” (Participant 6, line 52).

## **11. Unique relationship: parent & child**

Throughout the interviews, the relationship between parent and child was conveyed as unique in the participants discourses through three sub-themes, the fact that you only have one mother and one father, participants made references to the unconditional love and to the fact that losing a parent is a unique experience for each individual.



### **11.1.Only one mother and one father**

Four participants stressed the fact that people only have one mother and one father, which make those relationships special with irreplaceable people:

*“Well because I guess you only have one mother and one father. You have many friends hopefully, other family members but (...) you only have one of each and when they are gone they are gone. (Laughs) They can't be replaced or moved on to another parent. You could move on to another friend but you can't move on to another parent.”* (Participant 6, lines 159-163).

### **11.2.References to unconditional love between parent and child**

Five subjects referred to the unconditional love that bounds the relationship between a parent and a child *“Because of shared memories and I come from a very loving family, we were all very close as a loving family, brother and sister, and mum and dad and aunts and uncles”* (Participant 5, lines 130-131); *“I was “okay I am a half orphan (...) because you lose your father and you lose someone who loves you”* (Participant 10, lines 85-86).

### **11.3.Losing a parent as a unique experience**

Three participants mentioned that the experience of losing a parent is subjective and linked to the particular bond that was built between each child and each parent, explaining why experiences differ from one sibling to another:

*“Because it's very particular to see that even in the same family with the same parents, children don't go the same way and don't feel the same and then have another story, so maybe my parents are not received by my brothers and sisters the same as for me. I don't know why, it's very peculiar.”* (Participant 10, lines 85-90).

## **12.Quality of the relationship**

Having mentioned how subjective the experience of losing a parent is, we also identified a theme relating to the quality of the relationship. Indeed, participants shared the state of their relationships and how their experiences differed from losing one parent compared to the other according to how they got along. In light of the participant's discourses and their answers to the clinical tool of the *QRI-B* (Bottomley et al., 2017), the participants' results were utterly consistent with regards to having

close relationships with their mothers. Indeed, six participants had high closeness scores and one participant was only one point under the cut off line, which would still qualify as a close relationship. Surprisingly, five participants were above the average score on the conflict scale with their mothers for which we found little content in the interviews. With regards to their relationships with their fathers, nine participants scored above average on the conflict scale and five participants had above average scores on the closeness scale. The only result we are comfortable to extract from these results is that relationships with parents are ambiguous and interlock elements of conflict and closeness.

### **12.1.Close**

Seven participants emphasized the closeness they shared with their parents and the fact that their relationships could be qualified as being as close as best friends or siblings *“She was my mother but she was also my great close, best friend. I think, she was the one I would tell things too that I would say my deepest feelings and things so (...) apart for my husband of course. But she was like a sister or a best friend, so (...) of course I missed her.”* (Participant 1, lines 62-65).

### **12.2.Complicated**

Six subjects referred to complicated relationships with their parents due to family secrets *“And then after we really grew apart because he told me that he had another son, he had another son that was my age”* (Participant 2, lines 141-142), or bad histories with a parent *“My memories about him are really non existent because I had a lot of bad memories with him and I don't want to remember about that.”* (Participant 7, lines 146-147).

### **12.3.Consequence on family dynamics**

Subjects shared that the loss of their parents had an impact on their family dynamics. We identified four sub-themes: positive dynamics, negative dynamics, type of relationships impacted as well as a shift in communication hubs in families.

#### **12.3.1.Positive**

Two participants expressed how losing their parents brought the children together and contributed to solidifying the bond between siblings *“I think so because there is perhaps it's the same with every family there is less rivalry because the parents are not there anymore, it's just us now.”* (Participant 8, lines 198-199).

### **12.3.2.Negative**

Three participants mentioned the disruption of their family dynamics following the loss of one or both of their parents. A participant explained how her parents acted as a buffer between her two siblings and how their disappearance contributed to the full expression of the tensions between them:

*“The time distance between the two deaths was so short that my brother and sister were really put, really had to go on 5th gear, you know to accelerate a lot of the declarations and taxes, so it put a strain on their relationship and it resurfaced a lot of issues with which they never dealt with, because my parents were the ones who were dealing with it for them. (Participant 2, lines 297-301).*

Another participant explained how the loss of his father brought the family out of balance, with a degradation in the quality of the relationships between some members of the family:

*“We use to be a very close family without any people who felt more loved than others but it's true that my older sister and my mother their relationship really broke down and collapsed. My two sisters, their relationship also collapsed and for a year they were not talking to each other and being very mean to each other and now they are rebuilding slowly day after day. But for my mother she lost her lover so she is feeling lonely, so yes it has changed the whole dynamic. We all know the wishes of my father was to be close to each other and I think we will get to it. It just takes time, it takes a lot of time.” (Participant 3, lines 243-249).*

### **12.4.Relationship with surviving parent**

Three participants detailed how the loss of one their parents impacted their relationship with their other parent *“Well for me, I became a bit the head of the family in terms of, not like leading but at least making sure that we were going in the same direction, so this of course was something very new in terms of relationship with my mother” (Participant 3, lines 239-241).*

### **12.5.Shift in communication hubs**

One participant referred to the loss of a communication hub within the close and extended family since the passing of both her parents:

*“I would say an important factor about losing your parents is that they were very much in our family the tie between everybody and the sending of the news around the family came from the parents. Parents hosted you know the Christmas that we all got together for; parents were in contact with each child and exchanged all the news with everybody and family news. I did not know what was happening in my aunt or my cousin’s life because I did not have that connection anymore, through my mother. I think Facebook has helped that, it did not exist at the time but now that there are things like Facebook again I definitely have a stronger link up with the rest of the family. Family members on Facebook means that one can have a connection but because there is no longer the parents bringing everybody together it has to be an initiative coming from the children now.”* (Participant 1, lines 295-305).

### **13.Impact on well health and health**

Going through the process of grieving may impact the health of the bereaved. With regards to losing their parents, participants shared their personal stories on how their health and their well being was impacted either positively or negatively.

#### **13.1.Negative physical consequence**

Participants mentioned negative general consequences in terms of weight loss, anxiety and depression.

##### **13.1.1.Weight loss**

A participant mentioned her weight loss when losing her mother *“I was definitely internally affected, probably without realizing it, because I lost a lot of weight. I had people ask me if I was ill because I lost four or five kilograms without, unintentionally. I guess you don't eat as much so (...) there was a consequence to the action but I believe that to be absolutely normal. When you lose somebody you love, of course you are going to have a reaction”* (Participant 1, lines 92-96).

##### **13.1.2.Anxiety**

Two subjects evoked the development of anguish following the death of their parents. One participant mentioned how losing her parents contributed to building a sense of personal anxiety *“Yes, I think you do become a more anguished personality. I was not like that at thirty years of age, it's sort of life's experience as well. And you know that you have to find ways of dealing with that anguish, we all ways of dealing with it.”* (Participant 6, lines 342-346). Another participant expressed that she feels

anxious for her remaining parent since her father died *“I also feel more anxious for my mother, of course as now my only remaining parent is my mother, I am really more anxious about her.”* (Participant 10, lines 265-267).

### **13.1.3. Depression**

Three participants mentioned depression in reference of themselves following the loss of their parents:

*“I was quite depressed when I lost mum and I don't think I recognized how depressed I was, as I was working at the same time so you can't, you have to be on the ball, you can't allow yourself to be overwhelmed or depressed if you are working and looking after a lot of people”* (Participant 5, lines 231-234).

### **13.2. Positive physical consequence**

Three participants referred to positive physical consequences on their health and well being following the death of their parents. Interestingly enough those same participants were also relating negative consequences in the previous sub-theme *“No, I feel stronger and healthier today.”* (Participant 1, line 223); *“when you are young, you do not care about this, but then it's like “okay cancer happens because of the shit we have around us, industrial food”, so now I am more careful about this.”* (Participant 10, lines 292-294).

## **14. Impact of culture**

Death is approached differently according to the cultures in which individuals evolve. Also, the relationship with parents is also connected to the culture people live in. Three participants expressed those ideas. A participant was able to express his bereavement while visiting Mexico during the Day of the Dead on the 1st of November *“I also had the chance to travel in different cultures the following twelve months, especially in Mexico where people were very talkative about death and the concept of how to behave in front of death. I felt I could express myself quite easily.”* (Participant 3, lines 90-92). The same individual mentioned how invisible death appears to be in the Western society contrary to the cultures in Central America:

*“I mean I think it is weird the death aspect of society. You don't see any dead people anymore. You don't see death anymore. You don't see it anymore on the street. You see a lot of death on the T.V. but you don't see it in real life, it seems like it is totally*

*artificial but part of the artistic and movie world.*” (Participant 3, lines 118-122).

Also, a participant explained how his extraverted Serbian culture impacts the way people deal with their feelings and emotions *“I guess it's quite selfish where we come from, we are quite loud about anything that is affecting us”* (Participant 4, lines 251-252).

## **15. Dead parent club**

Having lost one or both parents, participants witnessed sharing compassion and a special bond with people who went through the same process *“when I meet humans who lose their father and their mother, I feel very empathic to them, I feel very close to them, very intimate.”* (Participant 3, lines 188-190); *“you have a special link with people who have lost somebody in their family. I can't explain that but it is really. I don't know if you can feel it but maybe it's the same for people who have cancer sometimes.”* (Participant 7, lines 227-229).

## **16. Circumstances of death**

In the theme relating to the circumstances of death, we identified five sub-themes: accident, illness, death of parents close in time, loss of parent before physical death and the death of one parent was experienced as the loss of both parents.

### **16.1. Accident**

Two participants had their parents die from accidental deaths *“I was on holiday with my father and it was the beginning of my holidays and in the morning he was not in his bed because he was out the night before and a friend of his called me and told me that he found my father in the harbour, in the water.”* (Participant 7, lines 18-21).

### **16.2. Illness**

Nine participants referred to one of their parents dying from an illness and shared elements pertaining to pain and anxiety *“We found out four years ago that he had cancer and for the next two years he fought the disease”* (Participant 3, lines 15-16); *“You go and see her and the doctor tells you she won't be able to live much longer, I think she had three months tops you know from the onset of the diseases.”* (Participant 4, lines 435-436).

### **16.3. Death of parents close in time**

Two participants lost their parents in a close time frame of six and seven months *“I think the thing with my father was a shock, again, six months after my mother died so it was pretty close to losing one's mother then my father died.”* (Participant 1, lines 124-126); *“so we were reeling from that and trying to get everything sorted out. My mum (...) it felt like a continuation of the loss, you know.”* (Participant 2, line 163).

### **16.4. Loss of parent before physical death**

A participant explicitly mentioned the loss of her father a year before his physical passing:

*“I think I lost my father actually a year before he died, it sounds like an odd thing to say but he had pneumonia, a year before he died and so I sort of lost the essence of my father at that time and he was very (...) frail after that. So the year after that he was very frail and not the dynamic person that I knew up until then.”* (Participant 5, lines 27-30).

### **16.5. Death of one parent as the loss of both**

One participant evoked how the death of her father changed her mother to the point that she felt she lost both her parents when the first one passed away:

*“The thing is after losing my pap, I, you could, it was as if I also lost my mum because she was so, she had to go back into herself you know to try to process her grief. To try to come to terms with everything that she was facing, so it's as if I also had to stop asking her as well. So losing her, its not like I had her the way she was before. It was like she had already to deal with stuff myself in those seven months.”* (Participant 2, lines 172-176).

## **17. Administrative and funeral logistics**

Last but not least, three participants mentioned the administrative and funeral logistics theme. They expressed the weight of having to deal with those elements on top of experiencing the emotional suffering following the death of their parents' *"When you say death of a parent, at least in our case, you cannot isolate it to the death itself, the emotional death itself but also the admin and financial things that are linked to it."* (Participant 2, lines 62-64); *"you go in some kind of show room where you have to choose the coffin, if he gets embalmed, well, it's very strange, you never think of those things before"* (Participant 10, lines 128-130).

## **DISCUSSION**

The main objectives of this research study was to try to build an understanding of how people experience the loss of one or both of their parents. Five questions guided us throughout this process. We wanted to understand the experience for this specific type of bereavement by exploring elements pertaining to its acceptance, feelings of vulnerability, coping mechanisms, health and well-being implications. This section will deliver an interpretation of the findings obtained; the discussion will illustrate why these findings are relevant to the research and related to previous studies' findings or existing models and theories. Our findings are based on the interpretation and analysis of data obtained through the process of ten semi-structured interviews with three participants who lost their fathers and seven participants who lost both their parents across their adult life span.

### **1. Grieving a parent: a unique experience**

Our findings indicate that grieving a parent is a unique experience due to several factors. First, we only have one mother and one father and those relationships are not interchangeable and they are also irreplaceable. Indeed, participants referred to a unique kind relationship based on unconditional love. Also, the results indicate that the experience differs between siblings. Grieving a parent is an intimate process that is inherent to the personality as well as the relationship each child holds with the parent. Also, all the participants expressed that it was a lonely process. This probably contributes to explain why subjects mentioned that they felt a special connection when they were in contact with people who also lost their parents. Subjects expressed the idea of a *dead parent club*, underlining that one can only understand how it feels from



experiencing it. They explained having a special connection with people who went through that same experience. Furthermore, the circumstances around the death of a parent also contribute to making the experience one of a kind. All the participants vividly remember the circumstances of the death of their parents. Some of them referred to grieving their parents before their physical death due to the Alzheimer disease or that the death of one parent resulted in the loss of both parents due to the grief of the remaining parent for their deceased partner.

## **2.A lifelong adaptive process**

Our first interest was to try to understand if people ever get over their parents' death? All the individuals in the sample expressed having reconciled with their parents' death, however, two participants expressed the fact that there is an ambiguity as, in their view, it is "*never really possible to come to terms*" (Participant 6, line 60) the loss of a parent. In the theory of growing around grief, Tonkin (2009) describes how people recover from grief by learning to cohabit with it, without having individuals being able to fully recover from the loss. Also, this model is not backed up by solid empirical studies, it seems relevant in explaining why people are reminded in their lives of their relatives who passed away through family events such as the grandchildren's birth for instance. Indeed, this echoes one of the sub-themes of the negative feelings of regret experienced by the adult child. Grief therefore appears as an ongoing process, which is reactivated at certain moments in the bereaved life. Aranda and Milne (2000) presented mourning as "*the public expression of grief, which is a lifelong adaptive process that is returned to again and again whenever loss is experienced.*" (p. 31). Losing additional loved ones triggered previous feelings of grief for our participants as shown in the re-enactment process sub-theme. According to Tedeschi, Park and Calhoun (1998), individuals that experience death in their close environments, develop sensitivity towards the fragility of life and are more prone to difficulties with subsequent losses.

## **3.A vulnerable experience**

Our findings indicate that the participants perceived the concept of vulnerability in different ways. Seven answered it through the social or economical exposure whereas three of them referred to its emotional dimension. As a reminder, according to Spini and colleagues (2013), vulnerability occurs when an individual is weakened due to a lack of resources. Interestingly, even though seven participants answered negatively to the question, however their discourses were teemed with

elements referring to being vulnerable. Elements such as the feeling of being exposed, missing their parents support and affection, not having a family of their own, to feel grounded, feeling unprepared for their loss and losing a sense of their identity as well as their place in the world. According to Spini and colleagues (2013) definition of vulnerability, all of our participants experienced a sense of it when confronted to the death of their parents. Although the loss of one's parent is expected, as demonstrated in the participant's discourse on the natural cycle of life, it appears to be an event that brings extraordinary and unanticipated changes to individuals during adulthood.

## **4. Grieving a parent: a transformational process**

### **4.1. Redefining identity**

All the participants expressed the fact that the loss of their parent was a determining moment in their life, which deeply changed them. Losing a parent confronted participants with the taking on of new roles encompassing leadership, which build their capacity at being strong and facing a new era in their life. Also it appeared as an opportunity for self-reflection and transformation as several subjects shared how they became calmer and more sensitive towards other people in their environments. Those findings match the works of Tedeschi Park and Calhoun (1998) who observed this change of roles and responsibilities, as well as the development of empathy and emotional connections to others following the exposure to a loss. They observed a phenomenon of *posttraumatic growth*, which is often encountered with individuals that have adapted to loss. Indeed, according to Michael and Cooper's systematic review (2013), *posttraumatic growth* can occur following bereavement and several factors appear to act as mediators to encourage it: the age of the bereaved, their social support, the time since the death, religion as well as active coping strategies. The expression *developmental push* (Osterweis, Solomon & Green, 1984) has also been encountered in the literature to qualify this phenomenon.

### **4.2. Generational time and its effect on well being**

Generational time describes how one's lineage placement is linked to responsibilities as well as developmental challenges and constraints. The life course perspective highlights that this concept has an influence on an individual's development and well being (Bengtson & Allen, 2009). As indicated from the participant's discourse, losing a parent shifts the generation line. Naturally, as the older generation disappears, the adult child becomes the next older generation. Participants on both fronts related this shift. First, the losses of their parent lead them

to realize their own mortality and that they were the next generation to go. Also, participants emphasized the taking on of new roles and responsibilities, which could have been carried out by their parent's generation previously. Petersen and Rafuls (1998) described it as *the process of accepting the sceptre* when documenting the shift in generations. Those authors suggested that this transition could be more intense when a parent from the same gender dies. This recoups the findings of one of the studies presented in the literature review (Marks et al. 2007). Most mortality thoughts come from people who lost both parents and at a later stage in life. Indeed, only the six older participants referred to those elements in their discourse. We could hypothesize that only individuals who lose their parents at a later stage in life, when they are themselves parents, experience this notion of generational time more intensively.

#### **4.3.Improved well being and health**

Research has shown that people linked through social ties, which share feelings and experiences, have interdependent health (Rostila & Saarela, 2011). Our findings indicate that the negative consequences of grieving their parents on the dimension of health resulted in weight loss, anxiety and depression for four individuals. With one of study presented in the literature study (Marks et al., 2007) those elements were expected. More surprisingly, three individuals from this same group also mentioned positive effects on their health following the death of a parent. Indeed, the three subjects who happened to have had at least one parent die from cancer, when the participants were 27, 32 and 42 years old, all reported having adopted a healthier lifestyle following their parents' death. We could hypothesize that children exposed to their parent's illnesses may develop sensitivities towards health and change daily habits accordingly.

#### **5.Coping mechanisms**

The findings are striking as to how all the participants in the sample maintained a link with their deceased parents, all as a successful strategy to cope with their losses. The subjects shared how they remain connected to their parents through a variety of options, which are all concurrent with the scientific literature. Bereaved individuals try to engage in direct communication with the deceased by maintaining a dialogue (Foster et al., 2011; Normand, Nickman & Silverman, 1996; Silverman & Nickman, 1996); they also maintain contact by internalizing the parent through their values and beliefs (Klass, 1993), by holding on to memories by reminiscing about

them (Marwit & Klass, 1996), by telling stories about the deceased (Silverman & Nickman, 1996), and by keeping possessions from the deceased (Tyson & Rawson, 1996). The only element for which we did not find research about was how managing finances that were inherited from their parents were reported as an ongoing bond. Those elements demonstrate how the subjects renegotiated the meaning of loss into dynamic relationship with their deceased parents confirming that the ongoing bond's theory (Klass et al., 1996) is relevant. Also this continuity in the relationship with the deceased is linked to cultural elements. Rosenblatt's (2000) findings indicate that many people within different cultures around the world carry on their relationship with the deceased. In the European and American contexts, Rosenblatt's (2001) details the forms this relationship might take, by feeling the presence of the deceased, through internal conversations with them, through contacts in prayer or in dreams.

The results confirmed one of the initial expectations that strong negative feelings are experienced in this situation. Those negative emotions probably explain why individuals then begin a quest for meaning (Neimeyer, Prigerson, & Davies, 2002). We can hypothesis that feeling in control could be a requirement in order to bear the emotional distress (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993). We observed that participants mentioned several positive feelings, while going through their experiences of loss, both in terms of gratitude and relief. Those positive feelings go along the way of the concept of *posttraumatic growth* (Tedeschi et al., 1998) mentioned previously. We can imagine that those positive feelings bear an importance in the narrative surrounding the death of the parent and the transition into a world in which parents are no longer physically present.

Stroebe and Schut (2001) in the *Dual Process Model* express the idea that an individual may reconstruct himself in the face of loss thanks to a process of building meaning. Our findings indicate that narratives bear an utmost importance in helping individuals to cope with the loss of their parents. For instance, some of the results detailed how the participants' feelings of having become orphans since their loss, triggered the need to parent themselves. Indeed, participants expressed feeling more mature, more responsible and therefore more adult following those events, which gave them more resources to build on. Indeed, this element of personal transformation from an adult child to a self-parented adult was a recurrent observation for all the participants, and most especially for participants who lost their parents at a young age. Those findings go along the lines of Umberson's (2003) statement that "*The death of a parent transforms the adult child into the adult who is no longer a child into an adult*

*who glimpses personal mortality and finds a way to become his or her own parent"* (p. 203). A loss of identity and of one's place in the world was previously mentioned as a type of vulnerability experienced in the process of grief. As detailed in the meaning reconstruction and the experience of loss theory (Neimeyer, 1998), having the capacity to elaborate one's personal story and inject meaning into it is a key element to adapt to loss.

According to the DSM IV (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), rationalization is defined as *"when the individual deals with emotional conflict or internal or external stressors by concealing the true motivations for his or her own thoughts, actions, or feelings through the elaboration of reassuring or self serving but incorrect explanations."* (p.756). Our findings established rationalization as an efficient coping mechanism that helped to make the participants experiences of their parent's loss bearable. In a way, we interpreted it as a way to contain the concept of death and deal with the anxiety that its confrontation might produce. It was observed that when discourses on the cycle of life emerged, the topics of spirituality and religion naturally came up. They both usually help to support people with the experience of losing a loved one (Shaw & Joseph, 2007), which was indeed the case for all the participants in this sample.

Last but not least, being able to focus on the positive elements in life such as the joy in one's family was helpful to alleviate grief. We may connect this element to the importance of positive re-appraisals that actively come into play in the restoration processes within the *dual process model* (Stroebe & Schut, 1999) which was derived from several theories including the *Cognitive stress theory* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A study tried to identify the content of the cognitive processing in an attempt to understand how to help people make progress through their grief (Matthews & Marwit, 2004). Indeed, coping mechanisms are researched as multidimensional and within a dynamic perspective. Positive affect has been studied as a useful and necessary coping strategy that enables individuals to deal with the stressors that surface whenever they are confronted to grief (Bonanno & Keltner, 1997).

## **6.What mitigates grief and what does not**

The participants' discourses suggested that preparing oneself to losing a parent acted as a protective factor when the event occurred. Indeed, the literature indicates that anticipating the death of a loved one helps to recover from the loss (Parkes, 1975; Hayslip et al., 2015). However, although participants reported it to

mitigate the process of grief, they also indicated that the actual death came as unexpected, as one participant formulated it “*so expecting and not expecting*” (Participant 2, lines 51-52). There was evidence in a study that no matter how involved people are in the care or preparation of death, or even the time they had to prepare themselves, the actual death still came as a surprise to them (Petersen & Rafuls, 2010). Those findings coincide with one of the vulnerability factors that were identified as a lack of preparation to their parent’s death for three participants. In our opinion, it would be interesting to investigate this topic further to understand what role the preparation factor plays in facilitating or not the grief process.

The parenting style plays a role in the bereavement process, which has been seriously documented in the literature through the internal working models of Bowlby’s attachment theory (1980). This theory is particularly relevant when studying bereavement to provide interpretations to people’s reactions to grief as well as to provide clinical recommendations and interventions for patients confronted with pathological grief.

Additionally, several factors were confirmed to act as protective factors for our sample of participants such as the age of the adult child (Hayslip et al., 2015; Leopold & Lechner, 2015), the emotional and financial independence, geography, having a tight social network, having a primary family, positive relationships with siblings (Zech, 2007). In order to remain concise, we have decided not to develop those elements further that are well documented in the literature.

Additionally, our findings indicate that losing a parent could qualify as a *disenfranchised grief* (Kamerman, 1991) when there is a failure to recognise that the death had been experienced as a significant loss. Indeed, some participants indicated that, in their opinion, people outside their close circles and society in general failed to recognize their losses as important events. According to Leavitt (1995) “*culture mediates the expression and experience of grief*” (p 453). Our findings detail that discussing death and one’s feelings towards it appeared inappropriate and even taboo within a European context, whereas one participant expressed how refreshing it was to be able to openly address death in the Central American culture. We can assume that the culture is influential on qualifying grief as disenfranchised which therefore presents culture as a mitigating factor for grief.

To our surprise, our findings mentioned that one of the obstacles to the grief process was to find the time to go through it, as Sanders (1980) expressed "*for the most part, these 'adult children' were caught up in their own busy world which soon engulfed them. They had families, jobs, and daily responsibilities which allowed little time to dwell upon the deceased parent.*" (p. 84). First, when the loss actually happened there were many administrative dealings and funeral handlings, which caused three participants to activate an autopilot mode to go through the events. Then on the medium to long term, the everyday life and the commitments that go hand in hand prevented people from emotionally processing the loss. Also professional obligations seem to hijack the grief process especially for people who have employments, which consist of taking care of others, such as in our sample a pilot as well as a doctor. It could be of interest to study if the lack of time to process grief could act both as a loss or restorative process if we set ourselves in the *dual process model* framework (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). Also another road of enquiry could be to evaluate if attachment feelings are re-directed towards other family members such as children, siblings or even maybe friends.

Last but not least, the only participant who had access to grief counselling following the death of her parents twenty-six years ago mentioned the *grief work theory*. It was also the only reference to a specific grief theory in all of the participant's discourses. At that time, the grief work model was predominant and there were very few alternative models available. In reference to that topic, Neimeyer (2003) shared his view that counsellors use "*outmoded and increasingly suspect models of loss*" when receiving bereaved clients, judging it unfortunate (Neimeyer, 2003, p. 2). In our opinion, this confirms the importance of having further research developed on this specific type of bereavement. It appears crucial to diffuse those findings to the general population as well as to the grief-counselling network. Indeed, people could benefit from knowing about current dynamic grief theories that may help support them through their experiences of loss.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The main limitation of this study resides in the fact that it does not anchor itself in a specific timeframe to understand the participants' experiences. Therefore except for one question, they were generally asked to describe their experience, without pinning them down to a specific time in the process, during the interview. Indeed, the fact that the study was exploratory was part of its DNA, however the

findings remain quite general and could have gained strength if they had been contextualized at a specific time during the participant's grief process.

Also, it is possible that the methodology suffered from a social desirability bias from the participants. Indeed, the subjects may have wanted to present themselves in the best light to the interviewer, which may have impacted the content of the interview.

In terms of the questionnaire design, the choices of inventories were retrospectively not adequate due to the fact that the sample of participants for this study was of only ten people and community based. Indeed, both the RFQ and the QRI-B were very recently developed and we could not find any data available to compare our results for non-clinical populations.

Additionally, all necessary precautions were taken to avoid any bias from the researcher during the analysis of the theme; however this does not fully prevent any from having occurred.

Last but not least, it seems essential to precise that the findings established are not generalizable to the whole population as they are the result of a sample of only ten participants within a specific context.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**

As mentioned previously, the field of bereavement is complex with regards to the different semantics employed and the number of models available. The topic of grieving a parent during adulthood could benefit from further research. The grief work theory for instance would require a formal testing in order to understand if confronting grief is necessary in order to overcome it in a healthy way. Indeed, this theory is the subject of some scientific controversy and remains however popular. Also, further light should be shed on how one coping mechanism can either have an adaptive or maladaptive function for some individuals. Additionally, investigating connexions between the relationship with the parent and the intensity of the grieving process could also be of interest. Indeed, some studies, from authors such as Lobb and colleagues (2010) established that the quality of the relationship with the bereaved is a predictive factor for the development of complicated grief (Lobb, Kristjanson, Aoun, Monterosso, Halkett & Davies, 2010). As it was presented, the dominant grieving



theories are currently set in dynamic approaches which points to time as a factor of importance. Following our findings, generational time appeared to be experienced by participants who lost their parent after reaching the age of forty years old. Furthermore, it could be worth exploring the dimension of generational time with young adults to test if age is a factor of influence in experiencing it. Last but not least, exploring the impact of preparation to face the loss of a parent could help to investigate it further as a protective factor.

This study was set with an exploratory endeavour, which yielded a variety of information that helped us understand the experience of people losing their parents. Many questions are yet to be asked in the field of adult child bereavement, however it is our hope that the findings outlined here, may contribute to develop specific hypotheses or predictions that may be tested in future research.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although losing a parent is a universal experience, little research is available on the subject when it happens during the span of adulthood. Our intent was to explore the subjective experience of interviewees to build an understanding of it, which could lead to finding areas of interest for future research. It is complex to try to capture in full the magnitude of feelings and what kinds of adjustment strategies occur when grieving a parent. However, this qualitative study was successful in carrying out ten semi-structured interviews from which several transversal notions emerged.

A point we wish to make is that although none of the grief theories have emerged or been tested for the specific type of bereavement investigated in our study, we believe them to be rather on point in relation with the content of our findings.

Additionally, we believe that our findings go hand in hand with the process of psychotherapy that may be provided for individuals who struggle in their grieving process. Indeed, supporting patients to inject meaning into their experiences of loss and help them rebuild a new sense of themselves in a reconfigured world is essentially, the support a healthcare practitioner provides. Indeed, whether the process is done personally or through the help of a professional; such as a grief counsellor, creating a sense of adjustment and relief will support an individual in finding adaptive cognitive and emotional coping mechanisms so as to mitigate any potential pathological outcomes.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Information sheet



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### Information sheet for Participants in Research Studies

Project Title: An exploratory study on how adults experience the loss of a parent

Researcher: Gabrielle Richou

Supervisor: Professor Daniela Jopp

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this study that will enable me to complete my master's thesis in Clinical Psychology at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. In the scientific literature, researching using the keywords "death of a parent" mostly implies the bereavement process through a child or adolescent perspective. Interestingly enough the loss of a parent at a later stage in life has little research available. Indeed, there is a gap in understanding the grieving process for people who lose their parent during their adulthood. The aim of this study is to try to get a better understanding of how people are impacted in their lives when losing a parent.

People who qualify to participate to this study need to respect several criteria:

- To be over 18 years old
- To be fluent in English
- To have lost a or both parents during their adulthood
- A 6 months minimum time period must have occurred since the event

We will ask participants to partake in a forty five minutes to one hour interview which can happen in person or via skype. Following that exchange, participants will be asked to fill out a questionnaire.

For your information, all the data collected is stored safely and reported in an anonymous form, in accordance with the CH Federal law on data protection ("Loi fédérale sur la protection des données" –RS 235.1). Also, the interview will be recorded in order to be transcribed. Once the study is concluded the audio files will be destroyed and the final version of the study will be available for consultation.

Should have any questions, please contact me through this email: [gabrielle.richou@unil.ch](mailto:gabrielle.richou@unil.ch) so that I may address your enquiry.

## Appendix B: Consent form



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### Consent Form for Participants in Research Studies

Project Title: An exploratory study on how adults experience the loss of a parent

Investigators: Gabrielle Richou under the supervision of Professor Daniela Jopp

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and received an explanation about the research. In case you do not meet a researcher in person during the challenge, please send a scanned/photographed version of the Consent Form to Gabrielle Richou ([gabrielle.richou@unil.ch](mailto:gabrielle.richou@unil.ch)).

Participant (Surname and First Name):

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Thank you for your interest in taking part in this study. Before you agree to take part, the person organising the research must explain the project to you. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Participant's Statement:

- I agree the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study on a voluntary basis
- I understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this project I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from the study without giving reasons and without any negative consequences
- I have read the Information Sheet for participants and I have received a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form.
- I have been informed that all data will be collected and stored safely and reported in an anonymous form, in accordance with the CH Federal law on data protection ("Loi fédérale sur la protection des données" –RS 235.1)
- I consent the use of the material as part of the project
- I agree that the investigators and project supervisors have access to the original data under strict confidentiality
- I understand and agree that the information/data I have submitted will be published (on paper as well as online) in peer reviewed journals, as open access reports, that the researchers will present findings at conferences, they may share data with professional organisations, peer researchers, policy makers, with the participants (thus you), as well as other interested parties

Signature

Date

## Appendix C: Results for the Quality of the Relationships Inventory-Bereavement Version

(Bottomley, Smigelsky, Floyd & Neimeyer, 2017)

Participants results	QRI-B Mother Conflict	QRI-B Mother Closeness	QRI-B Father Conflict	QRI-B Father Closeness
1	7	24	5	29
2	8	28	13	25
3	/	/	7	30
4	6	27	9	29
5	8	25	10	16
6	5	23	7	15
7	/	/	14	22
8	14	20	20	13
9	9	22	19	17
10	/	7	10	19

## **Appendix D: Summary of participants' descriptions**

**Participant 1** is a 68 years old woman, married with four children. She holds two citizenships, French and English. She is the eldest of her family with three younger brothers. She lost both her parents from illnesses. Her mother died of lung cancer when she was 42 years old. Her father died six months later from cardiac arrest. Both her parents lived abroad at the time of their deaths'.

**Participant 2** is a 35 years old woman, married with two children. She holds two citizenships, French and Filipino. She is the youngest of a family composed of three siblings, with one elder brother and sister. She lost her parents from illnesses. Her father died first from cardiac arrest and her mother died seven months later, also from cardiac arrest. The participant was 29 years old. The particularity to her story is that she lost her father twelve days before giving birth to her first child and she was unable to attend her parent's funeral abroad. Both her parents lived abroad at the time of their deaths'.

**Participant 3** is a 33 years old man, engaged to his girlfriend. He holds a French citizenship and currently lives in France. He is the middle child in a family of three children with two sisters. His father died of illness, cancer when he was 31 years old. He lived abroad when his father passed away.

**Participant 4** is a 57 years old male, married with two children. He is also the father of two children from a previous marriage. He holds two citizenships New Zealander and Serbian. He is an only child. He lost both his parents from illnesses. His father died of a stroke when he was 45 years old and his mother passed away from pancreatic cancer when he was 52. Both his parents lived abroad at the time of their deaths'.

**Participant 5** is a 67 years old woman, married with two children. She holds a British citizenship. She is the middle child in a family of three children, between an elder brother and a younger sister. Both her parents died from illnesses. First, her father passed away from a cardiovascular disease when she was 47 years old and ten

years later, her mother died of bladder cancer when she was 57 years old. She lived geographically close to her parents when they passed away.

**Participant 6** is a 66 years old woman, married with four children. She holds an Irish passport. She is the second eldest and has four siblings. Her eldest sister died at 37 seven years old from childbirth. She has a younger brother and two younger sisters. Both her parents died from illnesses. Her father passed away from clotting to his lungs following fifteen years of bad health. She was 48 years old then. Her mother passed away from a brain tumour, which was provoked by a melanoma when the participant was 62 years old. Both her parents lived abroad at the time of their deaths'.

**Participant 7** is a 35 years old woman, single. She is of French citizenship. She is the eldest in her family with one younger brother. Her father died from an accident when she was 17 years old, two days before her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was about to start University, which is why she qualified as an adult for the study. She lived at home when her parent passed away.

**Participant 8** is a 69 years old woman, married with one child. She holds three citizenships: Canadian, Irish and French. She has four brothers and sisters and is the second eldest child. Both her parents died from illnesses. Her mother died of cardiac arrest when the participant was 60 and her father died four years later of septicaemia. Both her parents lived abroad at the time of their deaths'.

**Participant 9** is a 70 years old woman, married with three children. She holds a French passport. She has five siblings. Her father died of Alzheimer's disease when she was 53 and her mother died of old age when the participant was 63. She was living in a different city than her parents when they passed away.

**Participant 10** is a 33 years old woman, in a relationship. She holds a French passport. She has one older brother. Her father died from a generalised cancer when she was 27 years old. Although her parent died from cancer, her family discovered her father was sick only two days before his passing. She was living in a different city than her father when he passed away.

## **Appendix E: Logbook extracts**

### **6<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

I am about to carry out my first interview and I am feeling rather nervous. The topic of losing a parent is of a delicate matter and I have no idea how things are going to work out and what kind of emotions might be stirred up. Also, not being face to face adds a level of difficulty in my opinion. I need to experience the process to see if the interview canvas is adequate in collecting the data I am interested in. The interview went smoothly without any technical issues. There were emotional moments during the exchange and the participant was surprised that after such a long time there would still be tears. I reacted with empathy and provided all the time necessary for the candidate to recompose herself. With regards to the process of the interview, it actually turned out that the flow of the questions naturally plays out. I spontaneously added a question at the end, asking if there was a question missing in the canvas in order to grow from each interview and adapt.

### **16<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

The interview started with a technical issue over the Internet, which was finally resolved by calling with my laptop and recording the conversation using my phone. Having gone through the experience of five interviews, I am now very comfortable with welcoming the participant's emotions during the process. I also adjust the canvas to the exchange depending on the candidate's discourses. I am struck by the fact that several candidates are surprised of their emotional reactions during the process. I feel very privileged to hear their stories. I was struck by the beauty of how this participant mentioned how she believe dying is experienced and it made me think about how it could be.

### **25<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

The transcriptions are rather long; I get quickly tired and need to take several mini breaks before finishing one. I am transcribing the last one of the interview batch and it feels like the end of a process. Although I do not want to proceed to any analysis during that phase, I now have a good overview of what was shared from each participant's experiences. I can already pinpoint certain similarities and differences. I try not to go too much into it, as I really want to analyse it as a whole only once all the transcriptions are completed. I however find this difficult as having experienced the interview process, I can't help having thoughts and ideas popping up when transcribing.



## Appendix F: Interview transcripts

### Appendix F1: Interview 1\_06May19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype without the use of the video. Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

#### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Could you please present yourself and share your personal story as to how it was for**  
2 **you to lose your parent or parents?**

3 I am a sixty seven year old woman who lost my mother twenty-six years ago about, so in my  
4 early forties, I lost my mother. Hmm obviously, knowing it was coming  
5 because she was ill, there was a preparation in one's my mind, it was not a shock like an  
6 accident or yeah anything like a heart attack or, it was an illness where one knew it would end  
7 up with losing a loved one. So there was a preparation, although, I think, even though you  
8 know it is going to come to that end, you don't want to believe it, you always think that  
9 something else like a miracle will happen to make it ok. But hmm, I think that for me, her last  
10 words to me are what helped me overcome the sorrow. What is impregnated in my mind is  
11 the last time I was able to take to her (...) was when I was literally saying goodbye to her. We  
12 were called to her bedtime by her nurse who was looking after her and when I arrived from  
13 France she was already in a week state she could hardly talk. So although, each member of  
14 the family was able to go in and have a few minutes with her to say goodbye as it were. I was  
15 extremely close to my mother so I did not need to tell her that I loved her and missed her and  
16 everything. It was not like that, it was just an acceptance I would say on her behalf and she  
17 was comforting me because she said the only words, the only words she had managed to say  
18 was "don't be sad". So that showed me that she had accepted what was happening, she did not  
19 want us to suffer and therefore she was comforting me.

20 **Was that an event that was difficult to experience in terms of practical aspects, everyday**  
21 **life or emotional aspects?**

22 Well, I think that the shock of losing her, knowing that it was coming, the preparation for her  
23 departure was imminent and accepted and funnily enough I think I took a lead role in her  
24 departure because she was lucky enough not to die in hospital, in a noisy or unfamiliar place.  
25 She died at home, in her own bed, and because we were summoned by the nurse all the family  
26 had arrived to say goodbye to her and therefore when the time came we were all actually in  
27 the bedroom, around the bed and my father who was unable to speak, hmm, it seemed that I  
28 was the one who talked to my mother who told her that we were all there. I remember very  
29 clearly, she was certainly aware of what I was saying because there was a sort of groan, there  
30 was a sort of grunt that came from her body, she could not talk, but she had her eyes closed of  
31 course, she was breathing with difficulty but I know she heard what I was saying and I told  
32 her we were all around the bed, I said everybody's names, so we were all with her so she  
33 knew she could leave surrounded by love. So, funnily enough, I think I was very strong at that  
34 stage. After her departure, (...), there was a very strong connection between everybody, when  
35 I say everybody, I mean everybody who was there, but particularly with my brothers. I  
36 remember we opened a bottle of champagne, it was as if we were having a party, we sort of  
37 drank to her, cried but laughed, remembered things, it brought us very close together. It was  
38 almost as if she was still there. I remember feeling wow some people will find it very odd but  
39 I thought well, my father slept that night in the bed with my mother who was dead, with her  
40 body and I think he was saying goodbye to her. Some people might have found that very odd  
41 (laugh). I just thought it was very romantic, he needed to be close to her body for another  
42 night and to say goodbye personally I suppose. But I do remember a very, very close knitted  
43 feeling between us all. I don't think it (...) I suppose it was a big feeling of love (exhales) does

44 bring back emotions (laugh), I was just (...) because you remember it, it's quite nice to  
45 remember it, it was not at all, it was not a garcelly moment, it was not a moment that I  
46 remember with "oh my god she died, it was terrible", not at all. It was, she died in peace (...)  
47 knowing we were all there, full of love, everybody's support. Obviously too young because  
48 now that I am myself have passed through and am a lot older than the age she died, it made  
49 me realize how young she was but I do say that the life she led was perhaps too short but also  
50 very happy, privileged. She had a loving family, she had a loving husband, she (...) I am sure  
51 she has, everybody does, I think her main character criticism would be that she was always  
52 anxious and worried about others, too concerned, unable to make decisions but she was a very  
53 loving, gentle person. I have not met anybody who has not known my mother, who has not  
54 said " Oh Penny yes she was so lovely" so she was a gentle, loving person (...) I know for a  
55 fact when I speak to my aunt Dorothy, that she was definitely her favourite sister, she really  
56 misses her big sister. That's probably what made me close to Dorothy too, why I was close  
57 with Dot as they had a special relationship too. So I think that I can say it hit me harder a few  
58 months after, having left my family home and come back to France and taking up my  
59 everyday life, I did have, definitely, probably about 3 to 6 months of deep sadness inside me  
60 and (...) missing her (cried)

61 **I am sorry that this interview is bringing back those painful memories**

62 (...) It does not matter (cries), because she was my mother but she was also my great close,  
63 best friend. I think she was the one I would tell things too that I would say my deepest  
64 feelings and things so (...) apart for my husband of course. But she was like a sister or a best  
65 friend, so (...) of course I missed her. I had moments like this where I would cry driving in the  
66 car on my own, never in front of my children, but driving on my own in the car, I use to put  
67 on (laughed) I, it's almost as if I was enjoying letting go, I would put on very loudly Queen  
68 which was the mama song and I would put it full burst in my car and I was driving along with  
69 tears dribbling down (laughed) but I would just be living the moment of missing her (laughed)  
70 but I think and it did me good to do that, it did me good to feel that she was still up there  
71 somewhere and I still feel that she is somewhere, she is somewhere. And I am not going to  
72 bring religion into it but I think you don't lose the person you knew and loved so fell when  
73 you feel they are with you because you know what they would say or what they would feel in  
74 certain situations, and because I can hear, I can actually hear her voice in my voice which  
75 sometimes is a bit spooky because I can hear a "hmm" or something like that and think "oh  
76 my god that does sound like my mum". There is also (...) I think I would know what her  
77 opinion would be in certain things, so on that point she is still with me, I know what she  
78 would say so she is still sort of there in my mind.

79 **Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, was it your case?**

80 (...) Vulnerable (...) no, no I don't think I felt vulnerable, perhaps because I am lucky to have a  
81 strong and loving husband so I don't feel vulnerable.

82 **And (...) yes sorry**

83 No I am just thinking about it, did I feel vulnerable (...) no more sad. There is a realization, I  
84 would say even stronger after losing a second parent; there is a realization that you are next in  
85 line to going yourself so from that point of view it does hit it home, yes.

86 **Did this event change you as a person? Could you explain why?**

87 (...) I guess inside I have been told and I am sure it's probably true that you need to have in  
88 French " faire le deuil de tes parents" (grieve your parents) before they die.

89 I think it's hard for people who have not had that separation to be strong enough to leave their  
90 parents to go on their own path, strong on their own.

91 I think it's easier if you are very independent. If you are more dependent on your parent's it  
92 must be very difficult. I was definitely internally affected, probably without realizing it,  
93 because I lost a lot of weight. I had people ask me if I was ill because I lost four or five  
94 kilograms without, unintentionally. I guess you don't eat as much so (...) there was a  
95 consequence to the action but I believe that to be absolutely normal. When you lose  
96 somebody you love, of course you are going to have a reaction but I (...) I think it was a very  
97 privileged, almost beautiful death. Not everybody has that chance to be (...) surrounded by  
98 their loved ones when they die. I think that that actually has left me with a very beautiful

99 memory. So, although it was tough because I feel she missed out on so much, I think to  
100 myself goodness, she did not see my third brother's second child, she did not see my youngest  
101 brother's children which is very sad (...) but she did set out to do what she did and died two  
102 weeks after my brother got married, therefore she had a very strong character because as ill as  
103 she was she got on a plane and went to America to be there at her sons wedding. When she  
104 had done that she let go, she set out to be there, see him settled with his new wife and then she  
105 let go.

106 **Going back to you, you mentioned physical aspects were there any changes within**  
107 **yourself?**

108 Well I had lost the confidence (...) I am not the sort of person who would confide everything  
109 to a friend, otherwise I would have told my mother so I definitely lost confidence.

110 **This is actually one of my questions; did you feel that it was difficult to open up, talk**  
111 **about your grief, about your difficulties when you lost your parents?**

112 Not to talk about my grief and I described to a lot of friends how she died, to my close  
113 friends. I did not have a problem with that. But again the problem I had was the problems I  
114 had later with my own family and children that I did not have her to help me. So yes, in that  
115 respect there was a definite sadness that I did not have the possibility of her confidence and  
116 help.

117 **You have already mentioned that you lost both your parents; I have a question with**  
118 **regards to the difficulty, the difference between those two situations. Did you feel the**  
119 **process of grief was different in those two experiences of losing your parents?**

120 Yes because my father died in very different circumstances (cough) (...) I guess again I felt  
121 privileged with respect to my brothers as my father was staying with us in France the day  
122 before he died. He just driven himself back home to Tring and he died the following day, or  
123 what is the day after, having had a very nice big lunch with one of his friends (...) they ate and  
124 drank everything they should not have been drinking or eating. They had a very big lunch. I  
125 think the thing with my father was a shock, again, six months after my mother died so it was  
126 pretty close to losing one's mother then my father died. Knowing my father, he (...) after my  
127 mother died, he did not do anything to help himself survive, if you see what I mean, because  
128 he had a heart condition that once his wife had died, he did not really bother to maintain or  
129 worry about, so he enjoyed his life in full. He went out in character I would say, he went out  
130 with a bang, just like my father was and I would say my mother too died in character, very  
131 slow and very gently (laugh) how she was too. Which is what I often thought about, did they  
132 die in character, often it is. He had a heart attack, it's extremely he had a heart attack, it's  
133 extremely, I mean again (...) there are things in life that point to me, well meaning that, is  
134 there a power above, is there something that is directing us into a certain way. My father died  
135 after a heart attack having been on the phone to my mother's best friend. They were actually  
136 talking when he had a heart attack, he let the phone go which is how we knew there was a  
137 problem because she alerted Debby, my sister in law, who lived just below where my father  
138 lived, and so talking to my mother's best friend on the phone, he has a heart attack, he  
139 staggered to the toilet because I think you feel sick when you have a heart attack, he died on  
140 the toilet in that little room which is in a direct line underneath where my mother died. So for  
141 me, I thought, "wow" they are in the same alignment, they gone up together. It was a very  
142 meaningful position in the house that he happens to be for his ending. So (...) in its weird way,  
143 my mind is sort of reassured that they are together somewhere, because the connection with  
144 my mother's best friend and where he died in the house, made me believe that there was a  
145 strong connection to both of them going somewhere.

146 **But did you feel the process of grief was more complex with the parent with whom you**  
147 **had the strongest bond?**

148 Yes, that is why I think my grief for my mother was more difficult than my grief for my  
149 father. Only because, not that I did not love my father but I did not have the same connections  
150 with my father. I would never have gone to my father to tell him about something that had  
151 happened to me or confide something to him. I knew he would know because my mother  
152 would tell my father but I would never have gone directly to my father. I know he loved me  
153 too but he was a little bit undermining me, teasing me about my lacking in the qualities that

154 were difficult for me like my spelling I was always very teased. I did not feel (...) it was just  
155 not the person I would have gone too if I had to tell something. Obviously, losing my mother  
156 was harder than losing my father.

157 **In your opinion, what is it that makes it more difficult to talk about losing one's parent**  
158 **compared to other losses in life?**

159 Well because I guess you only have one mother and one father. You have many friends  
160 hopefully, other family members but (...) your parents are your parents therefore, you  
161 obviously don't choose them but there is a bond that is strong and you only have one of each  
162 and when they are gone they are gone (laughs). They can't be replaced or moved on to another  
163 parent. You could move on to another friend but you can't move on to another parent.

164 **In your opinion, is there something special that happens when you lose a parent?**

165 Well, I think I would go back to what I said before, in that, it brings it home to you that you  
166 are in line to dying yourself. And (...) hmm again, getting to an age where your parents have  
167 died like I have now passed the age my mother died and for example my husband is exactly  
168 the age that my father died. All that brings it home to you that you are next in line. So, there is  
169 an awareness of perhaps the shortness of the passage that is left to live.

170 **Have you made any sense or found any meaning in your parent's death?**

171 (...) Any sense? (...)

172 **Found any meaning to it?**

173 A meaning, no, I mean we all have to die so it will happen in one way or another. The  
174 moment you are born, I guess you are going to die so the meaning is just that the life goes on.

175 **Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your parents? If so, how so? Do you**  
176 **think it helps you to cope or, on the contrary, does it make it more difficult to move on?**

177 (Unintelligible segment)

178 **Do you think that your view on losing your parent has changed over time?**

179 No it has not.

180 **Did you come to terms with losing your parent?**

181 She was not a usual normal functioning therapist, if I could say that, she had a method that  
182 was different. Apart from her help and you also mentioned your husband's help previously,  
183 did you have any other kind of support or are those the main resources? No I would say those  
184 were the main support (...) I would say the only regret I have which probably hurt me because  
185 I wish I would have said something while my mother was alive, was the recognition, to be  
186 able to talk about the fact that she was or might die was never an issue because one always  
187 had to remain positive that you did not want to risk making the person who was ill not believe  
188 that they could get better. Therefore, there was never any talk beforehand about, the fact that  
189 she might die. It was always a "no you are going to try this and this is going to get better and  
190 I am sure this new treatment is going to help, you've got to be positive" but actually I wish  
191 that someday along the line my eldest daughter had a conversation with my mother, in  
192 America when it was about two weeks before she died and they had a more honest  
193 conversation I think than I was ever or allowed myself to have because I did not allow myself  
194 to believe that she was going to die. I could not put that into words (...). And somewhere,  
195 somewhere along the line you have your head in the sand and you don't want to believe it.

196 **Because we were talking of support, do you think having that conversation would have**  
197 **provided you additional support in going through that experience?**

198 Well probably at the end of the idea it does not make any difference to what happened. I  
199 think, the only thing that helped me was my mother's one sentence because she knew, but you  
200 know it could not be put into words, to tell me not to be sad was that, was to say, you know  
201 "this is life and you got to now get on with your life, this is my life it's finished, don't regret,  
202 don't be sad (...) she accepted her lot. The other thing I do know that comforts me is, perhaps,  
203 that she did believe in us going somewhere so in her mind, you know she was going to a  
204 better world and hmm, I think half the reason that I always had a strong belief although the  
205 rest of my (laughs) family and certainly my brothers trying to persuade me that there is  
206 nothing after life (laughs). My mother having had her illness which was breast cancer at  
207 thirty-seven and being very ill when she was younger had experiences that she described to  
208 me, as if she was going somewhere but was saved and brought back. Because she described

209 things to me that she's experienced, it does not mean to say that I experienced it but because  
210 she described to me what she experienced as a near death experience, it helped me to believe  
211 that there was something. So she in any case believed that there was something and therefore,  
212 hmm, it was not going off afraid or in pain and fear of what was happening next.

213 **So could we say that religion was also an element that provided you a resource to come**  
214 **to terms?**

215 Yes, definitely (...)

216 **Right**

217 And I do still sort of look up and feel as though I can talk to her and she is looking down on  
218 me so yes I have that aspect.

219 **You have already mentioned some elements before, hmm, but did you experience any**  
220 **changes in your health or your well being since you came to terms with losing your**  
221 **parent?**

222 I don't think in my case there is any connection with my health improvement and coming to  
223 terms with the death of my parents. No, I feel stronger and healthier today. Hmm, perhaps  
224 because I have accepted things and the situations that I had difficulty with, but I think also  
225 because I discovered intolerance, having cut out certain elements in my food habits have  
226 made me feel stronger and able to cope with hmm, other allergies and things I had. I don't  
227 think there is any connection to the acceptance of my parent disappearing.

228 **You were mentioning you had swellings on the skin when you were grieving?**

229 No, I had swellings which started in my teenage years, I know why, I know exactly why, I  
230 don't know if you want me to go in those details. I can but not really necessary but it was  
231 stress to situations that worried me and although it did not happen often, it did happen when I  
232 was internally stressed. At the time, my mother took me to the hospital to get some tests done  
233 to see if I was allergic to something and I was not. It was stress definitely, it did carry on  
234 through my life occasionally when I had moments when I guess I was anxious or stress, I  
235 could have a lip that could blow up, my lip inside my mouth or my eye, my face basically, I  
236 would wake up one morning and my eye would be completely swollen.

237 **Was that related to your parents?**

238 No it was completely unrelated to my parents, it was related to internal stress.

239 **But then those swellings disappeared after grieving?**

240 After I saw the lady who helped me when I was grieving, I had the occasion to talk to this  
241 lady about the swellings. It has nothing to do with the death of my parents but she just helped  
242 me to get rid of that. I have not had them since so it must have done something with an inner  
243 strength to cope with those situations.

244 **This is a spontaneous question but I did not get an understanding, hmm, do you feel you**  
245 **have come to terms with losing your parent or was this something in your view where in**  
246 **your view there is no coming to terms with it?**

247 Well, I think I have come to terms with it because you cannot not, there are not there anymore  
248 but that does not mean to say that there is not a regret or a sadness that lingers, but (...) I think  
249 I probably really do feel stronger today than I did when I was younger and more dependent on  
250 them.

251 **Hmm.**

252 I don't know if this is an answer?

253 **It is thank you. What would you recommend for someone else that is in the situation of**  
254 **losing a parent?**

255 Again, I think the circumstances of the loss is important, I think it's more, you are privileged  
256 if you have the time to say goodbye to somebody and to let them go. It is, I think more  
257 difficult for somebody who is a long way away or has a shock with an accident, and then I  
258 think the grieving procedure must be more difficult because you are not expecting it. Hmm.  
259 Although my father was a heart attack, I was not entirely surprised because of his previous  
260 history and health problems, one would suspect that that might happen, so it was not  
261 completely out of the blue. Hmm. The sadness for that, for my father was that we were  
262 planning his seventieth birthday party with my brothers and literally a month before it was

263 due to happen he died. So, that was sad that we did not get to give him that party that we were  
264 planning for him. But, I (...) I lost the thread of what I was saying.

265 **Well, we are arriving at the end of the interview so thank you very much for sharing**  
266 **your personal experience. Is there anything else you are keen to share about your**  
267 **experience? Or any questions that would be relevant to ask?**

268 Today when I look back on my relationship with both my parents I have nothing to regret  
269 about my mother, however with my father I don't (...) I think as a child you are not strong  
270 enough to take the lead perhaps in things but I think there is a regret that I did not have a  
271 stronger relationship with my father (...). I admired him, he had a sense of humour and I  
272 found him interesting and funny and I guess you know there was a (...) he was a party man so  
273 I had fun dancing with him but there was not confiding, so in a way I perhaps, things that I  
274 can see today that perhaps I would have liked to tell him, could have made my life easier or  
275 my childhood better. But now being a parent, I know very well that you cannot do everything  
276 right and that you do your best in the character that you are and what you are and how you  
277 think you cope with things. Generally I think you are doing the best at the time that you can  
278 with your children, therefore my father, the fact that he thought of the things like that that  
279 perhaps he could have helped me more with the things I had difficulty doing or coping with  
280 but that was not his way so probably something again going back to a time when you know,  
281 very much it's a man's world and women are women at home with children. That was  
282 probably a generation thing with my parents so you can't blame for how he was but today if  
283 he was a father today, he would not have been supportive enough to his daughter (laugh). I  
284 guess I had double support the other side so it evens out.

285 **In our attempt to understand, what is the experience of losing a parent, do you think**  
286 **there are any questions that you think we could add to this interview?**

287 Any questions you could add (...) I guess you could, but I think I answered when I was talking  
288 about it, has the loss of your parents brought you closer to your siblings?

289 **Yes. How would you answer that question?**

290 I would say (...) It is a little bit difficult to honestly answer that, because I do feel close to my  
291 brothers but they are boys as opposed to girls and therefore between my second and fourth  
292 brother there is a strong tie because they are very similar and I think I have a tie with my third  
293 brother because we are similar. At the same time, whenever we get together there is definite a  
294 bond feeling between them. I think the bond was very strong having lost our parents, perhaps  
295 now it's twenty five years down the road, I would say an important factor about losing your  
296 parents is that they were very much in our family the tie between everybody and the sending  
297 of the news around the family came from the parents. Parents hosted you know the Christmas  
298 that we all got together for; parents were in contact with each child and exchanged all the  
299 news with everybody and family news. I did not know what was happening in my aunt or my  
300 cousin's life because I did not have that connection anymore, through my mother. I think  
301 Facebook has helped that, it did not exist at the time but now that there are things like  
302 Facebook again I definitely have a stronger link up with the rest of the family. Family  
303 members on Facebook means that one can have a connection but because there is no longer  
304 the parents bringing everybody together it has to be an initiative coming from the children  
305 now and actually last year for the first time for my brother's birthday we did get all together  
306 and I am going to see if we can do this every year, why not. I think it is a good thing to have a  
307 few days together like that with your siblings so perhaps it's more complicated once  
308 everybody got married and has a husband or wife to make sure that everybody gets on within  
309 the group but I think it is important to have a few days all together and not forget the roots of  
310 the family.

311 **Great, well thank you very much for your time and answering those personal questions.**

312 You are very welcome; I hope it helps your research.

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(57.47)

## Appendix F2: Interview 2\_16May19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype without using the video option. Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF THE INTERVIEW

1 **Firstly, I would like you to please present yourself?**

2 My name is A and I am thirty-four years old today. I am a mum of two kids and married to  
3 my husband for nine years now. I am currently working in the sales team in a maritime  
4 company.

5 **Okay, thank you. Could you please explain your family structure?**

6 My husband and I have been married for nine years, together for I think ten or eleven years  
7 give or take. My husband is thirty-eight, no thirty-seven, I am thirty four, my kids are six and  
8 two and a half. And then, in terms of my extended, well my brothers and sisters, I am the  
9 youngest of three children. My brother is fifty and my sister is forty-three something like that.

10 **Right. And now down to the core of our topic, I have to ask you if you have lost a parent  
11 or both parents?**

12 Yes I have both. Is your study one or both parents?

13 **It includes all situations, then I just adapt the questions.**

14 Both I lost them both.

15 **Could you please provide some information on the circumstances of those events?**

16 Okay. I lost my dad in November 2012. I gave birth to my son twelve days after and then we  
17 moved from Singapore to France in May 2013. I lost my mum in June 2013, so seven months  
18 after my dad.

19 **Right. Can I ask you the circumstances of their death?**

20 Both are heart failure, heart attacks.

21 **Was that a difficult event to experience for you?**

22 Hmm, at the moment, yes it was difficult, I really don't know. Just on my own, I don't know  
23 (laughs)

24 **It's a difficult question because as an interviewer you would expect people to say yes but  
25 for some people it is going to be difficult in terms of financial dependency or everyday  
26 life or like emotional dependency?**

27 I don't know, there are things for example, it did not make me afraid, I was already  
28 independent from them financially, physically so it's not like, compared to my brother and  
29 sister, I think I was the least affected. My brother was spending Sunday with them, working  
30 with them, he was really there on the day to day, whereas for me, I was living my own life, I  
31 was married, you know, already on the family way and everything. It was not, I mean it  
32 happened, I dealt with it and then I just moved on. So, I mean, it's sad to say but like maybe I  
33 was ready or there are things in my life compared to other situations where I am really scared  
34 or very sad. This one, did not figure, I could not do anything anyway so I just, it was an event  
35 in my life and I moved on. So difficult, ok but you know it's like, it happens, you deal with it,  
36 then you move on. I don't know if that makes sense.

37 **Yes, it does. In terms of the circumstances of your parent's death, the fact that they had  
38 heart failure, was this something that was an event that came as a surprise or did your  
39 parents have a previous health condition, where you knew that this was something that  
40 could happen. Were you kind of prepared for them to have this health issue?**

41 Well my parents were on maintenance medicine already, the lifestyle that they were dealing  
42 in terms of food and drink and you know exercise, you could see it. I mean medically, it was  
43 logical. My dad was also in and out of the hospital for a few months but it was not  
44 deterioration. My parents for every small thing they would go into the hospital so actually we  
45 were prepared and not prepared, in the sense that when my dad felt something, he would

46 move into the hospital and you would always think he would come out again and in really  
47 good health so I did not expect it at all. I did expect it and not expect it and then for my mum,  
48 you could see that the strain of losing my dad was really heavy and the other factors  
49 surrounding the loss of my dad. You could see it was really heavy so ok we were not  
50 expecting, we thought that she was going through a hard period but we did not expect that she  
51 would die from it. But you could see it was not easy for her, they were so linked together. So  
52 expecting and not expecting.

53 **Right. Some people might feel very vulnerable after losing a parent or both parents.**  
54 **Would you say that that was your case?**

55 Vulnerable (...) in what way?

56 **Well anything that you might associate to that words**

57 No (...) no. (laughs).

58 **No it takes time, they are not easy questions. It takes time to process them and to have a**  
59 **think about it.**

60 I think physically because I was not there to handle it myself, My brother and my sister really  
61 bore the brunt of the death of my parents because of their closeness. Because of the fact that  
62 they are based in Manila. When you say death of a parent, at least in our case, you cannot  
63 isolate it to the death itself, the emotional death itself but also the admin and financial things  
64 that are linked to it. So my brother and sister are really the ones who were managing all that,  
65 even the funeral preparations. The fact that I was so far away, first in Singapore and I could  
66 not come as I had to focus in giving birth and then for the one of my mum I was already in  
67 France so my mind was in our moving in France. "Where is my container, where do we go  
68 from the serviced apartment to the apartment we were moving into". My mind was there and  
69 since it had been already five or six years that I had left the Philippines. I was no longer in  
70 contact with even the basic logistics of who is the best funeral parlour to contact, how do we  
71 go about inviting the friends, if they want to give a tribute. All that, even that, I was no longer  
72 considered as a point person. My person handled it all and my sister in law. It's sad to say, I  
73 was just like a guest, there are welcoming people and talking to them but the logistics of that I  
74 was not involved.

75 **So for you the geographical distance and the fact that you were independent, if I could**  
76 **say that as protective elements maybe that helped you to go through this experience?**

77 Protective I don't know but they excused me from going through the process of their deaths.

78 **Right. So in terms of vulnerability, in your case, it was not a situation where you felt**  
79 **vulnerable after losing your parents.**

80 No not really, not really because financially I was not dependent on them. Anything that they  
81 gave me is really just a bonus where as I really think in relation to my brother and sister, he  
82 was working with them, they had established a company with them and then my sister I think  
83 she was studying at that time so she was not sure what to do next. Where as I was earning my  
84 own money, living with F (husband), we had our own income and budget and whatever so  
85 financially I was not vulnerable. Talking to my mum, yes I talked to her all the time but I did  
86 not feel that I could not continue. I did not feel that either.

87 **Did you feel that this event changed you as a person?**

88 Maybe stronger, it made me start to really count on myself and not on everybody else. Before  
89 it was so easy, I had a very close relationship with my mum especially but you know, we  
90 would, I would ask her for any kind of advice and without her I did not have anymore  
91 compass in my life so I really had to look within myself, look for other people, try to weigh  
92 and balance what they, knowing that, because before you take your parents words for truth,  
93 bible. But now I really weight what other people have to say. I really learned how to count on  
94 myself. Nobody has replaced that role.

95 **Did you feel that and it could be that you experienced things differently with each**  
96 **parent or in the same way, but did you feel that it was difficult to open up or to talk**  
97 **about your grief, the difficulties you were experiencing when you lost your parent?**

98 But yes, it was just me. Nobody asked me about my grief. Everything was straight away to  
99 the financial and all the pressing needs of the moment so ok I had people asking me how I  
100 was feeling, my close friends " are you ok" but you know it stopped there; no one really went



101 in depth to process. How is it, how are you grieving, what are you grieving about. So as  
102 nobody asked, I never asked myself.

103 **Why do you think that this is the case that people don't ask or don't go into depth on**  
104 **that matter?**

105 Look, I don't know. F (husband) is a guy. I would say that of all the closest people, I would  
106 expect to ask me, I would have expected my husband to ask me. But he is a guy so he did not.  
107 He was also; his way of helping me was to cover all the logistics of our move here so that was  
108 his way of support. And then, the emotions he could not take it. There was one or two times  
109 where I broke down with my mother in law, as I could not take all the strain. I think other  
110 people did not feel close enough to ask and then for my brother and sister, the immediate  
111 problem. They were grieving themselves so sometimes, we would grieve together but the  
112 immediate concern was ok how do we manage the assets of our parents so that it would come  
113 out equal for all of us and then also we would not be hindered by external persons who were  
114 also interested in the assets of my parents. So we had to manage that as well.

115 **Would you say that, the fact that they were practical aspects to deal with did not allow**  
116 **for the emotional part to be processed?**

117 Yes absolutely.

118 **And over time, once the practical elements were covered, were there any emotional**  
119 **expects that surfaced?**

120 No, there were emotional aspects that surfaced that I would say were triggered by grief but  
121 deeper. On the surface, I can really call to mind, a lot of isolated events, which maybe initially  
122 were not related to the grief but obviously I was feeling, I was actually grieving. I don't know  
123 if I would call it grief and then after when the practical aspects were sorted, no, I don't, there  
124 was no emotional feelings that surfaced.

125 **So**

126 And have not yet.

127 **Would you say that it was a very sort of, if I could use the word undercover. A lot of**  
128 **things happen internally without putting words on to it?**

129 Yes, yes.

130 **With regards to having lost both your parents, did you feel that it was a different**  
131 **experience?**

132 In what sense? In the sense that like? Ah from my dad to my mum? (Unintelligible segment  
133 due to overlapping speech/cross-talk)

134 **Yes, was it difficult to lose your first parent or losing the one you had the closest**  
135 **relationship to, did you experienced those events differently?**

136 (...) Ok with my dad the thing is that a few years before, so I was in Singapore for 5 years,  
137 just at the beginning of my stay in Singapore, we had grown apart, we had grown apart  
138 because in fact he, whereas before we were very very close and I was really the princess and  
139 the apple of his eye because I was the youngest and I was always the one you know, my  
140 brother was always working and using a credit card and I was always the one so careful so of  
141 course it was so easy to be the favourite. And then after we really grew apart because he told  
142 me that he had another son, he had another son that was my age and it's so, from then on.  
143 Hello?

144 **Hmm, yes I am listening.**

145 So from then on, not only did he not have another son that was my age but as he, it did not  
146 come from him but I found out later that he continued to have mistresses on the side.  
147 Mistress, mistresses I don't know, I would say that from 2005, 2006 we were not anymore  
148 close and I was very cautious with my dad. I really held back,

149 **Okay.**

150 So that's why his loss to me was more in relationship to my mum. She could not, they were, I  
151 mean despite his double life she really, they still could not live without each other. I mean he  
152 really loved her regardless of his double life and she could not let him go either so I mean like  
153 in terms of a couple they were really loving each other in their own way. They were solid  
154 according to their definition of being a couple. I can say that. So the death of my dad was  
155 really more in how was my mum going to continue without him. Basically, how long would it

156 take for her to grow old. They were so together all the time. Well the times he was not with  
157 his mistress (laughs). Ah ok, I should not say it like that. After he told me he vaped off, you  
158 know, on the mistress thing, they were also aging so anyway, basically that's why the  
159 relationship with my father was no longer the same as it was before. And then with my mum  
160 since we were just reeling from the sudden loss of my dad, regardless of how we considered  
161 him or how I considered him. A loss is still a loss so we were reeling from that and trying to  
162 get everything sorted out. My mum (...) it felt like a continuation of the loss, you know. I  
163 don't know what it means. You should talk to my brother, don't talk to me; I am not a good  
164 case study. I think my brother would give you better answers.

165 **No I don't think there are good or bad answers in this situation, it really is a case of**  
166 **trying to understand how people experience the loss of their parents and trying to**  
167 **understand if people have a more complicated grief process with the parent with whom**  
168 **they have the strongest bond. You were mentioning earlier that you would exchange a**  
169 **lot with your mother about when you had decisions in your life and asking for advice.**  
170 **Would you say it was more difficult to process the grief of her loss compared to losing**  
171 **your father?**

172 The thing is after losing my pap, I, you could, it was as if I also lost my mum because she was  
173 so, she had to go back into herself you know to try to process her grief. To try to come to  
174 terms with everything that she was facing, so it's as if I also had to stop asking her as well. So  
175 losing her, its not like I had her the way she was before. It was like she had already to deal  
176 with stuff myself in those seven months.

177 **So when you lost your father, did you experience as losing both your parents?**

178 Kind of yeah.

179 **And you were mentioning also earlier that you were pregnant when you lost your father,**  
180 **how did you go through this experience of losing your father and welcoming your child?**

181 Well my mum was there, my brother was there and my sister was there for the birth so they  
182 all came over for the birth, which is really typical of the Filipino culture, which is to wait  
183 outside the hospital room. For the family to wait outside the hospital room while the woman  
184 is giving birth so I had taken for granted. The difference was that my parents already had their  
185 tickets to Singapore to be there for the birth and so what changed now was that my brother  
186 and my sister who just had to go away from all of this grief and death that they were facing,  
187 they needed a break and they wanted to be around a happy event. And so it was sort of that  
188 they were all around me for this happy event. At least, that one worked out ok and even the  
189 Christmas that followed since it came just a month after, they also came to Singapore and we  
190 hosted for Christmas. We were together, we were at home and we were missing my dad,  
191 especially my mum. But we also had this baby. It was surreal, it was not the norm definitely,  
192 that one for sure. But again, because we were the ones hosting and because I was so, I was a  
193 new mother, I also got caught up in the logistics of that, you can't stop to process anything at  
194 all. My mum was really living her grief like a dress, you know, she was living it. And during  
195 that time, my parents in law they came also from France for the birth and my father and  
196 brother in law said (to the baby) look at your grand father and my mother loo oh and I wish  
197 the other grandfather could be here and my mum, she really melted into tears but me I was  
198 like, I had to prepare the spaghetti for the lunch, I had to make sure the bed sheets were set  
199 out, yeah you can't like stop and cry when you have your parents in law you barely know and  
200 then this new baby. I mean you just can't there is no space, no room for that. Does that make  
201 sense? Does that answer your question?

202 **Yes. Thank you.**

203 Sorry (sobs deeply).

204 **No, please don't apologize.**

205 (...)

206 **What do you think makes it more difficult to talk about losing one's parent?**

207 Why is it difficult, because other people they have not gone through it, they don't get it. They  
208 don't get it that I lost a parent, I don't have radar, I don't have my compass. You steer but you  
209 steer by yourself. You are bushwhacking; nobody's telling you that this is the road to take.  
210 You don't even have your cheerleading squad behind you " you are doing so well, go for it, I

211 am really proud of you". That part is what I really miss, my dad, he was such a dad you know,  
212 even though our relationship vaped off, he, it was important for him that his family look  
213 good, you know with style and with the dressing sense, he had walk in closets, two or three in  
214 the house and it was important that his family would always get compliments of being a  
215 handsome family and now I'm in this, I have lost so much weight, I can wear really nice  
216 clothes and stuff like that, I wish that he could see me like this. And I know that my parents  
217 are proud that I am able to make my way in France, raising my two kids without any maids  
218 and any drivers and I wish they could come here to see the way I live which I love it, it's  
219 really my kind of life. They arrive at your place and leave having bought you a couch because  
220 they say oh no you can't live without the couch. You know that is what I miss is that part.  
221 Being cuddled.

222 **Hmm. Taken cared of?**

223 Yes and having your parents say that I am really proud of you and how you managed your life  
224 and how you are able to adapt without having all this extra material need that we use to live  
225 with in back home. How my life has been simplified and how I seem to be thriving. That I  
226 miss. I miss their approval and their pride.

227 **You have pretty much answered the following question which was "is there something  
228 special that happens when you lose a parent?" With what you were saying in terms of  
229 losing that approval and that support.**

230 After there is one thing, which I really don't know if they were still alive today, I don't know  
231 if, you know, sometimes, you can't just console yourself. We call it in Spanish " Consuelo de  
232 bobo" which is a stupid consolation which is well at least I don't need to have that phone call  
233 in the middle of the night to say that mum has been rushed to the hospital because I already  
234 had it for both. At least, I am done with it you know. I don't have to worry anymore. You talk  
235 to all the friends whose parents are aging, oh I don't want to move far from my place as I want  
236 to be close to my parents in case they need me and stuff, I don't have to worry about that  
237 anymore because for me it's done. The only thing is, had they still been alive now, would I  
238 continue to and had I continued to come to them to ask for advice would have I lived my life  
239 and marital differently or would have I managed my marital life differently. Because there is  
240 really a lot of times where you know for that you don't know if it's good to come to your  
241 parents for help or not because they always take your side.

242 **So losing that support, in that sense, knowing that they have your back?**

243 Yeah but I don't know if it would be good or bad for me because they would always say we  
244 are here if you need to come home, you come here, or by yourself or with the kids. If I could  
245 see them, I don't know what they would say in fact when it gets a bit rough. Do you know  
246 what I mean? Or would they say stay, push for it, fight for it. Not fight for it because it's not  
247 like major major issues but sometimes it gets rough and it would be nice to be able to take a  
248 plane and go home, where you felt safe before. It seems that it's touching this point, sort of,  
249 unconditional love that you can get from your parents because it's probably not always the  
250 case, but if you do have that experience with them and losing that.

251 **Right and have you made any sense or found any meaning on your parent's death?**

252 Meaning (...). That one, the one I just mentioned, that maybe it's better that I finished already  
253 with that stage in life. I see my mother in law, she still worries about the grand- mother who  
254 lives in XXX, 3 and a half hours by train from XXX and I can see that she is not relaxed  
255 because she is worried about her mother that is 90 years old. You know she is, any time the  
256 call can come that she has fallen or whatever. I am glad to have finished with that part so that  
257 I can really focus on what I have here in France. And so I am done with that call and then that  
258 sense of saying that maybe if they were here I would call them more often and maybe I would  
259 consult with them for my marital life and maybe if they were here, maybe the idea of helping.  
260 I don't know how they would have reacted but if they started interfere, then maybe I would  
261 not be working as hard.

262 **Yes, I understand.**

263 When it gets rough, maybe it would be easier for me to just run home or what. But on the  
264 other hand maybe they would give me advice on how to go through it. There's too many  
265 maybe's. Those are the 2 things I found myself. So in a sense it's sort of growing up. Yeah.

266 **Becoming a full time adult, if I understand what you are saying?**  
267 And as it goes for sharing with other people it really is because they don't know.  
268 **Do you feel that you still have a link with your parents?**  
269 (...) Yes (...) yes I still speak to them of course and I really ask them to guide me, especially  
270 for my kids, for my marital life with F, things that maybe I am not able to talk to F about, I  
271 ask them to do it for me because it's also, so the ongoing bond that I have with them is both  
272 spiritual and financial because ok so for the spirituality told you ok, I really believe that they  
273 can still hear me wherever they are. I hope that they are heaven and that they can help me.  
274 With especially, areas where I cannot physically help, so I pray, I ask them "you are a dad  
275 you understand, please help my husband" or my mum and or even going to the toilet  
276 (laughed) and I see my clothes and I like it and I tell my parents look I am sure you would  
277 have been proud and it would have been nice to see being proud. So that is the spiritual bond  
278 that I keep with them. In terms of financial bond, in terms of assets, I am still managing all  
279 the assets that they gave to us. The different assets that they have to us that helps a lot so I am  
280 still in contact in the Philippines. I really strongly believe that whatever I am doing is still  
281 linked to them, affected by them, by the way they brought me up by the way, they still play a  
282 role. Even if they are not physically here, and this might even be better. They are still playing  
283 a role; I still for me believe that they are playing a role in my life now, until now. By knowing  
284 things for me things I cannot know.  
285 **Would you say this link is something that helps you to cope or does it make it more**  
286 **difficult to move on?**  
287 It helps me to cope a lot. This spiritual link that I have, it helps me a lot. Yeah and then the  
288 financial link of course it's a bonus. What they have given me and after the values that they  
289 instilled in me, family ties, safe fidelity to your spouse, not only in terms of extra marital  
290 relationships but also when the going gets rough or at least rough for you (laughs).  
291 **And would you say, do you think your view has changed over time on losing your**  
292 **parent?**  
293 Not towards them, not towards myself but more towards my brother and sister, because the  
294 loss brought out the ugly side you know. Because of the pressure and the space between the  
295 two.  
296 **The space between the two, could you elaborate please?**  
297 The time distance between the two deaths was so short that my brother and sister were really  
298 put, really had to go on 5th gear, you know to accelerate a lot of the declarations and taxes, so  
299 it put a strain on their relationship and it resurfaced a lot of issues with which they never dealt  
300 with, because my parents were the ones who were dealing with it for them. So that also  
301 played a role.  
302 **So it's a view that is not so much about the loss of your parent but more about the family**  
303 **dynamics.**  
304 Yes, exactly.  
305 **And to the question, did you come to terms with losing your parents, what would you**  
306 **answer?**  
307 Yes, I mean what can you do right.  
308 **And what do you think helped you to overcome this experience and where did you find**  
309 **support? You already provided some of that information but is there anything you**  
310 **would like to share?**  
311 Overcome this experience and?  
312 **And where did you find support? Any resources?**  
313 Of course the one who really helped is F (husband) Really in his own way, he caught a lot of  
314 the backlog or the things that I could normally have dealt with probably during our move. He  
315 did it in quiet because it's his country, and he is the one that brought me here and he is the one  
316 who understood how it works all of this social security and establishing our move and stuff  
317 like that but maybe if I did not have the grief I could have taken some of that load. So that  
318 when he really made sure that our first year was conducive for me to be able to like it. He  
319 even encouraged me to find work right away so that I did not get bored in the house, he  
320 encouraged me to do it, he took out M (son) and picking him up so that I could concentrate on

321 doing better at work and then you can really see the difference because now I really take on  
322 half the burden (laughs) compared to what he was doing before for me so I would say that F  
323 was a really strength of support. Maybe not emotionally because that is not the kind of person  
324 that he is but in terms of acts of service that was really his love language. And then in terms  
325 of emotional support the issue is that the conflict between my brother and sister also took the  
326 front seat. So instead of processing my grief I would say, I was really more, because we had  
327 an aunt also who was a mediator because of the death of my parents so close and the fact that  
328 we had to work together as brothers and sisters so we had to. We had to focus on the business  
329 side, so we could not even had cleared the air in terms of emotional, deep-rooted misgivings  
330 that everybody could have had because we had to focus on the business side. So we had an  
331 aunt to mediate to say, " Ok you have to give way" so we were not even talking about  
332 processing emotions anymore it was " you back off or give way or you fight for what you are  
333 saying". Because that took the front seat, I don't think I was able to (...) Did I answer sorry?  
334 **Yes, if I understand right, you feel that you did not get any support from your siblings in**  
335 **that respect?**  
336 No. And because everybody is linked together, who do you talk to about it? Maybe I could  
337 have talked to the aunt who was mediating for us but then the first, I mean when you are here  
338 with the time zone, with the kids to look after, with the work I decided to take on, I could  
339 have decided to stay home and breath instead but I decided on work instead. You only have  
340 like ten, fifteen minutes at best to talk to the aunt so what it's the most pressing topics that  
341 come out first and so of course what comes out first is how do we deal with your brother and  
342 sister who are fighting like crazy.  
343 **And, did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since you came to**  
344 **terms with losing your parents?**  
345 No. I am healthier but I think it's a change of lifestyle in France. You eat better here compared  
346 to Manila and Singapore. You eat better, the food tastes goes and the ingredients are healthier.  
347 **And what would you recommend to people when they grieve their parents?**  
348 Hmm. At least you are done with the call. Done with that call, you don't have to have that call  
349 saying that they have been rushed to hospital and they might not come back anymore. So my  
350 dad, they could not tell me so he was fetched to the hospital in the afternoon and I think he  
351 expired sometime at eleven o'clock at night and they could not tell me because they were  
352 afraid that I would go into contractions so they made F come to where I worked and then  
353 when he was at the embassy my brother and my mother they sat me down and they called me  
354 to tell me about my dad and he had already passed away. So that was how my dad happened.  
355 And then for my mum, we were in Avignon; it was the weekend before we were going to  
356 move into the apartment that we had rented in Gardanne so we were in transitioning. It was  
357 the weekend in transition between the serviced apartment and the apartment that we found in  
358 Gardanne. It was at seven in the morning and my brother and my sister were inside the  
359 emergency room and they told me, look mum is in the hospital, she was rushed here because  
360 she had fallen asleep on her bike at the gym and they could not rouse her from that sleep. Can  
361 you imagine she was just biking on the gym and that had to bring her in a wheelchair because  
362 she had fallen asleep and they could not raise her and here they are standing on top of the bed  
363 at the foot of the bed of my mum and they were shouting and telling me " A (participant's  
364 name do you want to resuscitate her or not? A (participant's name) what do you want to do,  
365 because she signed a DNR (do not resuscitate consent form)" in that case " don't we are not  
366 suppose to DNR" and they are "are you sure" and alternatively hey were shouting " wake up  
367 mum, we love you mum". Do you know that this is how, who wants to get a call like that?  
368 **That must have been very difficult.**  
369 Who wants to get a call like that? Yes. You have your seven months looking at you and going  
370 what is going on? You have your new family, aunt and uncle who barely know you in the  
371 other room and they are coming over to see what is going on. Knowing that you, they know  
372 that you had just lost your father seven months ago and how come you are here now shouting  
373 like this, what the heck. I hope you don't get a call like that. But all get a call. And that is the  
374 only thing I can tell people who are grieving, thank god you are never going to have to get  
375 that call again. After that you just have to deal with all the admin stuff that comes after and

376 then, but then after that, you even get used to it. But at what point in time do you tell that to  
377 somebody who is grieving because maybe they want to wallow in their grief. I don't know if  
378 it happened like that because I am built that way or because I am not the kind to wallow in  
379 grief because F is also the kind who does not wallow in grief. He is always talking about the  
380 practical side. I don't know if it is because I have been trained to suppress my emotions or  
381 whatever but it just did not happen to me. I am not calling on it either, it's just. I don't have  
382 this luxury of wallowing in grief or at least feeling the grief and so to. If there is somebody  
383 grieving for their parents, the very, I have the comfort of being able to tell them I understand  
384 how you feel, it's going to be bad, especially for the first few years but at least you are not  
385 going to get that call any more.  
386 **Thank you, that takes us to the end of the interview process. Do you have anything you**  
387 **wish to add?**  
388 No, not really.

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.  
END OF INTERVIEW  
(58:36)

## Appendix F3: Interview 3\_7June19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype without using the video option. Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Can I please ask you to present yourself?**

2 Yes, so my name is G, I am thirty-four years old, French and Dutch and I am designing  
3 and building camping sites.

4 **Okay. So can I please ask you to explain your family structure?**

5 Yes so I grew up in a very typical family. My mother is Dutch and my father was French. We  
6 grew up in the suburbs of XXX, thirty kilometres West of XXX. I have two sisters, we had a  
7 very happy childhood, and we're very close together and very intimate. I have a family in  
8 Holland that I used to see every two to three months until they passed away. The family of my  
9 father who was mostly based in XXX, because of political conflicts we are not seeing them a  
10 lot. So my family experience is really about my parents and my sisters, which was already  
11 very rich.

12 **Okay. Can I ask you which parent you have lost and how long ago that was?**

13 I lost my father two years ago.

14 **Could you please explain the circumstances of this event?**

15 We found out four years ago that he had cancer and for the next two years he fought the  
16 disease and I was at that time based out of Montreal in Canada and he passed away because of  
17 the disease two years ago. He was seventy-three years old. My mother is quite younger she is  
18 sixty-four. It was of course; I believe quite a normal situation, as it was quite dramatic for the  
19 family to lose the head of the family. He was a good man for us and we did suffer a lot  
20 emotionally and socially about his disappearance.

21 **How was for you personally to lose your father?**

22 It was kind of a chapter, because of the disease; we kind of knew it was going to happen. I  
23 was with him four years ago when the doctor told him that was it and that he was condemned  
24 so even though I was in Montreal, I really had time to engage with him, with his life, with his  
25 past and about the future of the family without him. So for me, it was like a chapter that I had  
26 to turn emotionally speaking as I lost my best friend but it was also releasing as the disease  
27 aspect was very dark and full of suffering. When he passed away it was kind of a new chapter  
28 and I think that the important aspect was that I could engage with him, I was preparing the  
29 fact that things were going to be new and we had time for him to share his intimate garden,  
30 his feelings and his memories and his achievements, his family. So it was kind of a journey. A  
31 journey that was necessary and I think I was lucky to live. I am not sure it is offered to  
32 everybody to go through such a natural process with so many intellectual aspects.

33 **You were mentioning that it was a difficult experience, could you elaborate in what  
34 sense it was difficult for you?**

35 Well it was difficult because of (...) do you mean during the disease?

36 **Yes and also when he passed away, it's up to you.**

37 It was difficult because of this feeling of absence, this feeling of being a little bit like alone, it  
38 was difficult because I felt a lot of love. It was the first time that I lost someone that was so  
39 close to me. Yeah, I felt a lot of happiness. It was someone that I really trusted and someone  
40 that inspired me so even though I was preparing for that chapter of course the first emotion  
41 was feeling. A bit lost. So this was really like the emotional aspect and this was the reality of  
42 losing someone in France, so the administration, the pressure and all the paperwork and  
43 managing the relationships with people closer and not that closer to the family and all the  
44 communication that I had to implement just to explain the situation, just like, really time  
45 where I had to be very intimate with my heart but at the same time very exposed to the society

46 and to move on where I just wanted to take a break and think about what was going on. Yeah  
47 it was also a very weird time for the family, I saw my mother breaking down, she had an  
48 emotional and nervous breakdown, and she really became a crazy person for almost a year.  
49 My younger sister who like freaked out and really could not like deal with her life anymore.  
50 My older sister who tried to be like protective but internally she was building so much  
51 emotional trouble. Just the whole family transformed, it was hard, and it was very  
52 transformational for every body.

53 **Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, would you say that this was your**  
54 **case?**

55 Not really in my case, again because I think I really took the time to discuss and share with  
56 my father and I was preparing it psychologically speaking but also with my personal and  
57 professional life. My girlfriend knew it was happening, my manager also, I took a year off, it I  
58 had some free time and I felt vulnerable but at the same time we agreed with my father that I  
59 would be strong and that I had to take care of the family. So I also feel like I became very  
60 mature, very adult with this chapter. It happened really quickly actually so in my case, I kind  
61 of understood it was part of a natural process that it was better to lose a father rather than a  
62 sister or a child and I think that the fact that we really exchanged and share with my father  
63 helped me to be like strong rather than feel left by the side and alone. And also of course, I  
64 am sharing my life with my fiancée and she lost both her parents six years ago in the matter of  
65 6 months, so she also went through that and she really helped me to build bridges between the  
66 past and the future, so I was surrounded by someone who had experience dealing with that.  
67 And I think that that was also a critical point in the fact that I was not feeling lost.

68 **You provided some insight into that but did you feel that this event changed you as a**  
69 **person?**

70 Yes it did. It made me grow and I think death is a very growing chapter. Just first of all by the  
71 administrative workload, facing the reality of the society and the financial aspects. I always  
72 worked for a company but there is independence with that and this was the first time where I  
73 had to deal with society and being fully responsible as an individual so I learned from it.  
74 Emotionally speaking I lost my best friend so I kind of felt I had to move on in a whole  
75 different world. And I, yeah for the following twelve months I was traveling, I did not have a  
76 very balancing environment and meeting new people. What people say is that those kind of  
77 experiences help you to be stronger. I think the fact that I lost my father at the beginning of  
78 the trip, at the end of the trip, I was feeling stronger, not because of the trip but because of the  
79 loss of my father. Yeah I mean definitely I have changed, it's been only two years and it is  
80 still very present. I feel that I am a different person, I see life in a different way, I talk to  
81 people in a different way, there is definitely something that has changed. I miss him a lot also;  
82 he was someone who allowed me to be an adult and someone who allowed me to be a child.

83 **Did you feel it was difficult to open up, talk about your grief or any difficulties you**  
84 **experienced when you lost your father?**

85 Interesting question, I had to send so many letters to so many institutions and government  
86 bodies, I had the feeling that the thing was becoming public, I had a lot of support from my  
87 friends and families. This also made it very public. I had a lot of support from my friends and  
88 families, which also made it very public. And then I travelled with my fiancée and death was  
89 always something very important in our relationship because of her story so I kind of felt that  
90 I shared a lot about it. I also had the chance to travel in different cultures the following twelve  
91 months, especially in Mexico where people were very talkative about death and the concept  
92 of how to behave in front of death. I felt I could express myself quite easily. I did not feel that  
93 I did not have any communication channels to express myself. I really like dug into my heart,  
94 I met some shamans in central America and they made me travel about ancient beliefs about  
95 death so I really feel like I was really expressing myself and it helped me be a happier man  
96 you know.

97 **That's very interesting, the backstage of this question is that sometimes it is such an in**  
98 **brackets natural rite of passage, some people feel that it is not allowed to go through a**  
99 **grief process because you have to move on and this is the natural way. It is very**  
100 **interesting that you had this very public aspect but that you were also able to talk about**



101 **it to your fiancée as well as the elements of culture, which contributed to improve that**  
102 **experience, or make it more tolerable. And what do you think makes it more difficult to**  
103 **talk about losing a parent compared to other losses we have in life?**

104 You mean losses in terms of life and death or any kind of losses.

105 **Any kind you think of.**

106 I don't know for me, in our European, Western society, death is something extremely hidden  
107 from the population and that it is something people should not talk about it. And if they do  
108 talk about it, they have to be polite. You know I was surprised to see how fast my father had  
109 to be burned, how fast we had to close bank accounts. Everything was extremely well  
110 organized and efficient, very industrialized. I could not see the body of my father, even  
111 though I did not want it, but you know they offered me the option but I said no and  
112 immediately it was done, I could not anymore. Everything was very strict with a lot of  
113 policies and regulations and it was done. After three weeks everything was done. I think that  
114 losing a parent today, the society is trying to make it sound normal or something that is just a  
115 step but we a bit of substance about it, we lose the substance about it, we are losing the  
116 spiritual and the religious aspect about it where other losses. Well you can get an employment  
117 benefit for two years, if you lose a friend, you can have a psychology, your boyfriend,  
118 girlfriend, friends are going to talk about it for six months. I mean I think it is weird the death  
119 aspect of society. You don't see any dead people anymore. You don't see death anymore. You  
120 don't see it anymore on the street. You see a lot of death on the TV but you don't see it in real  
121 life, it seems like it is totally artificial but part of the artistic and movie world. And it is  
122 something that is difficult to understand. I wish there was something more deep into it. Like  
123 in those Central American cultures, they play with it, they go into it, they make it into  
124 flowers, I was lucky to be at that time over there and people were really talking about it and  
125 being very intellectual about it. And I grew from it rather than just feeling empty about it.

126 **Would you say that there is something special that happens when you lose a parent?**

127 Yeah definitely, life has a whole different taste. It's a game changing point; nothing has the  
128 same taste or the same colours. It is kind of like childhood becomes memories. It was the start  
129 of a new chapter. There was a first chapter and then this is the second chapter. Losing my  
130 roots, I am no longer living in the area where I grew up and my mother had to move away and  
131 there are so many people that use to be around my parents that I used to see a lot and now I  
132 am not seeing them anymore and the food we are eating is no longer there. Just the comfort of  
133 knowing that there is a place where I can go as my mother, she is rebuilding her life but we  
134 are all rebuilding our life after that. We are rebuilding our lives, not in a bad way or a good  
135 way but it is definitely a game changer.

136 **It's an interesting metaphor this use of chapters, as there is a before and an after and a**  
137 **beginning and an end and an end and a beginning.**

138 Yes it's true, it's the start to something totally different and there is also the spiritual aspect of  
139 thinking where is he and you know, it's just like going to a restaurant with death, it's like  
140 opening the subject, it's time to talk about it now man. I am here, you just lost your father, it's  
141 here and it's happening. I was lucky enough not to have lost friends or close relatives so for  
142 me it was really the first boom, so definitely it was the end of a chapter.

143 **Would you say that it's like there is something existential, that it's an event that makes**  
144 **you think about your existence and brings philosophy into life?**

145 Yes it does to a certain extent; I am not someone who is very spiritual or religious, even down  
146 to earth. I would like to explore the spiritual life but it's like my day to day does not allow me  
147 to be like that. Looking at my past I have never been like that, it's part of my DNA but it  
148 definitely brings colours and identity to a more metaphysical aspect of life for sure. I  
149 remember the first weeks and months chasing religious and spiritual books and I was  
150 wandering more like how do humans behave in front of death. But the society is like, today,  
151 not allowing me to go back to that, I had enough time, I missed it. Even though I had a full  
152 year, I still feel I have to do some work on that. Just like yeah.

153 **Have you made any sense or found any meaning in your father's death?**

154 No, I am quite simple about that for me it's like the cycle of life, how it should be but I am not  
155 so scared about death but I have seen him suffering. I am sometimes scared about life and for

156 me it was a relief to know that he was free. It sounds simple but I do respect the cycle of life,  
157 life and death, reborn, rebirth, death and I wish I could have talked more about spiritual  
158 aspects with my family. This is something that I really missed, it's like the death of my father  
159 triggered a lot of discussions about how the family should be organized and where my mother  
160 should be living and the relationship between my mother and my sister and financial aspects,  
161 heritage but we never talked with the whole family about emotions and spirituality and  
162 beliefs. This is weird.

163 **Do you have an idea why that was the case?**

164 Because I never had a spiritual or religious education. My parents were very alike with me  
165 and they were simple thinking people, not very intellectual, down to earth, it's raining, it's  
166 sunny, it's a new year and that's it so we never had any discussions around that, it was a very  
167 free family so people were not really not focusing on that. And my mother is still depressed, it  
168 is one of the key reasons of her depression is that she could not really reflect on any spiritual,  
169 how could I say, benchmark or guideline, any leader who can inspire her to move  
170 forward. And today, she is like traumatized and she does not understand why.

171 **Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your father?**

172 Oh yes, yes, I still, for sure and I treasure there. He is still here and I feel him, the more I  
173 think of him, the more he is alive and I have a few ashes of him in my garden and I'm doing a  
174 couple rituals to make sure the connection is still alive and I have cried sometimes about him  
175 and I have pictures and you know I am always thinking he is still inspiring me and when I  
176 have issues in my life, I think "ok what would he say" and then I kind of feel that he is telling  
177 me something. So yes I believe the connection is still there for sure and I believe in that.  
178 Maybe he is less active than he was but he is still very present.

179 **Do you think that helps you to cope or does it make it sometimes more difficult?**

180 No it does help, it definitely does help me. I think life is easier like that, just to think that he is  
181 still there that he is somewhere and part of everything, no no it definitely helps me.

182 **And do you think that your view on losing your father has changed over time?**

183 Yes it has changed as two years ago I had a mountain to climb, emotionally, personally but  
184 also in terms of administration and just like supporting the family and today I am back in a  
185 normal life but it was a big big focus of my last two years. I spent the last two years thinking  
186 of that in terms of paperwork but also in terms of emotional work and today I am again  
187 thinking more about my family and my friends and my work so it's yes, it's a funny thing, you  
188 know it's part of the cycle, you cannot wish it to anybody so now when I meet humans who  
189 lose their father and their mother, I feel very empathic to them, I feel very close to them, very  
190 intimate.

191 **Would you say you have come to terms with losing your parent?**

192 I what sorry?

193 **Would you say you have come to terms with losing your parent?**

194 Come to terms? Can you explain it? I am afraid I don't understand the expression in English.

195 **Sure. Well to say it differently, are you okay with having lost your parent?**

196 Yes, I am ok with it, I understand it. For me it's natural and there was not a worst time or a  
197 better time, it was just the time. I think the age also helps, he had a good life, I believe, he was  
198 a happy man, he did not have problems, he was just a simple and a good man. He suffered the  
199 last two years because of his disease; it's part of the cycle. My fiancée lost her parents and  
200 they were very young. This connection was very different from mine. I talked with him so  
201 much about it, we were prepared and I think this is something that can be beautiful. I like  
202 nature and nature is about dying and rebirth and this is basically what is happening.

203 **You have mentioned that this preparation with your father contributed to help you  
204 overcome this experience, as well as your fiancée's support, is there any other support  
205 that you received that helped you to overcome this experience? Or would you say they  
206 were the main elements?**

207 Yes, they were the two main drivers of that for sure.

208 **Did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since you came to  
209 terms with losing your parent?**

210 Yes I changed, I became someone calmer. I don't know if it was the age or the factor of losing  
211 my father but physically speaking I changed a lot in the last two years. I am not sure if it was  
212 because of my father. I think I also really needed to move to something different but I can see  
213 that it aged my mother a lot, it aged my younger sister a lot, and I think the emotional  
214 negativity of it had an impact on physical health. I was kind of prepared for that so I quit  
215 smoking before my father passed away, I quit drinking and started doing a lot of sports, I just  
216 did not lose any of those good and bad habits following the twelve months after the death of  
217 my father. Physically speaking, I was good. I was taking care of me, I was trying to eat  
218 healthy but I don't know I am thirty four so it's difficult to say if it's linked to my father's  
219 death or just the natural fact of aging.

220 **What would you recommend to people when they grieve a parent or their parents?**

221 I would recommend to love, to be with someone who is careful, I would recommend to read a  
222 lot. I would recommend patience and time.

223 **And is there a question you think we should have asked in this interview to better  
224 understand the impact of losing a parent?**

225 No it is actually the first time that I am digging into it. I really like it. The thing is that it's just  
226 something, have you ever talked about it before. I am wondering if you do the same interview  
227 in five years from now, would you have the same answers. In the last two years, it's true that I  
228 have been in so many emotional states that today it's like my identity but it could be different  
229 in five years. What is the progression about death over time?

230 **Absolutely. Is there anything else you would like to share on top of the very privileged  
231 information we have collected?**

232 No, we are all sharing that risk as humans. It's the most dramatic risk but it's something we  
233 should all be able to talk about, a lot more, so thank you very much for giving me the  
234 opportunity to express myself on something like that.

235 **No thank you. I actually do have a question, it might turn out into two but there are two  
236 elements I would like to ask your insight about. How has the loss of your father  
237 impacted the family dynamics between like the relationship between yourself, your  
238 mother and your sisters?**

239 Well for me, I became a bit the head of the family in terms of, not like leading but at least  
240 making sure that we were going in the same direction, so this of course was something very  
241 new in terms of relationship with my mother and with my sister. I have always been abroad  
242 and away from the family but I was lucky enough to sustain loving relationships with my two  
243 sisters and with my mother. We use to be a very close family without any people who felt  
244 more loved than others but it's true that my older sister and my mother their relationship really  
245 broke down and collapsed. My two sisters, their relationship also collapsed and for a year  
246 they were not talking to each other and being very mean to each other and now they are  
247 rebuilding slowly day after day. But for my mother she lost her lover so she is feeling lonely,  
248 so yes it has changed the whole dynamic. We all know the wishes of my father was to be  
249 close to each other and I think we will get to it. It just takes time; it takes a lot of time.

250 **I ask the question because as the only son of the family and in the French culture which  
251 can be quite paternalistic and the fact that you said you had taken over a lot of the  
252 admin, I wonder if the family structure to be the only man if it had an impact in the  
253 family dynamic.**

254 Yes it had, without being the boss of the family, my father gave me his ring as a symbol of  
255 like you will take care of your mother. It was just a deal that we had with my father. It's true  
256 that the family was paternalistic and at the same time it was based on parity, my mother was  
257 very well respected but it was very traditional, a very traditional French family and yes there  
258 was definitely a heritage which was transferred and managed. There was no really question or  
259 debate about that. It was just sad that the depression of my sister and my mother, their  
260 depression they could not really accept that they were depressed and they could not really  
261 accept that their relationship suffered from it.

262 **Thank you very much for sharing. It's very interesting to see how a parents passing can  
263 bring families closer or divide sometimes. It brings out different things in family.**

264 That's true.

265 **Well that takes us to the end of the interview, thank you so much for participating**

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.  
END OF INTERVIEW

## Appendix F4: Interview 4\_12June19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype without using the video option. Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Can I please ask you to present yourself?**

2 Myself (laughs). Okay (laughs) (...) Yes, I am fifty-seven years old, well one thing that  
3 defines me at the end of the day, I am a pilot. I try to expand my interests and everything and  
4 my entire life so I have been studying the English language and the literature earlier on at the  
5 high school so I was caught between having a natural, let's call it talent or propensity to the  
6 languages and psychology and topics like these. I was, had a total aversion towards math  
7 physics or whatever. I found myself when I was looking for a challenge in my life and then I  
8 thought at one point, because I started very late, I found aviation as a profession, at that time  
9 it looked challenging to me. What happened at that time was that because of the ethno  
10 background I am coming from, life became very complicated, it became a story, see after the  
11 (...) just on the onset in the mid and late eighties due to the developments in Yugoslavia, I was  
12 forced to go to the US to get my licenses that changed my life completely. I opened my  
13 horizons completely but I had to go back briefly to take benefits from joining the local  
14 program but things stumbled up and I knew they were going to tumble down very quickly and  
15 I just did not want to be a part of it so I went to New Zealand and came back since then. I  
16 lived two years in the US, I spent five years in New Zealand, became a citizen, moved to  
17 Finland for my command upgrade to become a captain, then it was combined for a year  
18 between Sweden and Finland, then moved for five years to Switzerland, from Switzerland  
19 then moved to, because they made us redundant, to Singapore, twelve years in Singapore and  
20 then finally four years in Hong-Kong. I have been married twice before, this is my third  
21 marriage. I have two grown up kids, twenty three years and nineteen and they are living in  
22 Switzerland at the moment in Basel and I have a wife with whom I have been for the last ten  
23 years and we have two munchkins who are five and a half and one in a half. Very colourful to  
24 put it mildly (laughs).  
25

26 **Can I ask you to detail your family structure as in your parents or siblings?**

27 Sure. I have very limited contact with our relatives since I technically, apart from my parents,  
28 which have passed away for a couple years; I have nobody, nearly nobody else. My mother  
29 had a sister probably she still has but they were living on very bad terms their whole life.  
30 They were trying to kiss and make up but they could not, massive differences in upbringing,  
31 because my mother had the misfortune that her mother died when she was fourteen I think  
32 from cancer. The father was an artist, so my grandfather who was an exceptionally talented  
33 film producer, cameraman, an artist in any shape or form. He was as well as you would  
34 expect from a person like that quite a bit of an alcoholic and treated for alcoholism so what he  
35 did, he could not sit with both kids so he gave it to their, I am not sure which relatives, maybe  
36 the cousins, he gave the older sister, older daughter. So she lived in the centre of the city  
37 under totally different circumstances to my mother. My mother witnessing her father being  
38 alcoholic and being a person of particular directional with his own experiences and joy and  
39 enjoying his celebrity. She had to mature very quickly, like overnight and then she got  
40 married very early. She had two marriages. The first husband was a doctor back at home but  
41 they separated because she was, in terms of physical development, she was a fully grown  
42 woman very early but there was a huge gap in age so he was kind of well known doctor who  
43 was fooling around so she left him and she ended up with my father. My mother is like a real  
44 spoiled urban rat. She was exceptionally rich and spoiled in the process and as her mother  
45 died and how it happened with the relatives who started pulling all the property apart and

46 everything they could lay their hands on so my mother remarried. It must have been an  
47 exceptionally tragic experience as she went from life with French and English and helpers and  
48 nannies, she ended up marrying just to be able to survive as there was nobody to take care of  
49 her. So it was clearly a bit tragic but she coped with it pretty well. She remarried and picked  
50 up with my father. She was extremely principled like me. So she left the first guy strictly on  
51 principle because he was older and kind of a celebrity in his own circles that she should be in  
52 some subdued position. So what she did, she just left him although she had nothing to go to.  
53 She was not using one and releasing the other one. She left him and later on, she met my  
54 father. I came into Serbia, very limited contact with cousins and relatives so when my  
55 grandfather died, technically since then and although I left thirty years ago, I had 0 contact  
56 with anybody from back home and there was no social media so it was impossible to  
57 communicate with people even monthly. Although, you left, everybody stayed home, all the  
58 friends and relatives it was impossible to communicate because you had to call them all but  
59 all of them stayed where they were. It was difficult. I lost contact with all of them until very  
60 recently. Only now are we kind of rekindling some friendships back in Serbia but it is a very  
61 limited scope with limited opportunity.

62 **Ok. So you are an only child?**

63 I am an only child and my father had a previous marriage so there was I think a daughter from  
64 that marriage if I remember. So I met her maybe once or twice but I was very little, so no  
65 meaningful contact and my mother had a child as well from her first marriage but the husband  
66 being all shell shocked by her departure, denied her the contact with the child her entire life  
67 so she was cut off from that experience and so did I. So technically I am all alone, let's put it  
68 this way.

69 **Ok. Down to the core of it, have you lost a parent or both your parents?**

70 Both parents. I think I lost my father in 2007, I was in Singapore, I was changing companies  
71 so it was an extremely stressful and busy time for me so he passed away first and then a  
72 couple of years later my mother passed away. My father was a victim of a stroke and mother  
73 was mowed down by a pancreatic cancer, which was the result of this depleted Uranium shell  
74 bombing of Serbia. In Serbia, the numbers escalated from the rough in the last ten or fifteen  
75 years since the bombing. So she was one of the victims, so she had only six months to live  
76 before she departed.

77 **Right. Okay and can I ask you how old they were and how old you were for each event?**

78 Okay, I will have to recall but I am guessing that both of them died approximately when they  
79 were seventy-four. I was forty-five that's when I lost my father and then five years ago I lost  
80 my mother so I was fifty two. It was kind of, I was well into my mid forties when I lost my  
81 first parent and then early in my fifties when I lost my second parent.

82 **Ok and was it for you to lose your parents?**

83 Of the, it's a (...) I try to approach all the issues like the only way you can. You know  
84 especially where I come from, male kids are encouraged into less, you are expected to shake  
85 it off and move on so you don't dwell too much. I am an extremely analytical person and I  
86 love psychology and I am trying, my whole life I try to make an effort. I make a conscious  
87 effort not to leave a single aspect of my life unturned, unanalysed, explored so the only thing  
88 with all the possible pains and struggles you experience throughout your life I was just  
89 handling them from a position of: it happens and you just continue. That is what I did with my  
90 divorces, with the loss of my parents, with any unpleasant event that I had in my life so I had  
91 the ability to exceptionally quickly, I would not say move on, like move on mindlessly, like  
92 shut myself and move on and never look at the top but when you don't actively live with your  
93 parents because I left in the late 80's. I lost contact in terms of daily contact, small stories, this  
94 and that, we had fantastic relationships and they were exceptionally nice their whole life to  
95 me so I had no issues with them. The only thing that I lost was the daily closeness. So when  
96 they passed away, of course that you get devastated but I had this ability and I have developed  
97 this particularly through my profession, it's like whatever happens it does not impact me at the  
98 functional level that somebody would notice that something is happening to me but then I'm  
99 analysing it in the background for a very long time and then I put it where it belongs. So it  
100 would be the closest way for me to explain that process. The divorces were, should have been far

101 more traumatic in terms of, because I have never been in shallow relationships with anybody  
102 so I tried to make every relationship work but I also don't waste time if I see that it does not  
103 work. So the more profound effect of me on the divorce was that I had to keep sitting in that  
104 marriage for my own benefit so that I don't have later on the pains and the boomerangs etc. So  
105 I remember I was analysing daily that event for four or five years until I was completely ok  
106 with it and with all the consequences of it. The second one, we had no kids so it was quickly  
107 resolved and there no traumas but my parents I lost the daily closeness with them and it was  
108 not, I was shook up but as I don't live there. If I lived there and if I was immersed in it twenty  
109 four seven. Probably it would have been very different because when you go through that and  
110 that all brings all the memories and this and that that would have been an extremely traumatic  
111 event but I could not because I lived elsewhere. So my profession does not tolerate any, I  
112 cannot dwell on anything too much because any erosion of my performance would cost me  
113 dearly. I could hurt my career, which would be unacceptable because I would hurt people who  
114 live with me so I had to move on instantly. I had to live on to losing them both. I was  
115 extremely lucky that my parents lived that long and that I was a grown fully independent  
116 person. I was independent from my early twenties so I was not one of those, which is quite  
117 typical from that area where I come from where parents and kids stay in a very mutual  
118 symbiosis for too long. Because I met a lot of them and I noticed they cannot break away,  
119 they lose parents and they keep on, they almost (...), for instance, you know this primary,  
120 secondary family. It's like for males as soon as they grow up they get into this male mood and  
121 they are just chasing their own wife and kids and becomes but they stay for far too long on the  
122 primary family and they ignore the family of their own and they stay too attached to their  
123 actual mother or father for far too long. So where I come from, I did not have this because I  
124 left it very early, I am an extremely independent and self sufficient person so there was one  
125 contributing factor to having relatively, relatively low impact on the whole thing. Secondly,  
126 they were at an advanced stage and I was at an advanced age as well. And we did not live  
127 together for a very long time so that all left relatively minor impact, let's put it this way.

128 **Would you say that it was an event that it was difficult to experience?**

129 Absolutely, what happens is that everybody has his own idea of what is an old age and you  
130 know, I don't know, when people are in their twenties or thirties you are what they are still  
131 around and when you get in your forties, I don't know whether I associated with, in the pilot  
132 profession there is immediate consequence, it's an unusual profession and lifestyle, the price  
133 to pay being the adrenaline junkies, we drop dead very quickly after going into retirement so  
134 somehow with the years I stop listening, people drop dead after they retire because of the  
135 change of lifestyle. What happened was that in my mind, it became associated between death  
136 and retirement, which is not the case. Some people live until their nineties you know and they  
137 retire in their fifties so it's just me that I have this preconceived notion whatever about it. So  
138 when they died, they were already deeply in their retirement. The two of them were not a very  
139 happy couple; from them and their interaction I learned that it does not really pay off. This  
140 hippy thing from the sixties and seventies. Actually from the previous century, the old kind of  
141 couples they use to hang out with each other no matter what. They did not even entertain on  
142 the notion whether they were working out or not. They did not have the access to  
143 psychologists and therapist whatever, unless they were living in the US so they were just  
144 taking it as it comes so I am a very brutal analyst of anything that moves me. Any variation  
145 that moves me, and I am very brutal at analysing other people at well. When I look at my  
146 parents what I see was that my father was attracted, my mother was a very good looking  
147 woman so he was naturally smitten because men fall for the good looks more than anything  
148 else. He was also attracted to the fact that you can call it a city chick

149 **Sorry I didn't catch that word?**

150 My mother was a classic city chick.

151 **Okay.**

152 You know an uptown girl, so he was definitely attracted to her looks and to the fact that she  
153 was kind of a world-class lady and he was. He came from a small town and lost his parents  
154 very early and had to work very early to get to where he was in life. He was a manager of a  
155 large company in Belgrade and he was a self made man but they were never on the same

156 page. Life was very simplistic for him. I had an issue; I was more like her so I had an issue  
157 with him. She was into reading all the things that are high tech oriented but he did not so they  
158 had intellectual clashes their whole life. They were not as a couple, they had their moments of  
159 being ok but hum looking at today's couple dynamics they would have been divorced a long  
160 time. At that time, it was frowned upon and she was already to experiment a second divorce  
161 in that particular environment which was relatively rigid and strict so she stayed with my  
162 father and my father stayed with my mother although they were, I think. It was my impression  
163 but making each other quite unhappy. So when they got into retirement, as long as they were  
164 working they were meeting other people it was kind of flowing but as they moved into  
165 retirement I noticed the tensions flaring up between them because the economic situation in  
166 Serbia in pre and post war was exceptionally depressing. The were left with each other and  
167 they could not anymore hide behind their daily professions and chores and seeing other  
168 people so once they were left alone with each other with all the unresolved, you know, issues  
169 that they had between each other I don't think they were very happy. So in a way I was almost  
170 relieved when (...) until my father had a stroke, when he died, I realized that my mother was  
171 pretty, you could say relieved in a way. She lost a partner, a lifetime partner but she was  
172 relieved that there was no cause of fight between them anymore so she could be finally what  
173 she wanted to be. But I was so I was only coming rarely to Serbia, like every couple of years  
174 because from New Zealand it was nearly impossible; it was costing a fortune in time and  
175 money so since I was busy with my own career and family all those years in New Zealand.  
176 Only in Switzerland I had a chance to come up more frequently than normal, then we kind of  
177 reconnected for a while but then I had to move to Singapore and that is when I lost them both.  
178 So I saw the friction developing between them and I am happy that, well technically my  
179 mother was relieved when he passed away. So these are my memories from that time.

180 **Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, was it your case?**

181 Well, you feel alone. Kind of. Since I was extremely self sufficient and strong headed, my  
182 personality is kind of quite (...) I embraced the old male that I am trying (...) that chivalrous  
183 man. I am so individualistic so I did not need; I was not attached with my parents because I  
184 needed them. I tried to develop all my relationships not because I needed somebody. That's.  
185 So being so independent, I never developed a dependency type of relationship to my parents  
186 so it was like very early I fought for my own freedom of choices and they realized that they  
187 would not have a chance to control me even using force so they gave up very early. I spent  
188 my whole life making my own decisions, so I could never say like oh (...) I know a lot of  
189 people are mixing these terms. You know like one thing is like pure love when you don't have  
190 emotions for them and it is a totally different relationship when you need them to support you  
191 financially, emotionally, in making decisions, these are totally different things, mixing apples  
192 and pears. I never had this dependency on anybody so any relationship that I had, being  
193 friends, females or including parents it was all based, I really enjoyed who they were and  
194 respect what they did for me all these years but I never had this dependency issues so I never  
195 had prolonged periods of missing them if you know what i mean. When you become totally  
196 independent and you know that everything that happens around you and people with you  
197 depend on you, you are so busy with it that you have no time to entertain other issues if you  
198 know what I mean?

199 **Yes, so if I understand correctly you did not particularly feel vulnerable after you lost**  
200 **your parents.**

201 I felt not for long but alone. You really realize at some point, well when they both passed  
202 away that was it. When it comes to the entire country, I don't have any other relationships  
203 apart from a few childhood friends, seeing them only once in every five years whatever, but it  
204 is a totally different story with parents because of this huge absence of thirty three years of  
205 not being with them I missed that particular closeness but we are not talking about the daily  
206 superficial daily kind of contact but I never lost the real closeness with them. I really enjoyed  
207 them as people, they never tried to limit my choices and never did anything to me that I could  
208 say, " ah they should have done that, they could have done this better" you know this kind of  
209 blabla. So I enjoyed them as they were with no reservations.



210 **And do you feel that this event, you can also separate each event depending on how you**  
211 **experienced them but did this event or those events change you as a person?**

212 Not really. It's like no not really. I was sad not to have them anymore as they gave me  
213 anything else than unconditional support. I was much closer to my mother, then my father.  
214 She had a much higher capacity to understand me better than him. Maybe there was a typical  
215 male clash between my father and I but maybe you know. My mother was really well read,  
216 how would I say it? Life wise, personally, so we had really a relationship of closeness and  
217 understanding but the second when they both passed away was just a, because they were at an  
218 advanced stage and because of my advanced stage it was kind of natural. It was sad, it was  
219 sad to be alone you know and not having anybody else. You know I enjoy now going and  
220 seeing M's (wife) family and seeing them as family and whatever. It's a real joy but from that  
221 point of view you feel sad that your parents are not there to enjoy our kids. But since I was  
222 fully independent from very early on, it's a, I did not have that daily closeness. We really  
223 understood each other well, they were really my best friends, I was sad to lose them from that  
224 perspective but knowing how hard their lives were in general and knowing they were  
225 struggling with each other for a very long time. I knew that technically from a certain angle it  
226 was a relief to pass away. You know because it becomes a struggle when you cannot resolve a  
227 relationship that you feel stuck in, financially or in any other way, it's gets like kind of torture.  
228 So they spent quite a few years torturing each other because they could not brake away from  
229 each other but they could not also be with one another. So I am guessing that from a certain  
230 angle it was a relief for both of them to pass away.

231 **You were mentioning that you were closer to your mother? Did you feel that it was more**  
232 **difficult to lose her than your father?**

233 Let me remember (...). Yeay, there was an underlying feeling that my father was always  
234 aware that I was closer to my mother than to him. He was feeling it and there was a kind of  
235 feeling of resentment in him regarding that one. After a certain age, I grew out of those issues,  
236 I realized that he was exceptionally nice and warm and unselfish person. So all the things that  
237 you know when you start to analyse your parents and you start seeing them for what they are  
238 with their faults. On the list of things that I was enjoying, my mother had more things that I  
239 could relate to rather than my father so only after a long separation, I ignored both these  
240 things that I used to, not reproach but kind of like dislike about my father but it was already  
241 that we had been separated for so many years that we'd share, they were completely killed in  
242 my mind. When I was younger, I was closer to her than him but later on life it became totally  
243 an even relationship. So I felt the same thing when he passed away and when she passed  
244 away. It was not like I was, I was less hurt by his passing and more hurt by my mother's  
245 passing because after a long separation and the with the physical distance they were both  
246 lovely people who never did anything to me that I could object to. So the nitty gritty things,  
247 the things that I preferred about her and the fact that I kind of resented him was more  
248 associated with the early twenties and mid twenties and sooner than later on in life.

249 **Do you feel that it was difficult to open up and talk about your grief when you lost your**  
250 **parents with the people surrounding you in your life?**

251 No I had no. I made a major effort my whole life not to be. I guess it's quite selfish where we  
252 come from; we are quite loud about anything that is affecting us. So where I come from you  
253 could call it now seeing all the people around the globe that I had exposure to and seeing  
254 different culture but totally different culture from ours would be Anglo-Saxon culture where  
255 you don't drown other people in your problems and in your experiences and whatever so  
256 where we come from we just open up, even in places where we should not. I am an extremely  
257 expressive person, I am an extreme extrovert so I never had issues analysing the things  
258 happening to me and sharing them with anybody so but again coming from a perspective that  
259 I decided early on in life, you probably identify with the characters from the movies or the  
260 books whatever or from the prevailing culture that you just build yourself as a well that  
261 happened this is it and you moved on. So I never dwell on anything that happens so you carry  
262 the physical pain and any other problems. I will give you an example, when I divorced my  
263 first wife, I was in Switzerland with kids. I had more issue separating from the kids than from  
264 the wife because we were a miserable couple and I did not want my kids to repeat the same

265 type of relationship, unhealthy relationship that I had with my first wife but while I was in the  
266 process of deciding to separate after ten years of marriage I was analysing the impact of kids  
267 and everything else and it took me like four to five years of daily twenty four seven analysis  
268 but still my previous company had a policy that if they would hear that anybody is in a  
269 divorce process or having a problem with finance or gambling or with debt, they would  
270 automatically ground you. Then they would wait for a confirmation of a psychiatric  
271 confirmation so nobody even noticed that I was divorcing and that I was in four or five years  
272 of an exhausting mental process. If nothing shows on me on the outside so I stayed fully  
273 functional and then my natural propensity to do that was further cemented by my unforgiving  
274 profession that technically whatever happens, you have to delay your natural responses and  
275 handle the situation first and then later on in your own time analyse whatever issues you had.  
276 You become fairly it might appear to somebody as cold but it's not, it has nothing to do with  
277 that, it's just very early on in life those decisions were made of how I was going to live the  
278 punches and then it becomes your nature, then you do the things to stay fully functional but  
279 inside you fight your own battles and whatever. So basically with parents not having any  
280 issues, not having daily closeness and not sharing anything with them, a place of residence or  
281 whatever, made it much less stressful for me than it would have been probably otherwise.

282 **Hmm.**

283 So, if I stayed in Belgrade, if we were sharing a property, if I would have lived with them,  
284 which happens, some people stay with their parents until their mid forties or whatever  
285 because of financial situations, there would be probably some form of (...) deeper relationship  
286 and attraction which could draw a line with something that becomes pathological. You know  
287 because, you know from the studies, the parents technically help to do you a favour and  
288 decide at some point to let you go. So it does not matter what mistakes you make, they have  
289 to let you, they have to decide to let you go. So my parents, I had decided that they were not  
290 going to choke me with their death and desire to control me and to be helicopter parents or it's  
291 very likely that I also fought tooth and nail for it so it's likely that they recognized it and let  
292 me be rather than trying to break my spirit. I remember very earlier the comical event, my  
293 father was... something like three or four years old, not more than that, my father was pulling  
294 my swimming trunks on the beach down, exposing my bottom but what he was thinking as a  
295 light joke, I was taking very seriously, I was chasing him to get back at him, I asked for my  
296 mother's help, please help me to catch him to kill him. The were all "aha" like giggling. But  
297 when he fell asleep on the sofa, I still remember that event, I literally knocked him out in his  
298 sleep with a shoe brush, you know this old high quality (laughs). I knocked him out into the  
299 forehead, that's how much I was upset. After this, they started taking me very seriously  
300 (laughs). After that, they were avoiding pissing me off, I must admit. Then I saw it in my  
301 daughter's first responses, they also had these, nobody can teach you these responses,  
302 somebody interferes with you, you don't like it, it does not matter your size, you take matters  
303 in your hands. I think it's some trait in you that you can't do anything with, it's instinctual so  
304 they let me be and they never interfered with any of my choices, do nothing, do something,  
305 get married, not married, where are you going to move and all that because parents have the  
306 technically the possibility to limit your choices so when I finished university, I was about to  
307 go to the US to start my flying career but it was totally an adventure because we did not have  
308 any more so I literally went to the US penniless you know and managed to stay for two years,  
309 although my visa expired after the first six months. I was working in the school because I  
310 made them like me and burned the money from school and then finished school and all that so  
311 technically they could not prevent that choice. But even the money for the first couple of  
312 months, it got me started but my life could have taken a completely direction so they decided  
313 to let me go and to untie me and this lead to me becoming fully independent and I think that  
314 this lead to me being, facing the challenges of life, you know like, moving through all those  
315 relationships and countries and jobs and visas you know it made it very much easier I must  
316 admit. For this I am eternally grateful to them, eternally grateful that they never interfered in  
317 my choices in any shape or form.

318 **And, in your opinion, what makes it more difficult to talk about losing parents**  
319 **compared to other losses we might have in life?**

320 Losing parents, I think that it's first much easier to cope with loss of parents at a later, later  
321 stages in your life, it's much easier. I must imagine that it must be very difficult when you are  
322 still dependent on them. It must be a shocking affair so I was exceptionally fortunate to lose  
323 my parents when I was already in my very advanced age. It made it much easier to cope with.  
324 Secondly, they did not tie me up to themselves emotionally or financially which would have  
325 made it much more difficult to bear. And then eventually, very unusual circumstances, I lived  
326 thousands of miles from my parents for such a long time, so they were free, it reduced the  
327 impact on the scale of stress. So the impact of these events have been diminished simply by  
328 the fact that I lost them at a very late stage in their life and mine. I was physically far away  
329 and I was naturally independent. All these three things made it much more bearable. It must  
330 be traumatically different to lose your parent when they are young. It must be shocking if  
331 somebody lives with their parents or live nearby, it must be shocking to lose them so these  
332 three facts made it dramatically easier to bear.

333 **Would you say that there is something special that happens to a person when they lose a**  
334 **parent or their parents?**

335 I tried my whole life to analyse what drives me but to the smallest little, so what excites me,  
336 so for instance if I think back of high school, If I liked a girl in high school, I would think  
337 why, do I like her because she is posh or because she is good looking or because she is smart  
338 or because she does things for me. You know I was really analysing, like slicing like an MRI,  
339 analysing my own choices and then I was able to, if I did not like my choices or what was  
340 driving me to certain decisions, I was trying to change myself as much as I could. So  
341 analysing the relationship with parents it's, I was analysing what I preferred in her and what I  
342 disliked in him and then ask myself why. It was very clear to me at a very early age and later  
343 on life when I started finishing this process of what drives me, I managed to minimize the  
344 things that I was objecting to my father, I managed to completely ignore him, brush him aside  
345 and keep him levelled in my mind to extremely loving persons because I respected their  
346 choices and when I saw other people's stories I saw what things they could not have done  
347 things differently, to allow themselves to be more selfish to keep me close to them, to get  
348 back something from me because they gave me everything when they could. So I have seen  
349 this thing in Singapore where the parents are pathologically tying, brainwashing their kids to  
350 worry and provide for them later on in life. I have seen these pathologies all around the world  
351 and luckily I was not exposed to any of those. Culturally, I have seen unbelievable things,  
352 over the years; I started to appreciate more and more my parent's choices and the way they  
353 were more and more. Let's put it this way. You know parents who provide support from their  
354 kids but it would not be a true emotional desire to have kids and everybody sees somebody  
355 else as an end to a means so it was like if we have kids then we get the relief from the  
356 government, for tax, we get support or we get an allowance. This extremely unenlightened  
357 course of action that a lot of people like to entertain, I remember seeing people with stickers  
358 on their cars, daddy for life, or mummy for life, which is really scary. This is the worst  
359 brainwashing. The government provides no support, there is no pension in Singapore, so  
360 parents remind their kids everyday that they taking care of them to ensure themselves that the  
361 kids will be there and make sure they don't make selfish choices and go somewhere else. They  
362 need to be near so that they will help them and take care of them, which is to me an ultimate  
363 pathology. I have seen it a lot in Korea, Hong-Kong, Singapore; in China it is very popular as  
364 well. I have seen it a lot in my first ex-wife too, she was a emotionally blackmailed by her  
365 parents and they were objecting to the move to New Zealand, so we were living in a country  
366 that was about to explode and they know we had limited choices to do anything and as we  
367 decided, as I decided we should move to New Zealand to take care of us, they were trying  
368 everything to step in to prevent her from joining me. So they were fighting over the influence  
369 which is, so with these events and experiences, I was appreciating my parents more because  
370 they never entertained any of those idiotic concepts, let's put it this way.

371 **Have you made any sense or attributed any meaning to your parent's death?**

372 Not really no. It's a, I took it as the most kind of role or life let's put it this way because it did  
373 not happen. You know it did not happen, you know like people in high school that lose  
374 parents in high school. Any of those would be extremely hard and difficult to explain why it

375 happened and some people will try to suppress it and not think about it. Some people will try  
376 to analyse it. I was incredibly fortunate that the parents were there during my forties and when  
377 I was fully independent. I had to ship off literally and chase adventures around the globe as I  
378 changed jobs. I must admit, it was, I was unbelievably fortunate that I lost them as such a late  
379 age in their life and mine so being anything. I think losing a parent that way is the most  
380 normal event possible as much as the death can be normal but as an inevitable part of life you  
381 know like a cycle finishing so I did not see it as anything traumatic in terms of what am I  
382 going to go through this now, how am I going to cope with this or anything like that. I did not  
383 have those issues. It happened at such a stage in my life and theirs that it looked like the most  
384 natural thing to happen, I did not expect them to live on till a hundred and fifty years because  
385 I need them or because, you know what I mean.

386 **Yes absolutely. Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your parents?**

387 Well, one thing that I can absolutely adore about them that is life with them, when it comes to  
388 handling themselves and me, came with no, it just happened to them naturally, they did not go  
389 through any particular schooling, upbringing this and that, you know, it just happened to  
390 them, for them it was natural, they realised they had to let you go. Maybe if I was weaker, if I  
391 was showing some signs of weakness, some times of attachment, I could never tell. From my  
392 side and theirs, they already had a natural propensity to let me be and I was a hundred percent  
393 on being independent and these two things worked together. My mother was, I was quite  
394 attached and she was entertaining a concept of, she was unhappy in her marriage but she was  
395 happy with the name and I think somehow she decided that I was more liker her than like  
396 him, that is kind of my assessment so she was fully satisfied and she saw the full satisfaction  
397 with her life as it turned out, from that point of view that "oh he came out the way I was  
398 hoping that he would come out", you know right?

399 **Yes.**

400 It's a. But she never loaded into manipulative attachment " oh I need you here because". I  
401 knew she was torn apart when I went to New Zealand, she knew that going away so far it  
402 would be very unlikely to see me again in terms of living next to them. Abroad of for a  
403 vacation but never living next to them again. So I cannot imagine how tearing it was for them.  
404 I cannot possibly imagine that so that's the part that I much appreciate from both of them.  
405 They did not keep me with them for their own selfish purposes that they let me go although  
406 they knew the whole country was falling apart and that they would be exposed to the harsh  
407 reality and an uncertain future. But they never allowed to mix with directions. They would not  
408 interfere in any shape or form. Each passing year, seeing how it was the case, I was  
409 appreciating (...) the only problem was that I was so busy with the whole detachment for  
410 instance, you know when I was in Singapore, you were detached from the European culture.  
411 When you came back you were very close in the physical sense and you know just a country  
412 away so it's a different story. You go on vacation and the whole emotional processes activate  
413 when I go back, so I get plugged in. You know like a Tesla car. So I go back, I live up and  
414 remember my supper and what I use to but then unfortunately because of this. Then you come  
415 back to where you live and in a very painful manner, you have to unplug in a painful manner  
416 and you have to perform instantly twenty four seven and that I find extremely difficult with  
417 this experience. I cannot naturally come back. I wish I could come back from a vacation, a  
418 trip back to Europe where I could see my friends or my parents whatever and then come back  
419 here and then analyse everything that happened and put it all where it belongs and now okay  
420 now I am ready to immerse myself again. Unfortunately, now it does not work so already on  
421 the flight back I have to completely forget how enjoyable or meaningful whatever the  
422 experience was. And I already have to start studying the procedures and manipulations and  
423 this and that you know just to fly back and then I have to take pills, melatonin, a certain  
424 regime of life and that's one thing you know that allowed me to linger on and analyse for too  
425 long those experiences. I was in the middle of a change in my career, I was changing  
426 company in 2005 so I was changing company, it was extremely risky for me. I could have  
427 stayed in Singapore, I had just started and it was ultra demanding, my father was not feeling  
428 well, they told me he was going to pass away eminently so I flew back, I was elated that I  
429 managed to come on time and he was just waiting for me to see me and then he passed away.

430 So when I was traveling back on the plane, he already had passed away and you back here  
431 and nobody gives a damn about how you feel or about this or that so I just had to continue as  
432 if nothing happened and then later only in my spare time I would remind myself what  
433 happened and what was going on and the same happened again with my mother and also at  
434 the same time I was divorcing my second wife, I am not sure, yeah I think it was something  
435 like that. You go and see her and the doctor tells you she won't be able to live much longer, I  
436 think she had three months tops you know from the onset of the diseases. And you can't be  
437 part of it, you can't be there and you can't do anything but one thing that takes away all the  
438 prolonged thing is that you instantly get preoccupied with things, you know at your  
439 destination so these are the things that keep you busy because probably when you are not too  
440 busy you have more time to think and analyse but when you live this idiotic lifestyle that I do,  
441 you can't entertain these notions for too long and you have to act quickly, very quickly and  
442 close down the topics very quickly, so that is one thing. At the end of the day, certain  
443 processes would be inevitable to hit you but just the fact that they died at a reasonably  
444 advanced aged for themselves and mine and me living so far away from them and being  
445 naturally very independent and not having daily closeness. Daily closeness can be superficial  
446 but is still a very important aspect of closeness, we changed those nappies, ate this and that,  
447 we did not have that because we did not communicate that frequently. When you lose the  
448 closeness, the only thing that stays is somebody's qualities. So you appreciate that but you no  
449 longer have the daily relationship.

450 **But since they passed, would you say that you have an ongoing bond with them?**

451 No, I just have this immense appreciation of how they handled things and I try to implement  
452 this in my life. Not to allow myself to be preoccupied by my daily interests, I try to separate  
453 these in my own actions but reminded by how fabulously they handled it.

454 **Has your view changed over time, or is this something that remained constant since  
455 their passing?**

456 Well it's a early on, as you remember, I spent a massive amount of time discussing books with  
457 mum and watching movies and movie's festivals in Belgrade so I created a specific whereas  
458 you see these guys as role models or whatever, you get formed. You read a book or watch a  
459 movie and you get impressed by some people's behaviours about how he treats women, how  
460 he treats males, how he behaves in general in his life and then you raise these values and there  
461 was a very early bond between me and my mother. My father was not much of a thinker. We  
462 divide people into thinkers and tinkers, my father was a tinker (?) my mother was a thinker. I  
463 guess it all stems from my artistic grandfather. My whole life, I was totally preoccupied with  
464 understanding myself and others in the process and I, so these are my topics, psychology and  
465 philosophy and literature and whatever. So I have no idea how I ended up in the flying  
466 business (laughs) when it comes to that about physics and chemistry but somehow I survived  
467 in this profession to this date. So early on as I developed and created that, I recognized later  
468 on in life this archetype of things that I have embraced or things that I tried to embrace in my  
469 life, that it was all at early stages influenced by my mother but I was later on appreciated in  
470 life. I can't call it otherwise than immense appreciation for the way they actually were because  
471 they have never finished any super fancy school or anything like that so it's like just a natural  
472 talent, I would not know how else to call it or instinctual behaviour which was proper so I  
473 tried to raise it and perpetuate it in my life.

474 **Would you say that you have come to terms with losing your parents?**

475 Yeah absolutely, it's a, I told you, I really saw it as much as you can see it, such a dramatic  
476 event I saw it as the most natural when it comes to the timing and how they passed away that  
477 there was not prolonged (...) they were both preoccupied by undignified old age which is a  
478 very relative thing. Somebody might be just happy to be alive and you can't blame him or tell  
479 him that it is not really dignified to live till a hundred and thirty. But some people embrace the  
480 notion that as long as you can live a dignified life, so they never needed anybody's help so in  
481 their own terms they passed away elegantly from that point of view, they were very happy  
482 and accepted it as a reasonably natural cycle.

483 **Did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since they passed  
484 away?**

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No.  
**Hmm. Should it be possible to provide a recommendation, what would you recommend people when they grieve their parents?**  
In general, it's very difficult when it comes to combinations of ages, you know like how it is going to affect somebody. For me, what I tried to do when it comes to coping with events, coping with events could be ranging from, you know, the relationships, either same sex or opposite sex, with neighbours, I try to analyse all these to a point where you have to move very quickly, life does not wait, let's put it this way. In psychology it is known that a six months process should be sufficient to cope with anything, it does not matter how traumatic it was, six months is considered to be a decent grieving period. If a person stays locked in for longer than that period which is I said it debatable, people get bogged down with the memory and they start twisting them inside out. I never had those issues; I am extremely blunt in resolving an attachment. If a person is blind, then you just walk away. I will give you an example; I was with my second wife. Although my life story does not look like somebody who, it looks like frivolous but it's never been frivolous. So I did my utter best trying to rectify my first relationship and unfortunately that person was wrong for me and I was wrong for that person so I had to terminate it. But of course it was super painful because of the kids. I could move on the same day, literally so when I was divorcing my second wife and that there were not any kids and I did not intentionally want to have any kids with her because I knew that, we understood each other perfectly, actually she was a talented psychiatrist, she had a medical masters degree and a clinical psychology and graduated from Young and we were in Zurich for a couple of years and she wrote a thesis. After ten years I totally satisfied my intellectual hunger and at an instinctive level, I am an extremely loyal person and I would have stayed with her until the rest of my life. As long as it was not a violent relationship, I would have stayed together forever but she at some point expressed desire to try something else so I was like okay, absolutely no problem, just remember that the second you walk out that door, I will never revisit that decision, once you leave that finishes and that is what happened, she departed but she was hoping she could change her mind. For me those decisions are instinctive. After ten years of being best friends anymore, I tried to make it work to the best of my ability. As we separated, I was finished with the emotional analysis of the event the same day. And I was ready for my new life and I think I met my current wife in a record time. I have no residue, as I don't go through life like sleeping. I daily analyse the responses, emotions on the same day to keep things at level so called zero, so no accumulated negative experiences, events or suspicions. That's way somebody else decides to walk out, it's instantly finished, confirm delete, and yes I can move on. So the same approach applies to parents, it's a totally different type of relationship but on the other hand I did not have the ego fights with the father or the possessive mother, with things to win her approval or to fight for my own freedom, I never had any of those issues and that's why maybe I grew up the way I did. That's why I have this immense feeling of appreciation and maybe in a huge part I am the way I am because they allowed me to be. So there is literally. When it comes to advice to people coping, technically it would only be fair; first it would be difficult to advise the opposite sex as we are less connected to the family part when we are males. So that's one. Secondly, the age is a massive part. I don't know how I would have reacted if I lost my parents in their teens or in my twenties. I cannot possibly analyse that one and give advice to somebody like that depending how they lost their loved one, how violently, a car crash or crying related events. The way I lost them was in brackets the most natural way so it was very difficult to give somebody advice, I am trying to cope with anything that life throws at me, pretty much like kickboxing, you just get hit and you continue, unless you get crippled by the hit, you just continue. I instantly reset, delete and move on. If the event, like my separation from my first wife and you know the kids, you required careful analysis whether the move was right, did I miss something, what could I learned from this event and all that, for instance that event took me, I think, four years of careful, daily analysis on things but it did not prevent me from acting, so I was fully functional but in the background I was daily analysing until I was comfortable with my choices and only then I decided to get married a second time. So you know, I think I took four or five years after the first separation but with the second one,

540 which was not requiring any analysis, I was instantly over it on the same day it was finished. I  
541 remember a friend was mentioning these cases, it was very interesting, coping with grief that  
542 there is not such thing as being hurt by somebody, it's whether we decide if we want to be  
543 hurt or not. I will give you an example, if somebody said, you know to provoke me, at a party  
544 " your mother is a whore". Well, I know that my mother is not a whore so I cannot be insulted  
545 by an idiot saying something. I can hurt a person because they have a nasty intent but I would  
546 never be hurt by something that is not true. So if a person leaves you, it's either the person is  
547 blind or insensitive to the particular value that you may bring to their life which means that it  
548 was fantastic as the sooner it happens the better, because if you get into a deeper relationship  
549 and get attached to a person that does not deserve you and then they move away later and you  
550 have kids and you have a financial arrangement that could massively impact your life. It's  
551 like good riddance (laughs). It's my first thought. It's a choice; I am just using this as an  
552 example. So being hurt, I had a lot of experience earlier on, when somebody behaved the way  
553 I would not expect them to, I would not wait one seconds. If I see the person is not behaving  
554 and it's a feeling, it does not have to be a real process like you take it to the Supreme Court  
555 with evidence. You just feel that people does not provide the peace and mind, then I just walk  
556 away instantly to reduce the damage. So you can say no to an experience. So a lot of people  
557 tend to roll on me those experiences and tend to act as victims because it's easier. It provides  
558 massive damage in the inside. And these relationships probably stem from the relationships  
559 with parents, so that later on behaviour in relationships, emotional relationships, actually it's  
560 mostly it's a replica of relationships with parents. And that was the chain that I did not want to  
561 repeat. My parents stayed in, the stayed locked a relationship that was not satisfactory for me  
562 but they still stayed in it so I did not want to be a replicate so that's why I decided after ten  
563 years of unsuccessfully trying to make it work, that it was the best thing that happened to me.  
564 I can only strongly recommend to others the same response but then again, you know,  
565 knowing the infinite intricacies of the human mind, it's very very unwise suggesting to others  
566 their responses, as they might not have your strength of resources or your background. So it's  
567 very difficult to recommend. It can be a suggested course of action. I remember people asking  
568 for advice but I don't recall people acting upon it (laughs). That's the problem. I see this on  
569 Facebook with a lot of people back home who stayed locked in unresolved issues because  
570 they grew up in relatively macho environments, you know, they can never entertain ideas that  
571 are supposed to be developed and then they are like lonely, pretending to be normal or  
572 whatever and then of course, the only thing they can turn to emotionally because their life is  
573 empty emotionless, they locked on parents. So when they pass away, they get reminded every  
574 week or every year of the emptiness of their lives. So it suddenly is an unfulfilling  
575 relationship. So I will give you an example of my first wife, she needed emotional support  
576 from a psychiatrist, she was a psychiatrist and one day he was asking her about what is good  
577 and bad about me and she could not remember one thing, she should analyse very carefully  
578 how come you can stay with somebody for then years when you can't give a straight answer  
579 to a straight question. This is what I am seeing a lot. People who did not manage to turn their  
580 relationship sin meaningful relationships. They stay in functional relationships and stay more  
581 attached to their parents and glorify their parents, simply because their parents relationship is  
582 not satisfying. These are very complicated issues so I must admit I never had as my parents  
583 did not preoccupy me with their should and should not so maybe the way I saw them coping  
584 with the majority of things I experienced so far. I had no unopened boxes. If we imagine our  
585 psyche as a dark room full of boxes, I made an effort to open up every single topic in my life,  
586 including the brutal analysis of my parents. I don't know many people like me so it's very  
587 unusual. I am trying to find people with whom I can speak with such freedom; I would not  
588 say breadth but the ability to be soundly analytical. I did not have the no go areas.

589 **Indeed. You are preaching to the choir.**

590 Laughs

591 **Is there anything else that you would like to share or a question you think we should**  
592 **have asked?**

593 No, thank you.

594 **Well thank you very much for sharing. It's an interesting process, there were a lot of**  
595 **interesting input and I will be able to analyse with the other interviews and see if there**  
596 **are any trends that come out from there. Thank you so much for your precious time.**  
597 Sure. Anytime.

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(01:36:20)



## Appendix F5: Interview 5\_13June19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype with the video option.

Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Could I please ask you to present yourself?**

2 Do you want me to tell you who I am?

3 **Yes please.**

4 I am H, is this what you want?

5 **Yes exactly.**

6 Right. I am sixty-eight years old. I am married, Second marriage, two children. F (daughter)  
7 who is thirty-seven and K (daughter) who is thirty-five. And I have been retired but I am  
8 coming back into work now, I am a doctor, a GP but I have quite a lot of surgical background  
9 as well. I lost my two parents, they were both eighty-nine when they died and my dad is now  
10 over, my mum was 2009 and my dad was about ten years before that, yes a good time ago  
11 now, twenty years ago. There was quite a difference in the age group between mum and dad. I  
12 live in XXX by the sea, by XXX, I am very very happy and I have two dogs, as you  
13 have heard already. What more would you like?

14 **Right. Thank you for that. Could you please provide some information on your family  
15 structure, if you have any siblings essentially?**

16 Yes I have a brother and a sister both alive, my brother is eighteen months older than I am  
17 and my sister is two and a half years younger than I am. No other siblings, we come from  
18 quite a small family.

19 **Right.**

20 I have no other aunts and uncles, they all dead now, my mother's side of the family was all  
21 cancer and my father's side of the family was from heart disease.

22 **Was it the case for your parents who had the same diseases?**

23 Yes, exactly, my mum died from bladder cancer and my dad died from cardiovascular  
24 disease.

25 **Thank you very much for that. Now down to the core of it, how was it for you to lose  
26 your parents?**

27 I think I lost my father actually a year before he died, it sounds like an odd thing to say but he  
28 had pneumonia, a year before he died and so I sort of lost the essence of my father at that time  
29 and he was very (...) frail after that. So the year after that he was very frail and not the  
30 dynamic person that I knew up until then. He had had a stroke when he was sixty-four but  
31 recovered very well from it and he was still gardening, helping us with moving house,  
32 decorating, very much a loving husband to my mum and a very loving father. So I went  
33 through that process of mourning a year before he died and we knew he was dying. Mum was  
34 a GP as well, a doctor, my sister as well is a doctor, all the females of the family were  
35 doctors. And we nursed dad at home towards the end and I was sleeping on the floor in his  
36 bedroom the night he died. it was very sad. It affected my eldest daughter really quite badly  
37 because she was very close to her grandfather and she had been (...) mum and dad lived with  
38 us when I first had my daughter and so the bond that you get between grandparents and  
39 grandchildren is very strong and he spent a lot of time looking after her and being with her.

40 Can you hear me?

41 **Yes, there was a freeze but we are back on track.**

42 Is that ok, can you hear me now?

43 **Yes, thanks.**

44 For mum, it was different because I had mum live with us, with B and I when I moved back  
45 in Preston in 2002, so we were much much closer then and it was a very powerful bond. Mum

46 was a dominant person, a bit like my eldest and she, I think as a child I was a bit frightened of  
47 her and dad was a bit of the softer part of the partnership but as she got older she gave up  
48 some of this dominance and so we got to share a lot more together and her death was very  
49 hard and in fact it is still hard. I find it very difficult talking about it. So as I was taking her to  
50 the hospital and back, we were both working in the same practice and so we shared the  
51 hospital visits and the care of her and we looked after her between us through her final days.  
52 And I think I am the softer one of the two of us, as I quite never recovered from her death.  
53 When my eldest was there with us, she was just a little one, I looked after her during the  
54 daytime, and my sister and F were there overnight to look after her overnight. So she took ten  
55 days to die, which was very hard and as a doctor I felt we should be able to do things much  
56 better. My sister and I have done a lot of terminal care work and I still did not think we had  
57 done enough to help her to die with dignity and you know well. So what was the impact on  
58 me. Well you see, I don't really like talking about still but I still was doing terminal care work  
59 and in fact it brought back the death of my aunt who was mum's younger sister. She died  
60 when she was forty four from breast cancer and she was a bit like there was mum and F and  
61 me and we were like equi-distance in age, so she was like my big sister and it sort of brought  
62 back all the loss from that time as well. It does not matter at what age you lose the people you  
63 love; there is a big loss to it. Hmm, yeah.

64 **Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent or both parents, would you say**  
65 **that was your case?**

66 Yes. I suppose there is a vulnerability on two fronts. As a daughter and as a doctor. The  
67 daughter, yes, I knew mum was eighty nine but apart from the cancer, she was a very fit  
68 eighty nine years old and I wanted her to go on and on as a mum because we shared such a lot  
69 together. And I lost my father again when mum died because we use to talk about dad a lot  
70 and she was the last of the older generation and you lose the whole of that generation, apart  
71 from my brother and sister. It was an expectation I had with myself to help my mother to die  
72 with dignity so it puts questions in your brain, are you a good enough doctor and it affected  
73 my brain and my performance when I was back at work. And I think it did in a way. I still had  
74 to look after dying people and still had to identify cancers when they could be treated instead  
75 of when they were just diagnosed and I could not treat them. So there was that. But my  
76 brother and sister were very good. They are less emotional but I think my brother felt it as  
77 well as he lost his wife, when she was sixty-five, she had really horrible death, she's had an  
78 auto-immune disease that affected her blood vessels and she bled to death in the end. So I was  
79 him, when she died, and it's all that re-visiting with death, every time you revisit previous  
80 deaths and it depends how close you were to what impact it had on you. I think it brought  
81 back my grandfather's death as well, he had a heart attack, all of a sudden and I was in my  
82 teens at the time and I was very close to my grandfather but not so close to my grandmother,  
83 so my grandmother's death hardly impacted on me, it's an awful thing to say but it hardly  
84 impacted on me but my grandfather's death did. Yes.

85 **You have already answered that question on a professional level; did you feel it changed**  
86 **you as a person to lose your parents?**

87 As a person. I think I rationalized it. Both my parents were eighty nine and strangely enough  
88 when I am going back to work, I am doing half time general practice and half time palliative  
89 care, so I am going to be re-visiting that all the time but I am going to take with me some of  
90 the things I learnt from being with people I love who have died. And looking after people  
91 who are in the process of dying and it is going to hurt a bit, I know that but I have a lot of  
92 insight into dying and how to comfort people. Yeah, so that is where I am at the moment. As  
93 a person how does it affect me? It affected me a lot to begin with, I cried a lot to begin with,  
94 well yes it is me, I am the more emotional person. I am like F (daughter), F (daughter) is an  
95 emotional person and I am an emotional person. My second daughter holds everything inside,  
96 she is just like my sister, just like my sister, holds everything inside and does not let much  
97 out. And I am more likely to tell you exactly how I am feeling and crying.

98 **Did you feel that it was difficult to open up, to talk about your grief or any problems you**  
99 **had or negative emotions you felt, you can also dissociate between the two events. Did**  
100 **you feel that it was difficult to talk about it?**

101 Yes. Yes, partly because I still want to cry now, even after ten years. When I talk about it I  
102 get very emotional and I have never recovered

103 **I am so sorry H, it cut off.**

104 Yes, it's very fuzzy the line breaks up a lot.

105 **I am so sorry about that.**

106 Well I got you back.

107 **Apologies, I interrupted you in the middle of your sentence.**

108 I think Skype from XXX isn't great. Oh right I think that contributes between my forest and  
109 Ireland. Sorry I forgot the question?

110 **That it was difficult to open up about your grief.**

111 Right, yes, it was whom I talked to really. I went back to work very quickly, I had been off  
112 work for three weeks. My sister was working because it could not be the two of us at the same  
113 time so she was working while I was looking after mum and so I went straight back to work  
114 and I did not go through that proper stage of grieving and like talking through it and I did not  
115 want to upset the children. My brother did not want to talk about it at all, so I sort of, I talked  
116 to B my husband and he was very good about it and he lost his smother a year after, so that  
117 was quite difficult for all of us but I should have talked to somebody but I am a typical doctor,  
118 I hold it inside and I don't do whatever I recommend others to do, to seek grief counselling. I  
119 did not do any of that but then (...) I don't know if I told you but my first husband left us, and  
120 I did not get much chance to do everything about that either because I was trying to hold the  
121 family together and work, get extra work because we were very short of money and we were  
122 in debt and all that bit so, I have never done the counselling, getting to grips with things and I  
123 just carried it through, unfortunately I carried it through from that to my father's death, no  
124 sorry my aunt's death, my father's death and my mother's death and it's still sort of rattling  
125 around in my head, catching out from time to time. And there will always be things, things on  
126 the television that I am watching and then I think I am going to cry. I have to leave the room  
127 and just get myself under control again.

128 **And in your opinion, what makes it more difficult to lose a parent compared to other  
129 losses we might experience in life?**

130 Because of shared memories and I come from a very loving family, we were all very close as  
131 a loving family, brother and sister, and mum and dad and aunts and uncles, the immediate  
132 family were very close as well so each time we lost a member of the family, the ones that  
133 remained became more precious to us and of course F (daughter) has no children, K  
134 (daughter) has no children so there is still, there is only the two siblings, my two children and  
135 my brothers children don't have any children so we are going to come to a full stop. When I  
136 peg out, we are probably going to end on a full stop. So it's nicer when you got a bigger  
137 family to share things with but we are getting to smaller and smaller families now.

138 **And in your opinion, is there anything special that happens when we lose a parent?**

139 Sorry can you say that again?

140 **Is there anything special that happens when we lose a parent?**

141 Anything special, yes go on.

142 **No that's it, that is the question**

143 Right, anything special that happens when we lose a parent. Well I have to say, my brother is  
144 the eldest of us now and he is 70 and I shall be 70 next year, I suppose we have to take the  
145 role of the senior members of the family and to be responsible and hmm, I suppose and that's  
146 the biggest thing. When we lose our parents, we are now the senior generation, that's quite a  
147 responsibility really; I think I will have to stop being so stupid really.

148 **Hmm, well that's very interesting. Have you made any sense or given any meaning to  
149 losing your parents?**

150 I think it's just a fact of life. Losing your parents, you get to a certain age and we were lucky  
151 ours got to eighty-nine. I think it was quite an achievement for that generation. And they lived  
152 hard lives really.

153 Hello.

154 This is my husband B. Come and say hello to Gabby.

155 **Hello. It's nice to meet you.**

156 Hi Gaby.  
157 Here is your tea.  
158 Thank you sweetheart.  
159 **Do you feel that you have some sort of link to your parents, like an ongoing bond?**  
160 Do I still have a link now to my parents. Yes I still talk to my mum. And the strange thing of  
161 course, every once in a while, I want to pick up the telephone and ring her because there will  
162 be a thing and I will go " oh mum will want to know about this". We, my sister and I split  
163 mum and dad's ashes between us, they were cremated and half her ashes are in my sisters  
164 garden and half their ashes are in my garden in France so she's still there. And she's growing  
165 really good things, we have got a smashing tree that she's been scattered around and that is  
166 doing extremely well. So yes, do I, I still think about her a lot, sometimes dream about her  
167 actually.  
168 Gaby, the one in France. The dog kept trying to dig her up. I would call Helen and say "he's  
169 trying to dig mum up again".  
170 **Oh no (laugh)**  
171 Oh yes naughty dog. Oh dear. We will always continue, as children we will always continue  
172 to think about our parents, I think, unless we did not like our parents. And the more we have  
173 shared then the more I am likely to be talking to her, in my brain or dreaming about her. And  
174 my dad, of course I say that but it is not as fresh in my memory as mum's death and in some  
175 ways it was of course almost a blessing when dad died because you know he stumbled on for  
176 another twelve months and not enjoy it at all. Yeah.  
177 **And do you think that this dialogue that you have maintained with your mother, has it**  
178 **helped you to cope or, on the contrary, does it make it more difficult to cope with the**  
179 **situation?**  
180 No it's a bit like having her with me, which is a comfort, which is a comfort. And, my eldest  
181 daughter and I talk about mother a lot. That is another dialogue, which I have that keeps mum  
182 alive. F (daughter) wrote a diary, when she was in XXX, every week she wrote to mum and  
183 mum and I read through her letters and the pictures she sent from Japan and F (daughter) had  
184 a stronger relationship with my mother at that time because I think it was because I was still  
185 living on the XXX so I was still living and working away. Hmm and she was writing to her  
186 granny from XXX so every once in a while, I would go and read some of her letters and that  
187 keeps her with me through F (daughter).  
188 **Hmm.**  
189 Yes. I think that is right.  
190 **You just said a word the Wirral, Sorry I do not know what it refers to?**  
191 That is ok it's called the XXX peninsula and it's opposite XXX so the river XXX  
192 comes up. XXX is on this side and XXX is on the XXX on the other side of the  
193 XXX.  
194 **Right. Okay. Thank you.**  
195 So we lived there. The children lived from when we were, well the children, F (daughter)  
196 from when she was five until she went off to University.  
197 **Right, Okay, thanks for the precision.**  
198 (Laughs) A geography lesson.  
199 **Yes, I am actually half English, so I am embarrassed I have to ask.**  
200 It's only a little peninsula; it's very old though.  
201 **Would you say your view on losing your parents has changed over time?**  
202 Hmm. I suppose it's adjusted through time. Is it as painful, obviously not as there is a distance  
203 from it. Thinking know. I don't think it's any less painful, not less painful but maybe I don't  
204 think about it much but when I do think about it it's still as painful. Does that make sense?  
205 **Absolutely. Would you say you have come to terms with losing your parents?**  
206 Oh yes, I have had to come to terms with it, because life goes on and you know, she would  
207 have been ninety nine if she was still alive and her family died in their seventies so as I said,  
208 we were very lucky to have her until she was eighty nine because she was such a dynamic  
209 little person.

210 **And you were mentioning that you had support from your husband B and I also**  
 211 **understood your children were also a resource, did you find support anywhere else?**  
 212 No, not really. My brother and sister obviously as we were going through the same process.  
 213 And me  
 214 Yes I did say you. But I did not seek support elsewhere either. That was my fault and it was  
 215 offered to me. Then it's quite difficult to offer doctor's support, it is difficult. If I was a  
 216 layperson, they might have offered counselling but as a doctor you don't get offered those  
 217 things. It's like when I was having my children, when I was pregnant for the first time, it's  
 218 different to looking after pregnant people because things are happening inside you aren't they,  
 219 that you have no idea about and people make an assumption that if you are a doctor you know  
 220 everything about it and I am swimming in shark infested waters. I have no idea what is going  
 221 on and I am not offered counselling so there are certain things that are not offered to  
 222 professionals that are offered to laypeople. So it's an interesting common but it's quite  
 223 common, you have to be careful with doctor colleagues, especially grief counselling.  
 224  
 225 **It makes me think of this expression in French" ce sont les cordonniers qui sont les plus**  
 226 **mal chaussés" I think there is a saying in English about the shoemaker too that has the**  
 227 **worst shoes or something.**  
 228 Yes. Exactly.  
 229 **And did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since you came to**  
 230 **terms with your parents.**  
 231 Hmm, I was quite depressed when I lost mum and I don't think I recognized how depressed I  
 232 was, as I was working at the same time so you can't, you have to be on the ball, you can't  
 233 allow yourself to be overwhelmed or depressed if you are working and looking after a lot of  
 234 people but I retired in July, the year that mum died and we went over to France. B (husband)  
 235 and I moved to France and we lived there for six years and I know that at that time I was not  
 236 functioning very well. And as I said, B (husband) was very good with me at that time because  
 237 he loved my mum. He was very very fond of my mum and we were struggling to cope  
 238 together and we were busy with renovating.  
 239 And then we lost one of our loveliest dogs.  
 240 So typical. It was one death too many that year. We'd actually had a series, we lost a good  
 241 friend who died of bowel cancer and he was only in his early sixties and then B's (husband's)  
 242 mum died and then we lost our Spaniel. A lovely little Spaniel dog. So it was a whole series  
 243 and I think it's the accumulation of loss isn't it that makes it, so four big events one after the  
 244 other, you are looking for the next person to die.  
 245 **What would you recommend to people who are grieving their parents?**  
 246 For the loss of their parents?  
 247 **Yes.**  
 248 I still think that grief counselling is helpful and especially if the counsellor is someone they  
 249 don't know because you can actually talk and cry. If it is someone that you know, it is quite  
 250 difficult to cry. Well for me it's difficult to cry as it upsets other people and I don't like  
 251 upsetting other people. How do I say that? The other thing is to be able to talk to your family  
 252 about pictures photographs that you got, going through your photograph albums and being  
 253 able to comfort each other, share the comfort and not to have to be strong all the time which is  
 254 the problem about being the senior generation as you have to comfort the ones below you and  
 255 they should not have to be comforting you. That is silly because why would not they want to  
 256 comfort you. That's silly because I know F (daughter) was so upset when her grandmother  
 257 died and she was away from home, so how can you put that on somebody you really love.  
 258 You can't put your grief on that person. I don't really know how she coped as she was away  
 259 from home, I could not comfort her. Anyway.  
 260 **It's such a natural process to lose your parents, did you find it difficult to be able to live**  
 261 **that grief because society considers such a rite a passage that is part of nature? Did you**  
 262 **feel it was difficult to be allowed to grieve?**  
 263 That's a yes and a no. It depends on the age of the person you are talking to. If you are talking  
 264 to a younger generation who has not experienced loss then yes they think your parents are

265 going to reach a certain age and they are going to die. That's a lack of experience. For people  
266 of your own age who have already experienced loss then I think there is a lot more  
267 understanding and sharing of comfort in that age group. Yes.

268 **Is there a question you think we should have asked you in this interview?**

269 Maybe a question regarding a possible change in the relationship with your own children  
270 when you lose your parents (unintelligible segment).

271 **Is there a question you think we should have asked you in this interview?**

272 No, thank you.

273 **Thank you for participating in this process and sharing this intimate experience of**  
274 **yours. I much appreciate.**

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(40:00)

## Appendix F6: Interview 6\_16June19

Comments: The interview took place over the phone.

Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Thank you so much for participating to the interview.**

2 You are very welcome, I am glad I can help out.

3 **Just to get started, could I please ask you to present yourself?**

4 You mean how grief presented itself?

5 **No, sorry, to briefly present yourself?**

6 Oh briefly present myself, my name is C, I am Irish and I have lived in France for forty years  
7 now. Married, the mother of four children, I am sixty six years of age, very sporty and  
8 outgoing, I love to socialize, love to play golf and many other activities. How is that, should I  
9 give you some more?

10 **That is fantastic, thank you; I would also like to ask you in terms of your family  
11 structure in terms of your siblings and anything specific with regards to your parents.**

12 Ok so we were my parents and five children. I was the second in the family. My oldest sister  
13 was just eighteen months older than me she died at a young age, she died at thirty-seven.  
14 Hmm. I still have my brother who is three years younger than me and then I still have my two  
15 younger sisters, one who has just spent a week with me here, they are seven and nine years  
16 younger than me, voilà. We are very close thank heavens, we see a lot of each other and  
17 spend a lot of time together.

18 **And can I ask you; have you lost a parent or both parents?**

19 Yes, I lost both my parents, my father in 2001, he died, I think he was about eighty three  
20 years of age when he died and my mother in 2005 and she was eighty years of age when she  
21 died.

22 **And can I ask you how old you were when they passed away?**

23 (...) Wait till I see, for my mother that is going back, hmm, fourteen years so I would have  
24 been fifty two and for my father we are talking about eighteen years so I was like what forty  
25 seven or forty eight I suppose.

26 **Right. And can I please ask you to detail the circumstances of their passing?**

27 Well my father had had bad health for several years, he'd had cardiac problems, he'd had  
28 blood circulation problems, so the last fifteen years of his life he had many health problems so  
29 he was in and out of hospital regularly. Hmm, so he died in fact of multiple clotting to his  
30 lungs. My mother died of a melanoma, hmm, which I spotted actually, a melanoma that  
31 started on her arm, (exhales) and she was operated on and it all happened very quickly. I think  
32 she was diagnosed in October, November and she had her first operation and died about six  
33 months later, hmm, from a brain tumour, which was provoked by the melanoma. Voilà.

34 **And can I ask how was it for you to lose your parents?**

35 Sorry what was the question Gabrielle, how?

36 **How was it for you to lose your parents? You can also separate both events if they were  
37 experienced in a different way.**

38 Yes. For my father it was expected, I mean, because sometimes when I'd see him suffering  
39 and I saw him suffering quite a lot and I would be like "oh poor daddy, I hope it does not go  
40 on for too long". I went to Ireland and spent time with him while he was in the hospital and  
41 also to spend time with my mother, so when the phone call came to me to tell me that he had  
42 passed away, I was expecting it but you are never prepared for the death of your parent. You  
43 are never prepared; it's at the same time a terrible shock and an immense sadness.

44 **Hmm.**

45 For my mother, it was quite sudden, as I said she died of melanoma, it was I who spotted her  
46 problem on her arm and asked her to go and see the doctor, very quickly they operated on to  
47 take out an under arm ganglion (lymph node in French), what they called ganglion (lymph  
48 node in French). And very quickly it spread to her brain, so one day I was in the car on my  
49 way to Brest one day when my sister called me to say that she had been diagnosed with hmm  
50 brain cancer so I went back to XXX immediately and spent the last three months of her life  
51 with her. We took her down to my sister's house and took care of her over there and Gabrielle  
52 even I speak now, I want to cry again as I don't think I will ever get over my mother's death.

53 **Hmm.**

54 I adored her, I loved her, she was in fact a bit like a child for me, I kind of became her mother  
55 as she got older because she was a very lovely person but quite simple in her way, and even  
56 today, when something nice happens in the family, I want to share it with her and I can't share  
57 it with her anymore but she is still very much a presence in my life, a very strong presence in  
58 my life and I think we can say the same thing with my sister as well. We were talking about it  
59 the other day, so it's a grief that you never really come to terms with. It's a huge loss; it's a  
60 huge loss. Voilà.

61 **You were saying that they were difficult experiences to lose both parents, this might  
62 seem like a naive question but what do you think makes it so difficult?**

63 Well first of all, you are faced with illness, hmm, to see your parents becoming really very ill.  
64 In my mother's case as it was brain cancer she quickly lost use of her coordination, her hands  
65 her legs so that in itself you are confronted with illness and that is a terrible shock. And, you  
66 are also confronted with death in a very drastic way and probably with your own death as  
67 well. You really keep coming to the full realization that life does come to an end, that even  
68 those very close to you that you love very much disappear and you know that one day you  
69 will go yourself as well so it's a very dark confrontation with loss and with the meaning of  
70 death.

71 **Hmm. And some people feel vulnerable after losing a parent, would you say that was  
72 your case?**

73 Hmm. Did I feel vulnerable? Maybe not, I don't remember particularly feeling vulnerable, I  
74 was at a time you know when I had teenage children and very busy with my family and taking  
75 care of people, it was in a way that "well that generation is gone, now it's us that have to be  
76 there and we have to be strong for our children". Hmm, so no, I don't think I remember  
77 feeling vulnerable, I remember feeling I needed to be strong now and you know to take the  
78 place of my mother in the family, because I am the eldest now of our family, so I suppose I  
79 felt I had to take the role of the older figure in the family if you like, so I tried to be as strong  
80 as possible but yes when you are going through it, you feel vulnerable, it's a terrible  
81 experience of, hmm, suffering and waiting for it to happen and wanting for it to happen as  
82 you don't know how long you are going to be able to deal with the tension and the fear and  
83 when it does happen, there is the shock of it all happening. So it's a mixture of very very  
84 strong emotions, a rollercoaster that you never had in your life before. Well I never had in my  
85 life before, well I had it once before when I lost my sister as I said, she was only thirty seven,  
86 she died in very tragic circumstances as she died in childbirth so that was really an appalling  
87 experience as well. So losing my mother was very very difficult.

88 **Hmm. Did you feel that this event changed you as a person?**

89 Did it change me as a person? Hmm, I think it made me much more sensitive, hmm, I think I  
90 became much more aware of all she had brought me in my life and what I wanted to give to  
91 my own children. Hmm. I feel very much, that I, the process of growing older as we are now  
92 experiencing, I don't want my children to be aware of that because I want my children to  
93 experience their lives as fully and, young as they are today, you know young lives, you know  
94 C, our younger son is out there, working away and enjoying his life so I want them to live  
95 every moment and I don't want them, I want to protect them from what the difficulty of life  
96 can be when people close to you become ill and the suffering that it can cause. I want to be  
97 strong, I try to prepare them, I want to be strong for them. I think that is what I really learnt  
98 from that experience. And give strength to them to help them with the difficult situations, they  
99 will have to come across in life.



100 **Hmm. Hmm. And did you feel that it was difficult to open up or talk about your grief or**  
101 **any difficulties you might have had when you lost your parents?**

102 Hmm, no. I am somebody who talks quite easily. I need to talk so thank heavens I have C  
103 (husband) of course and my two sisters, one of them I am very close to, so we did talk a lot  
104 and we still do talk a lot. As I said, she just spent a week here with me. And we still talk quite  
105 often about my mother, even though it's quite a number of years later. We talk about them as  
106 a couple as well. So no, I talked about it and I think you have to talk about it. And you have  
107 moments when you are incredibly sad, we went away for instance, my mother died in July  
108 and my youngest sister was remarrying again in August, her first marriage had fallen a part  
109 she's the mother of two young twins and she had met somebody and she was remarrying in  
110 the month of August, so not even a month after the death of my mother, and I thought that  
111 that was going to be very difficult to deal with but in fact it turned out to be a joyous  
112 occasion, because, it was a happy moment, and at the same time the three of us, the three  
113 sisters were terribly sad that my mother was not here because you know she was really  
114 looking forward to being there. And she was not there. What happened between the time she  
115 died, we were very occupied with the wedding that was coming up, also summer we go down  
116 to our house in Brittany and I remember we had our children and some friends from America  
117 who were there so it helped me get through that difficult time but at the same time I was  
118 deeply saddened about it.

119 **Sometimes, losing parents is seen as a rite of passage, a natural process in the best case**  
120 **scenario, did you feel it was socially acceptable to talk about your grief?**

121 Sorry Gabrielle, I did not quite get that, was it socially acceptable to talk about it?

122 **Yes. Did you feel that it was socially acceptable to express your grief outside of the**  
123 **family, let's say to friends?**

124 No, I feel you just need to grief, maybe just very close friends, yes probably, other than with  
125 the family but with other people, hmm, no I remember for instance i had to go through a very  
126 difficult situation, C (husband) had German business friends coming to stay with us the night  
127 before my father died and I remember sitting there, trying to talk to them and it was a very  
128 difficult situation as you are so overwhelmed and stunned by the situation and what has  
129 happened to you. I still tried to keep up the face, I tried to do that several times with people,  
130 you try to get on with your family and you know that everybody loses their parent at some  
131 stage, so you don't try and stick that on others but, no people like very close dear friends, like  
132 your mother or V (friend), we would talk about it.

133 **Right.**

134 People tend to be very "pudique", hmm what is the word in English?

135 **Oh yes what is the word in English, it's not shy, would you say private?**

136 Private, yes, discreet, private, yes, you do not want to show your emotions to everybody  
137 either hmm, when you are a certain age, maybe when you are twenty years but when you are  
138 at a certain age as I was you have to put a face to a certain extent and let people understand  
139 that you are coping with the grief that you are going through.

140 **Hmm. And did you experience any differences in both situations, when you lost your**  
141 **mother and when you lost your father?**

142 In some ways and it was also a very difficult situation for my mother and for my brother and  
143 sister living in Dublin, I could not help to have a certain sense of relief as he was not suffering  
144 anymore and the poor man was told to have to go home and was told that he had to go to a  
145 medical institution. And he told the doctor that he would never do that and that he had a  
146 daughter in XXX that would take care of him. So in his mind, he would have come to me and  
147 I would have taken care of me but thank god my poor mother would have been incapable of  
148 taking care of him because he was a big man and he could not move properly, he couldn't  
149 walk, at the end we were feeding him but he had his mind completely, up till the moment that  
150 he died, he was fully conscious of what was happening so I think to a certain extent there was  
151 a certain relief that he was not suffering anymore and that the last fifteen years were finished  
152 and that my mother might be able to have some sort of a quality of life for the few years or for  
153 the number of years that she might have left, as it turned out it was only four years in fact.  
154 Whereas, when my mother was concerned, I was not ready to let her go, I was not ready to

155 lose her at all, that was really devastated and as I said it happened over just a few months.  
156 One day I was with her, she seemed to be in good health, we did lots of things together and  
157 we went out to see friends, we had some really good quality time together and I just noticed  
158 one or two things that were a little bit strange and in fact she had brain cancer and it evolved  
159 very very quickly so that was very hard and sad. She herself realised that she was very ill and  
160 in fact we had one extraordinary evening with her and my sister, as I said we nursed her in my  
161 sister's house and we were having a good glass of wine and we started talking and she was  
162 saying that she was sad at the idea that she was going to leave and of course her level of  
163 consciousness went down after quickly after the, (unintelligible segment due to overlapping  
164 speech) evolved and we took care of another two weeks before she died, she had to go into  
165 palliative care. She needed to be administered morphine as the person gets more ill they have  
166 to administer more morphine so she was in the hands of professional doctors so the last two  
167 weeks, we had a little prayer but it was a very desperate, bad time.

168 **Thank you for sharing.**

169 Hmm.

170 **Oops sorry.**

171 No go for it.

172 **I was going to ask if you felt that the process of grief was more complex with the person  
173 with whom you had the strongest bond?**

174 Yes, definitely with my mother, it was very strong. And especially considering what is  
175 happening in your family with losing your sister

176 **Hmm.What do you think makes it more difficult to talk about losing a parent than other  
177 losses in our lives?**

178 What is more difficult to talk about it. Hmm. It's just this very strong bond you have with  
179 your parents and that you don't fully realize how strong it is until the day they are no longer  
180 there. It is a bond, hmm, that really comes to the form when you have children of your own  
181 and you become a mother and know the love that you have for your child and you realize that  
182 your parents have this intense love for you as well and they give up so much of their life for  
183 your well being. And for my sister well that, Yeah I fully came to realise what they meant for  
184 me and for my children because my children wepted them very deeply, they were very  
185 attached to them and you know they came over to us regularly and I can't help think about  
186 them too. That very strong bond between us human beings and our parents it's something that  
187 lasts all your life until the day they go and until the day you leave this world as well  
188 (trembling voice).

189 **Hmm.**

190 And funnily enough Gabrielle, I have a beautiful photo of them in front of me, I am sitting in  
191 my living room if we would have Skyped I could have shown it to you, and there is aver  
192 beautiful photograph of them on their 50th wedding anniversary. I have a nephew in XXX  
193 who is a professional photographer and he took this wee beautiful photo in black and white  
194 and it's just really so perfectly them. My mother is so (smiley)? in her face and my face he  
195 looked at her because he adored her, I mean they very close as a couple, my father really  
196 adored my mother. I mean like everybody they could drive each other crazy, I mean my  
197 mother did not always have the patience that you need in the last years because when you are  
198 living with somebody who is constantly sick and has health problems it's not an easy burden  
199 to carry at all but they had great love for each other and they transmitted that love to us. I  
200 think it's a very precious gift in life and I think it makes the difference into having children  
201 that are well balanced and who can deal with the problems they will come across in life and  
202 overcome the obstacles that you have to overcome.

203 **Absolutely. And have you made any sense or come up with a meaning for your parents'  
204 death?**

205 Have I come up with a meaning. I am catholic and a lot of the time I believe deeply in god.  
206 My mother was very religious and transmitted her love of god to me and my belief in god and  
207 my belief in an afterlife. There are moments when I doubt of course like everybody, very  
208 (unintelligible segment due to overlapping speech) Irish. And I truly believe that where she is

209 concerned, my father was too in fact, that they lived on and rest in eternal peace and I hope  
210 and I pray regularly that they rest in eternal peace.

211 **Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to them?**

212 Hmm. Yes. I think if something happens to me tomorrow, the first people I would meet or  
213 speak, whether it be a question of religious faith or the actual death process, I think the first  
214 people I would see would be my mother. And I think about that because when she was very ill  
215 in the last two weeks, my mother was orphaned when she was very young, she lost her mother  
216 when she was only twelve and her father when she was fifteen and she was an only child. So  
217 the people she was close to, one in particular was an aunt that was very kind to her and took  
218 care of her, she took an interest in young children and when my poor mother, in the last  
219 couple weeks of life, when she sometimes talked, she could see this aunt in the room with her,  
220 it was, what you call hallucinations probably because the brain was damaged by the cancer  
221 but when she died she probably went through a process of being close to the people she was  
222 close with and with the people she wanted to be with again.

223 **Hmm.**

224 And I believe that's the way it will happen to me as well. It's the way I imagine death. I mean  
225 a read a book, you probably heard about it, I can't remember the name of her "near death  
226 experiences" there were many researchers done on near death experiences in many countries  
227 and she collected experiences of people who were actually declared dead and have come back  
228 to life but not quite and she describes the processes of seeing the light and flying into a tunnel  
229 and seeing people that they loved and really do believe that that is what is going to be. And in  
230 fact, I had a very close friend here, you probably knew her M (friend)?

231 **The name does not ring a bell.**

232 M (friend) was from South America, from Columbia and her sister in fact was a doctor and  
233 her husband was a doctor and she (the sister) had contracted a very rare illness and she was  
234 only in her late twenties and she was actually declared dead by the doctors and they left M  
235 and her mother to grieve with her sister who was dead and in fact, her sister was not dead,  
236 somebody came in to check her pulse and in fact she was not dead, she came back although  
237 she was described clinically dead 100%. And she described the whole process she's been  
238 through, she described the whole process and she described that when she was dying she  
239 could hear the doctor's voices next to her bed, although as far as they were concerned, she was  
240 unconscious. She could hear their conversation and she knew that there was a holy picture at  
241 the back of the bed and she also knew that her husband (unintelligible segment) so it's quite  
242 an extraordinary story (unintelligible segment) so I cling to that story to that sort of belief that  
243 at the moment of going it's an experience that you will see the people you have loved very  
244 closely in your life.

245 **Hmm. Absolutely.**

246 After that to describe an afterlife would be very difficult. There are days I believe and there  
247 are days I find it hard to believe (unintelligible segment).

248 **You mentioned earlier that you still had a dialogue with your mother for instance in  
249 some situations. Would you say you still have an ongoing bond in your daily life?**

250 I have none. I have a photograph of her and I have something in my handbag, which never  
251 ever left her, rosary beads, I don't know if you know what rosary beads are?

252 **Hmm.**

253 And I have them on me all the time so that's my way of keeping a close bond with her. I also  
254 have a piece of jewellery as well that belonged to her so yes that's the way of keeping a close  
255 bond and as I said when something happy happens in the family, you know the birth of a baby  
256 or when I see my grandchildren, I often think " oh mum I would love to share this with you"  
257 then you realise ouch she is no longer there. So yes it's a bond Gabrielle that impregnates your  
258 whole being forever. But I have to say I had a very happy relationship with my mother,  
259 overall I had a very good relationship with my mother, my younger sister was not the case, it  
260 was quite different for her, I think her life was quite a different experience but yes. But she  
261 would not deny either that my mother was a very loving and kind person

262 **And would you say that this ongoing bond, helps to cope, or, on the contrary, does it  
263 make it more difficult to move on?**

264 I think it helps to cope; it's a way of still keeping them in your lives, somehow or another. Of  
265 making sense of what a life is because every individual is unique and extraordinary, every  
266 individual. When I see my grandchildren being born, L (daughter) had a baby there two  
267 months ago and she is quite different to her brothers and sisters physically and she has a  
268 different character. Each life is so unique and so extraordinary, it's very difficult to make  
269 sense of what life is, and what is the meaning of life and why death, why do we all have to  
270 face that so yes for me and my husband.... it's very difficult to make sense. I am catholic, I try  
271 to hold on to the beliefs of the afterlife and that we will meet again and there has to be some  
272 sense of life, above and beyond this life on earth. It's very difficult to express Gabrielle. I am  
273 sorry it's very difficult to express.

274 **No, not at all, it's very interesting to hear your views on it and thank you very much for**  
275 **sharing. It's very personal so I really appreciate.**

276 No but, I am, I am, am happy to do it for you. I am sure the work you are doing is very very  
277 important.

278 **Yes.**

279 And actually, my brother in law, my sister passed away after the birth of her fifth child, she  
280 had complications after the birth and my brother in law who was in banking at the time, hmm,  
281 he went back to do studies and he is actually a psychotherapist in Dublin today and he went  
282 into grief counselling. And he has a practice, he remarried, he has a wife, he has a wife who is  
283 a psychiatrist. They both have their rooms together in Dublin and he specializes in grief  
284 counselling. It might be something you could talk to him at some stage.

285 **That is very interesting.**

286 Yes, he is not a very open person, mind you, not easy to get information out of, whatever  
287 what the subject is. No, I found it interesting that he went into this terrible terrible tragedy,  
288 losing his wife and left with five young children so, yup he went into grief counselling.

289 **And would you say that your view on losing your parents has changed over time?**

290 Has it changed, hmm, no, no. It will still be one of the most painful, yeah, experiences I had  
291 in my life, after my sister's death of course.

292 **Hmm.**

293 After my sisters death of course (unintelligible segment) the death of my sister and the death  
294 of my parents.

295 **Hmm. And you mentioned earlier?**

296 Even my sister is, it's been, how many years, thirty two years so now, hmm, even my sister  
297 it's still a very deep wound for all of the family in fact, a very very deep wound. Your parents,  
298 it's a both way, it's the natural process of things; you know they grow old, they become ill and  
299 you know it's going to happen. In the case of my sister she was only thirty-seven and she she  
300 had only given birth to this little baby. It was probably a month and a half old when she died  
301 and that was just completely (unintelligible segment) and so you can never come to grips with  
302 a tragedy like that and you never come to grips with that. I have never been able to understand  
303 how even from a religious point of view it's always been a problem, I just felt incredibly  
304 angry at God at the time and could never understand how, you know, how God is good and  
305 how he could take a young mother away from her children. That was very very hard.

306 **Hmm. And you mentioned earlier that you can never come to terms with losing your**  
307 **parents. In your opinion, what has helped you to overcome in the best possible way this**  
308 **experience? Where did you find support?**

309 Well again, in my faith in god but also with my husband C, who is a very supportive and  
310 strong person, I am blessed with him, he is very optimistic and you know has a very good  
311 way, he also has an amazing strong faith, hmm, he came from a family who were atheists and  
312 non believers, non religious, non practicing.

313 **Oh sorry C, I was not able to hear that clearly I am sorry.**

314 Yes. Okay. I can repeat and you call tell me if you can hear. C (husband) came from a family  
315 who were non-religious, non-practicing. His father was an atheist and he as a teenager; you  
316 know, searched and had a very very strong faith so in my moments of, falling down or falling  
317 on the wrong side, he is always the one that will help me.

318 **Hmm.**

319 He is very very strong and also I turn to my sisters too. The sister who just came to see me,  
320 she is of great support and I support her greatly too. It's a very important for both our  
321 relationship and there is no doubt, yes, we have helped each other tremendously over the  
322 years. So yes to reveal there my faith and a great family force.

323 **Would you say your children were also a resource?**

324 Yes because your children are youth and are, you know, projects in life and wonderful things  
325 happening, sharing their happiness when things go well for them so that gives you strength as  
326 well and it makes you happy. It gives your life a purpose and wanting to grow and prolong  
327 that happiness for as long as you can.

328 **Hmm**

329 I mean your children will I have problems too obviously but thank god, and we have had a  
330 couple of problems, there is no doubt about it, hmm but on the whole at the moment, all four  
331 of them are, you know well in their lives, we can always wish for more but that does give you  
332 great strength and what is really wonderful Gabrielle are grandchildren because that is a  
333 whole new experience in life, And when you come get to an age as you do get older and your  
334 children have grown up and they don't need you that much anymore and then the grand  
335 children start turning up, that is so wonderful, you have so much love for them, they have so  
336 much love for you too and they are so beautiful. That is such a source of joy of happiness in  
337 life and strength; it's wonderful, wonderful.

338 **The next question I have to adapt a little bit because of your previous answer, would you  
339 say that experienced any changes in your health or well being since coming out from the  
340 difficult grieving process?**

341 No I have been, thank heavens, in good health for most of my life. I don't think, I think what  
342 might have happened is to become more anguished and more vulnerable. Yes do, do, once  
343 you go through death with your parents and with my sister, the way it happened with my  
344 sister. Yes, I think you do become a more anguished personality. I was not like that at thirty  
345 years of age, it's sort of life's experience as well. And you know that you have to find ways of  
346 dealing with that anguish, we all ways of dealing with it. I invest myself in different things  
347 whether playing golf or singing in a choir or whatever and friendships; it's a way of dealing  
348 with stuff for anguish.

349 **And, hmm, would you say that as a parent, we were mentioning that children are a  
350 resource when going through that experience, would you say your relationship changed  
351 with your children when you lost your parents?**

352 Hmm, change. I have to think, they were still teenagers, well C (daughter) was a little bit  
353 older and she had spent a lot of time, she was very close to my mother, no as I said I wanted  
354 to be strong for them. I felt now that I replaced that generation which is gone and we are now  
355 that generation and would have to try and be strong for them and would have to be there for  
356 them to support them if they have problems in their lives. That was all very important. Yeah, I  
357 am not sure if I answered the question properly but looking I remember holding C  
358 (daughter) in my arms at the funeral, they were very supportive as well, it was a very difficult  
359 thing to go through if I had not had my children and I think once they saw their grandparents  
360 go as well, they all became very conscious of the fact that at some stage we will go too. It is  
361 something you have to integrate in your life that it will happen to all of us and that at some  
362 stage we will go too. I think of L (daughter) in our family, she is quite worried about that, it  
363 something that quite preoccupies her from time to time.

364 **And if you were to give a recommendation, although a bit complicated to give a  
365 recommendation, what would that message be?**

366 To accept their grief, it's a process that you have to go through, it can take some time. I mean  
367 in the past, people dressed in black when they were widowed or loose their parent. I  
368 remember as a little girl when I lost my grandmother, we wore a black band on our arm and it  
369 was not a bad thing in the sense that people knew that you were grieving, that you were going  
370 through grief and they would respect your grief. There was a time, you would not go out for  
371 instance, hmm, you would not join in the normal social activities maybe for six months or  
372 even up to a year after. In fact, I remember the Victorian imposed grief for a number of years  
373 and in some cultures widows wear white or black for the rest of their lives. All that to say

374 that, it's a way of explaining, that letting people know that you are in a stage of grief and that  
375 it is a process that you have to go through and it can be longer for others, some more than  
376 others but it's a natural process that you have to go through. The first stage is the shock, pure  
377 shock, the deep sadness, wanting to cry constantly, wanting to see the person, wanting to hold  
378 to them for as long as possible, their physical presence, their clothes, having their pictures  
379 around you. All that is very intense in the first month and then as time goes by it becomes  
380 more (unintelligible segment). So that is the natural process of grief, I think there are different  
381 stages in it and you have to accept them.

382 (Unintelligible segment) It's a natural process that has to be gone through. Accept it, if you  
383 have to cry and pour your heart out. If you want to hold their picture or something that  
384 belongs to them do it. You have to exorcise it from your system, it has to be gone through and  
385 it is a painful process.

386 **Hmm. We are reaching the end of the interview C, hmm.**

387 Yes.

388 **I was wondering is there anything else that you are keen to share about your personal**  
389 **experience or if you feel that there is maybe a question that could have been asked in**  
390 **this interview in order to understand how people are impacted in their lives when they**  
391 **go through that process?**

392 I can't think of something off hand. I do think that as I mentioned, the grief process is a very  
393 important element to try and understand. I know that there has been some studies who have  
394 done it well. I thought that this should be closely looked at, over periods of time, I would say  
395 up to a year at least. Other than that no, I cannot think of anything else. Voilà, c'est la vie (it's  
396 life in French). You have to accept it as well. La maladie, la mort, (Illness and death in  
397 French) thank heavens we get through life every day through making projects and being  
398 positive, through literature and hmm so that's just how we go through life every day to stay  
399 happy but hmm there are moments too when you are faced with that awful reality of life and  
400 death and that is a huge, hmm, job to do and I think all the poets and all the writers have had  
401 to try, experiential the poets with a dark vision of life and they were best with an idea that life  
402 was not eternal but passing, it's something we all have to deal with and sometimes quite  
403 present in my mind. Voilà.

404 **Well thank you so much C for sharing and accepting to partake to the study.**

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(47:04)

## Appendix F7: Interview 7\_17June19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype without the video option. Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Could I please ask you to first present yourself please?**

2 My name is C and I am living in the XXX, I live near the XXX and I am  
3 thirty-five and I am a photographer. I am living life as freely as possible.

4 **Could I please ask you to explain your family structure?**

5 So actually I was brought of in the suburbs in XXX with my mother, father and so I have one  
6 brother and he was born two years after me so he is thirty three and I am thirty five, yes. My  
7 mother is sixty-nine, oh sixty-nine, wow. And my father was born in 1942, so he was eight  
8 years older than my mother, maybe there are some details that are not very important but yes  
9 we are two kids, two children.

10 **Okay. And then down to the core of it. Have you lost a parent or both parents?**

11 I have lost only my father.

12 **Could I ask you how old you were and what were the circumstances of this event?**

13 So I was eighteen. The circumstances from my point of view were a little bit crazy because I  
14 was just like, I just passed my Baccalauréat (A levels), a few days ago and I was on holiday  
15 with my father, him and me. My brother was learning English in XXX, anyway, I don't know  
16 if I give you the places?

17 **Up to you, whatever you are comfortable with.**

18 So anyway, he was in another place, learning English. My mother was working in XXX and I  
19 was on holiday with my father and it was the beginning of my holidays and in the morning he  
20 was not in his bed because he was out the night before and a friend of his called me and told  
21 me that he found my father in the harbour, in the water. So it was a little bit traumatizing, I  
22 don't know if you can say that because I was the first one to know it and I did not know what  
23 to do so I ran to another place, to some friends a few meters away. I was eighteen and I think I  
24 was really a kid, I was, it was the end of my childhood. I was really beginning to become  
25 someone, just the year after.

26 **Hmm.**

27 Someone or at least a fun place in the society, just a year after. It was the end of something in  
28 my life with my father's loss. So I went to that place and I had to announce to my mother that  
29 my father was dead and my mother had to announce to my brother, who was in another place,  
30 so we all, how do you say discovered it in separate places. And so we had a boat in the  
31 harbour and he went very late to the boat, I think he was, well everybody thinks that he was  
32 drunk, he had like a disease or something back on the boat and fell into the water. In the  
33 morning, the guy who sold us the boat found him in the harbour. So this guy is traumatized  
34 forever.

35 **How was for you to lose my parent?**

36 You mean at this moment?

37 **You can decide, whatever first response you have to that question?**

38 At this moment it was a real nightmare. For me it was really unfair and I was always  
39 repeating to myself "why why me". It was unbearable but yes. But it happened in another  
40 place than home so when we came back home, it was a little bit, the nightmare was kind of  
41 over. I mean the nightmare was away, the home was different, very quickly we had a new life  
42 and very quickly the pain was very bearable and I understood a lot of things in the months  
43 and years after. I think I have changed a lot. I began to listen to people, to be more into I don't  
44 know, I was less, I had a kind of violence before, psychologically a little bit in anger and after  
45 that weirdly, after that, it went better. I don't know. There are a lot of things to explain also

46 because of the role of my father in the family. So when he died, when he passed away, the  
47 things changed and so first it was a little bit better for our life. It was a little bit appeasing. Of  
48 course it was a big big loss and up until now I still have the frustration of what I could discuss  
49 with him because he was very intelligent, really into action and I don't know how to explain  
50 in English but thinking about life of philosophical things and concepts and I have a lot of that  
51 part in me and I do not know to whom talk about that so I still have a big frustration about  
52 that but my life after from eighteen years old was a little bit more peaceful and calm than  
53 before. So I understood that everything was happening for a reason and so it was okay. It was  
54 really hurting for a few months and after that it was okay. And thanks because my life is  
55 different and that is okay.

56 **So you mentioned that it was an event that was difficult to experience. Some people feel**  
57 **very vulnerable after losing a parent, would you say that this was your case?**

58 Hum, I would not say that because of course during those first two months. It was during the  
59 summer and two days before my eighteenth birthday. I really love symbols and things like  
60 this. Why now and why at all? There is a before and after, everything changing so much so  
61 during the first two, three months I was very lost but after I went back home, I went to  
62 University two months after but I think it gave me strength. I was really; I took his role in the  
63 family. I was not vulnerable because I was not allowed to be vulnerable, so I got back home  
64 and I was like okay let's go, I have to support my mother, to be there for my brother. Maybe  
65 it's something I say now and maybe I would not say that twenty years ago. Speaking about  
66 that, I don't remember me as being vulnerable and lost and sad. Of course I was sad and I  
67 cried at night because I missed him and I did not like for things to change like everybody but  
68 no, to answer the question I would say no (laughs).

69 **You kind of already provided some insight about that but this event change you as a**  
70 **person?**

71 Yes it did, definitely but it came with the moment that could have changed me whatever  
72 because it was the end of my childhood. I finished high school, it was the beginning of doing  
73 things on your own, the beginning of meeting someone else than the people you know since  
74 you are a kid so yes, I don't know because everything is mixed up because it was the  
75 beginning of my adulthood. But of course it changed me (silence) into, with all the spiritual  
76 things. I mean at the moment, you are forced to believe in something or not to believe in  
77 something because you need to have this person who disappeared somewhere, I mean in your  
78 heart, in your head in the sky.

79 **Hmm.**

80 But so you are moving your thoughts towards something. What it is, I don't know but your  
81 brain is really moving. Is there something after life? Is he around me? I don't know, can I feel  
82 him? Can I speak to him? So yes, it changed a lot of spiritual things for me. Spiritual and  
83 maybe the relationship with people about the anger or sadness or listening to people, okay.  
84 But for all the other things, but what are the other things, they changed a lot because of the  
85 circumstances of my new life with university. So maybe the biggest thing for me was about  
86 spiritual things. I don't know if it's okay.

87 **Sure. Did you feel that it was difficult to open up, to talk about your grief or any**  
88 **difficulties you had when you lost your parent?**

89 Yes definitely, I did not talk about that a lot. We did not talk about that at home. Sometimes  
90 we were crying together but like it was once a month the first year and once a year the year  
91 after and after ten years, it never happens. Sometimes on the eighteenth of July we send each  
92 other something, a message but we never talk about that and with friends it's so hard to  
93 understand for people what are going through. I was too young to analyse what happened in  
94 me, what changed in me. Today, I have a lot of tools to understand my feelings, to take some  
95 distance and five years after I lost my grandfather, I had the distance and the tools to  
96 understand but at this moment no. I did not want to cry at school or university, my life was  
97 new so I to build it, I really don't remember, that's crazy, I really don't remember having any  
98 moment of vulnerability at University, like it was a new life, so I had to be me without my  
99 father, so I had to be a new one by myself but not into sadness and not into "omg she is such a



100 poor person" so I fought a lot. I think I was only sad and with my very close friends and with  
101 myself actually (expires strongly).  
102 **Did you feel you had to grow up very fast?**  
103 (...) Sorry (Cries)  
104 **No please take your time.**  
105 (...)  
106 **Take your time; it's a difficult process.**  
107 Yes, I did not realize this. I had to have a new role as I think my mother was more lost than  
108 me.  
109 **Hmm.**  
110 Not lost because she was a fighter too but she really needed someone. I mean I. It was not my  
111 responsibility but I felt she needed an adult with her so of course, I was a kid before but as I  
112 told you, yes University changed me, I remember my mother telling me " oh you have been to  
113 improvisation theatre and it's amazing how much it changed you, it's changed you a lot". And  
114 I think it's not improvisation classes, it was university and this loss. You begin to build on  
115 your own because my mother was not really into teaching us how to behave with people and  
116 how to analyse life but I was already into analysing life as my father taught me to do that.  
117 From this point, you just take the small tools you have and you understand with yourself. So  
118 to answer your question, of course it changed me a lot in terms of independence and so my  
119 way to be an adult. An adult in a way because I always skipped a very very big part of child  
120 in me but I think it's a different topic. So yes I became very independent very quickly. I mean  
121 less independent than a lot of other people because I left home only at twenty-two but I was  
122 really independent. I wanted to drive very early, I was independent about feelings and how do  
123 you say that, more like in the relationship in my family, I was not into hugging or kissing  
124 (sobbed) the only person who, not the only but who was the closest to my father, because he  
125 was like a, I was a kid before because my father was there to hug me or to have physical  
126 contact and after I decided to be very at a distance with everybody. I was already at a distance  
127 with my mother, I was kissing my father but not my mother so of course when I lost my  
128 father I realized that I was a little bit alone with this feeling of love. It's a moment you grow  
129 up of course because you say okay it's my responsibility to care about my own love so you  
130 grow up because you don't wait for your mother or your father, sorry, your mother or your  
131 brother to give you the love you need. I don't know why but I realize that now (laughed). So  
132 yes of course I grew up a lot. And I got a lot of new friendships at that moment, because I  
133 needed some love and that was the only way I found to have it, with friends because I did not  
134 have any boyfriends for like three years after. So those three years were very, like, helping me  
135 to grow up very quickly. Okay so ten minutes to answer your question (laughs).  
136 **And in your opinion, what makes it more difficult to talk about losing a parent**  
137 **compared to other losses that you have in life?**  
138 (...) It's more about, it's not about the way it happened, I think it's more about how it changes  
139 you. How you can, the things you realize that have been very painful in your life because of  
140 this but those things are not things you felt when you lived it. It's more; I don't know if it's  
141 spiritual, it's not very clear in my mind actually. I am not missing him. Of course I miss him  
142 but I miss him as a person I don't know. I can't know who he would be now. Its kind of a fake  
143 missing, what you miss is just the caring of, someone caring but this, maybe it's idealization,  
144 which is the worst to talk about. I wish I knew that person now, I wish I could have some  
145 understanding of life, some discussions about life but maybe he could not do that. Maybe I  
146 am more into philosophical things than he was but maybe it's that. My memories about him  
147 are really non existent because I had a lot of bad memories with him and I don't want to  
148 remember about that, it's like a box in my mind and I really don't want to open it, sometimes I  
149 do it with psychological therapies and everything. And it is better and better when I open the  
150 box, but I lost my track of thought. I don't know what to answer to this question. The worst to  
151 talk about, it's not hard to talk about, what is hard to talk about is how you can understand that  
152 you suffered and you did not want to see yourself suffer. It has changed your way of doing  
153 things. I think it's the cool things (silence). Okay, I know why I can't answer your question,  
154 because I think everything has a reason so I really don't think there are hard parts. I suffered

155 but it's okay if I suffered and that is why today I am an artist, so it's not hard to speak about it  
156 or to cry about it when I related you the events. It's really like it's cool. I love crying about  
157 that because I am opening things so I like speaking about my father but I don't have a lot of  
158 opportunities to do it. Because I don't want to bother people, it's not a problem to talk about  
159 it. I suffered because before he died he was a drinking guy and I suffered after because I lost  
160 something and I did not know where to go but I am happy with everything now. I don't know  
161 if I am happy because everything changed because he died, I don't know. Of course it was a  
162 big point in my past. Sorry, it's not clear.

163 **No, you answered another question which was, is there something special that happens**  
164 **when you lose a parent?**

165 Yes of course you need to grow up, I guess everybody says that but you have more questions  
166 about your own identity, your own personality, your own family, who you are. At the  
167 beginning I was photographing a lot of weddings and I was very touched by all the  
168 relationships between daughters and fathers and all the speeches and symbols around the  
169 wedding like, I need my father to be in the car, to bring me to the church, to speak about and  
170 each time I was a little bit touched and sad because I will never be the same as all those  
171 people. So of course it changes you, I am not the same as everybody, I have a part of myself  
172 who is alone so I have to be okay with this part in me. I need to take care of me. So you begin  
173 to be your own parent, your own hugger. But you are not old enough to do that after you lose  
174 your parent at eighteen. It's not the same if you loose your parent at the beginning of your  
175 adulthood. If I lost my other parent now, it would be completely different, as I have yet  
176 understood what is my independence towards people and parents and all the people around  
177 me. But maybe it's not because I lost my parent, maybe it's because I am an adult now  
178 (giggles). So I can't really, it's a blurred line.

179 **Yes. And you already gave some information towards that, as you said previously that**  
180 **everything happens for a reason in your opinion. Have you found any sense or put any**  
181 **meaning to your father's passing?**

182 Yes of course and it was mandatory at this time. It's not like when it's normal to lose a father  
183 when you are thirty because of old age or illness; it's an accident so of course you need to  
184 understand so you have to understand. For him or either for you. It's more or less the same for  
185 him. For the last five or six years, he was sick, he had a kind of hepatitis and in his job, he  
186 was kind of a big radio star and for those six years, it was like going downhill because he was  
187 not recognized anymore and so he began to drink. So the everyday life was really really hard  
188 and my life before eighteen was really hard for six or seven years and I realized that three  
189 years ago when I began to analyse me. I realized I had a lot of shame, fear, feelings like this.  
190 So of course when this stopped, we had like one year, sometimes we were looking at each  
191 other and in our heads, we would imagine, we did not really speak about it, only a little bit.  
192 Imagine how peaceful and quiet it is, how constructive our lives becoming, we are sleeping at  
193 night. So I took this as a reason. The thing is was that I was thankful to the universe for that.  
194 But it was so complicated to have all those feelings inside. I felt guilty inside. I had guilt,  
195 sadness because I missed him but I was also relieved at the same time but the smile was back.  
196 There was more smiling and happiness than before so of course I found a reason. And for him  
197 also, I was relieved for him, he was suffering a lot, so I found a reason for him too.

198 **And do you feel that you still have a link with him, some sort of ongoing bond?**

199 (...) It's not a straight answer, I don't think about him a lot but sometimes, I mean, I have a  
200 friend who lost her father and she is constantly thinking about him but she lost her father at  
201 the age of thirty so it's funny to see the differences, it could be interesting for you to interview  
202 her. So no, I don't have that link everyday and I don't need that but sometimes when I am  
203 feeling very alone and like a child, I need to find that link so I am searching for it, calling for  
204 it and sometimes it happens. The last one was really funny because I realised after, I had a  
205 very important concert and when I have very important moment in my life, I sometimes have  
206 thoughts for him, it's more like hope " I hope you are around" no it' snot around it's a part of  
207 you. Spiritually, if you believe in things existing after death so I would not enter this subject  
208 but I think you have a part of him in you and this part you can call it back sometimes. Even if  
209 it's outside or inside, you can call it. I was at the beginning of a concert and I was talking to

210 him" maybe you can send me a link, a symbol, something to tell me you are around" and I did  
211 not realise that, but just before the concert, we were chilling with the musicians and one of  
212 them began to sing something. But something and I had my eyes opened like this and I did  
213 not know that this song was known from a lot of people as I had only heard from my father  
214 singing it, as he had made a cd with that so he sang that and I thought yes that's my father.  
215 But I was so stressed about to go on stage and the day after I was like "wow" that was the  
216 biggest symbol ever, that was the record he made, and the record he made my musician sang a  
217 song before the most important stage of my life at this time. So I don't know if I believe in  
218 those symbols but now I want to believe. I decided, you know it's all about the beliefs. Now I  
219 am ok if I believe that the link exists so okay, I decide that I believe so yes there is more or  
220 less a link between us. It depends on my energy of the day and my spiritual energy.

221 **Would you say that it helps to cope or makes it more difficult?**

222 Yes, it helps.

223 **I am curious to ask you which song?**

224 Hmm. Tatatata "Ma serpette est perdue" (title of a French song). In fact he made a record for kids.

225 **Right.**

226 And it's funny as that friend who just lost her father. She called me first on Christmas day.  
227 She called me and said you understand. It's absolutely outside your question but you have a  
228 special link with people who have lost somebody in their family. I can't explain that but it is  
229 really. I don't know if you can feel it but maybe it's the same for people who have cancer  
230 sometimes. I think with the loss people lose apart of themselves, they have to grieve that part.  
231 And anyway, this girl said to me, can I listen to your father's record. And I said " wtf no, I  
232 have never listened to it before" and I said, " okay let's listen" and of course we cried for like  
233 five minutes. And I thought, it's amazing why; she always wants to have this link, to see  
234 pictures, films. I don't want to, I am not searching for that. I am not going to see mediums to  
235 see if he is around. I don't need it but I guess there is something. If I want something I can ask  
236 but most of the times there is no time for this link. Je te ferais écouter (I will make you listen  
237 to it in French).

238 **With pleasure.**

239 It's really cute, you change all the ends of the words with A and U  
240 (singing it)

241 **Will do. And do you think that your view of your parents has changed over time?**

242 Yes definitely, at the beginning it's a nightmare and then you understand it happens for a  
243 reason and you are better and after you understand that you are the person you are now  
244 because you lost that father. I am who I am because I lost him, because I began to fight,  
245 because I wanted to. In a way to be like him but I did not realize that. There was a part of me  
246 that wanted to be the part of him that was the best part. The funny guy, the artist guy, the  
247 passionate guy, you know all those things. I mean I am that but I did not realize at first that I  
248 was going to be that so of course you, and when you get the distance on your thirties of  
249 course it changes everything. And of course your vision is changing all the time. So now I  
250 would not say I wish he would be there, of course I wish I could meet him for one hour you  
251 know but I know I would not have the same life if he had not disappeared. So I am happy  
252 with everything.

253 **Would you say that you have come to terms with this loss?**

254 You mean if I am okay with that?

255 **Yes.**

256 Yes, I could say that for three quarters but when you are vulnerable, because I did not build  
257 any family of my own for now, my only link of unconditional love for now I try to be in  
258 unconditional love with everybody but the only link or the easiest link for now is the link that  
259 does not exist because the link with your mother and brother it's really hard to work on it, it's  
260 really hard to do it, everybody knows that. So of course when I am vulnerable and feeling  
261 alone. I wish that I could feel that but I know that it would not be the reality so I am always  
262 balancing everything and sweeping the idea under the rug. So I miss him but I think I kind of  
263 think a fake thing. I miss something but not the guy I did not know.

264 **And like the expression coming to terms, is if I understand what you are saying, is a**  
265 **little too static, there is a dynamic, some days it's going to be okay and some other days**  
266 **it is going to be a different feeling.**  
267 Yes, I am not sure if you ever feel that you get to terms.  
268 **Yes it's like saying you made sense out of it and are okay with it happening.**  
269 No no no, yes I mean of course yes, I have come to terms but you can feel some sadness. The  
270 sadness is okay with the terms. I am not asking questions again, they are over but the sadness  
271 sometimes still remains. But the sadness it's a cool feeling, I am okay with the sadness.  
272 **I am following. It's very interesting.**  
273 And I am fluent (laughs).  
274 **No you are doing very well.**  
275 (Laughs).  
276 **Did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since you came to**  
277 **terms?**  
278 The loss of my father is a minor event. It has less weight in my life than the five years I lived  
279 before so I can't say that the loss of him I get, but I just understood now in my thirties, at  
280 thirty three, that those five years were really important in my life and I am really resilient. My  
281 mother is the same. I always forget about bad things and I realized at thirty-three that I had  
282 those awful years in a very important period of my life for building yourself. And after I had a  
283 very confused way of being with people, not confused but I want this, I want that.  
284 **Unsure?**  
285 Yes. I was thinking, why am I so demanding, so angry and now I understand that it's about  
286 those five years before he died so I can't really answer your question. What was the question  
287 (laughs).  
288 **It was about the impact on your health?**  
289 So I would say no but understanding something about those five years as well as the death  
290 well of course it helped me to give me more love of what I was exactly and what I have been  
291 during those years of fighting myself and other people. It's not completely linked with the  
292 death but also with whom I was before, with him and without him so you know it's more or  
293 less, it's not a straight answer, like a, you knew I would be a complicated patient (Mutual  
294 laugh).  
295 **We are reaching towards the end of the interview; if it was possible to provide a**  
296 **recommendation to people that grieve their parents, what would be your message?**  
297 It's funny, not it's not funny but I have a very good friend who lost her father this week and  
298 her father killed himself so I was really like, I felt sad for her but I was relieved because I  
299 know she is in trouble with herself and the only thing I could say to her was you know what is  
300 happening. And of course she knows what is happening and of course she knows. Only time  
301 can relieve the feelings of nightmare and unfairness, only the time but try to understand what  
302 is happening for you. And you will soon know why it happened for him and for you. Try to  
303 understand why but it's not trying as in fighting, it's more don't worry, you will know, just  
304 crying just let the feeling go, you know what it's like the five steps of grief sometime it's like  
305 during ten years or five months and even for my friend I think it will be one month. The anger  
306 and the sadness are really quick and now she needs to be in other things. The only advice  
307 would be live the feelings and it's only with time that the feelings will be okay, don't fight  
308 against the different feelings that are growing in you.  
309 **Hmm. And is there a question that you think we should have asked you in this**  
310 **interview?**  
311 Maybe I could answer but maybe the relationship with the other parent. What changed in the  
312 relationship with the parent. In the beginning, I was losing every night that I was going to lose  
313 my mother. I don't know if it changed something in me because I love unanswered questions  
314 so I can't know how I am different with my mother because I lost my father but I think it  
315 would be a very good thing to analyse because it's so complicated with my mother now. So of  
316 course, there is a link, it's really funny, yesterday I was speaking with a friend that had the  
317 same problems with her father drinking and we said " why did our mothers not take us far  
318 away from that". Maybe I was not aware of it but maybe I was angry about that with her. I

319 don't feel that the anger I have against her, I do have anger but I am not sure what it is. Maybe  
320 it's that but I can't analyse that today, still not. Of course, for your future job, I think it's really  
321 important to. I mean you know when I go to see some therapists, " what is the link with your  
322 mother so complicated" but we never do the link between the parent loss and the one staying.  
323 Maybe we have to bury, wait not bury " creuser" (dig in French).  
324 **Dig?** (Mutual laugh)  
325 **Changes in family dynamic often appear with that question. Well great, we are at the**  
326 **end. Thank you so much for sharing a personal experience that stirs up emotional**  
327 **feelings. Is there anything else you wish to share?**  
328 No I am done, that's okay.  
329 **Thank you so much.**  
330 Thank you too.

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.  
END OF INTERVIEW  
(01:02:45)

## Appendix F8: Interview 8\_17June19

Comments: The interview took place over Skype without the video option. Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Could I please ask you to present yourself?**

2 Good afternoon my name is V. I have lived in XXX for forty years and I am originally  
3 English, Irish and Canadian. What else can I tell you, nothing really. I lost my parents, my  
4 mother ten years ago, my father five years ago. And I still miss them.

5 **Could I ask you for your age please?**

6 Seventy.

7 **And can I please ask you to explain your family structure in terms of your primary  
8 family.**

9 On my mother's side, there were ten boys and girls whom I was always very close to. My  
10 father's side I don't know anything about him. He was just a darling father and he always said  
11 that his life began when he met my mother so we don't know anything before that, except that  
12 he was an officer in the Canadian army during the second world war and he lost his brother  
13 during the "débarquement" in Dieppe. So on his side of the family we don't know much. But  
14 on my mother's side we are very close, they lived in England and Ireland, most of them and  
15 those who left and my cousins are scattered in the States, England and Ireland. And my  
16 family, I was one son F which is thirty-nine and he has just come back from five years in  
17 Vancouver.

18 **Can I ask you if you are married and if so how long you have been married for?**

19 Yes, I am married to M. a lovely man who is five years older than me, he is French and his  
20 family are from Bordeaux and Normandy. He is retired and he is now working for an  
21 association in Madagascar and he is very busy. Like I am as I work with a program called  
22 "école à l'hospital" and the Red Cross.

23 **Can I ask you, I actually did not catch, your mother was from a family of ten, is that  
24 correct?**

25 Yes, she had nine brothers and sisters and it was quite an interesting family as they were half  
26 protestant and half catholic which was quite unusual. My father was a protestant who married  
27 an Irish catholic but they were very very happy and had ten children. My mother was brought  
28 up between Ireland and England. The Canadian American side is on my father's side.

29 **Right ok. And do you have any siblings?**

30 Yes I have four brothers and sisters, two sisters, one in Vancouver, one in Montreal. Two  
31 brothers, one in San Francisco and one in Calgary, Alberta and they all have children except  
32 my brother who is in San Francisco who is a lawyer and he is not married.

33 **Right. Down to the core of it, have you lost both your parents?**

34 Yes, I lost both my parents.

35 **Can I please ask you about the circumstances of those events?**

36 Yes, my mother had high blood pressure but hated taking any medication, hated seeing  
37 doctors so when she lived in Ireland with my father, she would come to France and I would  
38 take her to see a cardiologist. When I was not there or not with her, she would not take her  
39 pills and when they moved back to Canada because my father missed America too much, she  
40 probably stopped taking her hypertension pills and went to bed one night with a bad headache  
41 and did not wake up. Which was in a way a lovely death for her but quite difficult for her and  
42 her husband because it was very sudden and my father, whose world was centred around my  
43 mother, he did live for three, four years afterwards and then died from septicaemia. I am not a  
44 hundred percent sure as it was in Vancouver and I live in XXX so it's difficult to know  
45 exactly.

46 **Can I ask you how old you were for both events?**  
47 Sorry?

48 **Can I ask you how old you were for each event?**  
49 Well my mother I was almost sixty and my father I was sixty-five.

50 **Right. And how was it for you to lose your parents?**  
51 Well I think my mother, we were always very close. Fortunately or unfortunately, I resemble  
52 my mother in every way, physically, in character, etc. etc. and as I got older, she was almost  
53 like a sister. So it was very hard. I was lucky it was not an illness that dragged on, it was  
54 better that it happened quickly for her and for my father well, I was sad because he was my  
55 father. And he changed from a very vital person to a very old man, so in a way it was a sort of  
56 deliverance when he died for him and for me.

57 **Would you qualify those events as difficult to experience?**  
58 Well I would not wish them on anyone but hum, I think, how can I put it, yes it's difficult but  
59 it's not impossible because life goes on and well it's something you expect an ending. I  
60 expected it for my father but not for my mother. Not so quickly. So that was more difficult I  
61 suppose.

62 **Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, would you say that was your  
63 case?**  
64 No because I had a very very loving husband. Of course he did not replace my mother and my  
65 father but he was very present and you feel lost but you don't feel. I was not depressed. I did  
66 not go through or have any panic attacks or any after effects, it was just sad but with time, the  
67 sadness sort of diminishes which it has.

68 **Did this event or those event, as you can dissociate between the two, change you as a  
69 person?**  
70 Yes, I think it's silly at sixty but I think I actually quite grew up and became a nicer person  
71 when my mother died because I. I remember all the good things about her and there were an  
72 awful lot of them and I suppose I try and be like that a little bit which brings out a nicer side  
73 to me.

74 **Did you feel that is was difficult to open up or to talk about your grief or to talk about  
75 any difficulties you might have had when you lost your parents?**  
76 Did I have any difficulties talking about it, is that what you mean?  
77 **Yes.**  
78 No, immediately after I did not, it was funny for both my parents but a year after when I saw  
79 my brothers and sisters, we spent the summer together and that brought it all back and that  
80 was very difficult but at the time no. Perhaps because I live far away, of course I went back  
81 for the funeral for my mother and my father but I suppose when you have your feet in both  
82 countries, you don't feel as much as those who are " sur place" (right there in French) right  
83 there. Because I have a totally different life here.

84 **And did you experience any differences in your feelings in both situations?**  
85 My feelings. Yes, as I said it was perhaps more of a shock because of the circumstances of  
86 my mother's death and also because we were like, it was sort of like a part of me went away.  
87 My father I did not experience that, just sadness and I realized that I had no parents when my  
88 father died, far more than when my mother died because at least there was one then and then  
89 there was none.

90 **And did you feel that the process of grief was more complex with your mother with  
91 whom you seemed to have had the strongest bond?**  
92 The grief was stronger. Perhaps (...) but when you are feeling grief you somehow remember  
93 the very good things and it diminishes the grief or it did for me.

94 **In your opinion, what is it that makes it more difficult to talk about losing one parents  
95 compared to other losses we might experience in life?**  
96 Well I think because it's part of you. If you have always been part of a close family, the way  
97 we were, are, you sort of grow into one another so when one dies there is a little part of you  
98 that dies as well or that just is not there anymore so it's. I have not, touch wood, experienced a  
99 friend who died, I think a very close friend would leave a loss as well but it would be totally  
100 different than a parent I would imagine but I can't speak from experience.

101 **In your opinion, would you say that there is something special that happens when you**  
102 **lose a parent?**

103 Sorry, I don't know what do you mean?

104 **Is there is something special that happens when you lose a parent?**

105 Yes, because you realize that you are next, when your second parent dies, you are an orphan  
106 and then you are next on the line, they are not the older generation in line anymore, it's you or  
107 it's me.

108 **And, have you made any sense or found any meaning in your parents' death?**

109 Well as I said, I think it made me a better person and it, I sort of saw them as adults for the  
110 first time, as an adult to an adult when they died and that's made quite a difference because up  
111 till when, where they still alive, you are their child, even though you are sixty years old, you  
112 are their child but when they are not there anymore, you see them as you know not only, well  
113 not as parents but as adults.

114 **Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your parents?**

115 Yes with my mother, I often feel she is there and if I am doing something that I know is like a  
116 naughty schoolgirl, I know I should not be or, I can just hear my mother. So she is here  
117 somewhere, I can't say where but she is just there. She is in my awareness.

118 **Would you qualify it as an ongoing bond?**

119 Not really because an ongoing bond is giving and taking and it's not really giving and taking,  
120 it's a theory, it's virtual, it's not something tangible, it's just something that is there. It's  
121 difficult to describe Gabrielle.

122 **Also another question, do you think that this link you have with your mother, do you**  
123 **think it actually helps to cope with the fact that she is no longer there or on the contrary**  
124 **does it make it more difficult to move on?**

125 I think it's half and half. Sometimes, I really wish she was there, to share something, usually  
126 when it is something positive, it's very difficult to think that she is not there, to enjoy it with  
127 her, to see it with her, to feel it with her because you can't when somebody is gone. So I do  
128 feel sometimes that it is quite difficult and then I say to myself, "Oh don't be silly, c'est  
129 comme ça" (That's the way it is in French). You become accepting with time, it's been ten  
130 years now.

131 **And, do you think that your view on losing your parent has changed over time?**

132 Yes. As I said, I see them as adults now, I see their faults which one tend to be perhaps blind  
133 to or does not see when they are alive. Because I know that they were far away, even when  
134 they were in Ireland it was another country, even in Canada or the States. It's not the same as  
135 not being there at all but I see them in my brothers and sisters and it brings them back.  
136 Especially with one of my sisters who has my mother's character and I see my mother and I  
137 see her well I suppose her faults but I see her as an adult, not as my mother.

138 **And would you say that you have come to terms with losing your parents?**

139 Yes, I have because I think that when you lose them and you realize as I said that you are the  
140 next in line, well you just sort of automatically accept the order of things so I have come to  
141 terms. It does not stop me from missing her but it is something I accept now. I don't like it but  
142 I accept it.

143 **What helped you to overcome this experience, you mentioned the support from your**  
144 **husband?**

145 Yes and I think probably because my mother helped me or maybe it's just me, I do a lot, I  
146 wake up most mornings now and I am just happy to be alive and in good health and I think  
147 very positively about a lot of other things but it's easy to say that when you are happy and in  
148 good health. I think probably, my parents gave me that gift to be able to see things positively.

149 **Could we say that you actually found support through them?**

150 I actually what?

151 **Could we say that you actually found support from them, incorporating the teachings**  
152 **you might have had from them?**

153 Yes, what they taught me; perhaps it came back even more after they died, when they were  
154 not there anymore. I don't think I am exaggerating there. I think it's because you remember  
155 more, when they are not there to communicate with them, I am not idealizing them, as I am



156 seeing them as adults now, from one adult to another but I think that a lot of what they gave  
157 me and passed on to me, I am aware of it now which I was not when they were alive.

158 **And would you say that you have found any support elsewhere?**

159 Do you mean did I see a psychiatrist?

160 **It could be but not necessarily, it could a friend, or with the administration?**

161 I think with very close friends, when both of them especially mummy both died, I did not talk  
162 at first, I did not want to talk with anyone, I didn't really need to but afterwards about a year  
163 later, I sat with my sisters and brothers and with very close friends. It did comfort me to  
164 express what I was thinking or feeling which is unusual for me because I do not usually  
165 express things if I feel them very strongly, I keep them inside.

166 **You mentioned earlier that you had come to terms with losing your parents.**

167 Yes.

168 **Did you express any changes in your health or well being since you came to terms?**

169 No, I don't think so.

170 **If we were in a situation where we could provide, let's say recommendations, if that's  
171 even possible, to people who grieve their parents.**

172 **If you had a message to share to someone grieving a parent what would you like to  
173 share?**

174 Well I think they should listen to Peguy's poem, they are not gone, they are in the room next  
175 door because if you think about them really hard, they are still there, you cannot pick up the  
176 phone and jump in the car to go and see them but you can make them alive in your mind and  
177 that really helps when you are grieving. They are just in the next room, if you think positively  
178 like that it works, well it worked for me.

179 **I don't know that poem?**

180 I will find it and send it to you because I read it for my mother's funeral P.E.G.U.Y. You  
181 probably know he is French?

182 **Yes, actually now you spelt his name. I will look for it and read it again. Another  
183 question, when it comes to family dynamics, did losing your parents change your  
184 relationship with your child?**

185 With F (son) no. F (son) and I have always had a love hate relationship and I think it's more  
186 of a love relationship now but I do not think it has anything to do with my parents. He and I  
187 worked at our relationship.

188 **And with regards to your siblings, was there any change in those relationships?**

189 Yes, it brought us closer together and I think it's, you would not say normal as everybody is  
190 different but we did not automatically meet for at least twice a year as we did when my  
191 parents were there, for Christmas and the summer we would all gather at their house but  
192 now, after they died, we all have to make the effort to organize and to be together and just  
193 having to make the effort and plan and see things differently. It has brought us closer we are  
194 doing it because we want to, not because it's a tradition to be home for Christmas or the  
195 summer. So it has made us closer.

196 **And in terms of the communication. Do you feel you communicate more with your  
197 siblings today since their passing?**

198 I think so because there is perhaps it's the same with every family there is less rivalry because  
199 the parents are not there anymore, it's just us now and I do not hesitate if I remember  
200 something of my mother or my father, you know I can say it to my brother and sister and they  
201 can talk to me about things I did not know about because we had quite an unusual upbringing.  
202 We were all in boarding school from September to June and so we just had summers together  
203 and Christmas. So of course we have different memories. It's always nice to think of those  
204 memories and it does bring us closer.

205 **And do you think your geographic location was, let's say a protective factor when you  
206 experienced the loss of your parents?**

207 Yes, because when you are geographically away it can work both ways. Well you miss them  
208 of course but you are more detached about certain issues and that is an easy way out because  
209 you are not right there in the middle of it and then I can work the other way as well. Not being  
210 there when you want or need to be closer but you are not because there is a thousand

211 kilometres or two thousand or three thousand. I think it works both ways. I think it is more  
212 positive then negative because every time you see them again, you are happy to see them and  
213 there is not time for every day disagreement or rubbing one another the wrong way because  
214 that just does not happen when you live far away.

215 **Thank you very much V. for sharing, we are towards the end of the interview. Two final**  
216 **questions, is there a question that is maybe missing and that could improve the canvas of**  
217 **the interview?**

218 I am trying to think. What is funny you did not, perhaps it's not important because it concerns  
219 me and my parents but F. my son and nieces and nephews were all affected, especially by my  
220 mother's death and it either created problems or brought the families closer together. So I  
221 think it's important to ask as well, and it made me see my mother differently how affected my  
222 son was and how much he loved her. I think that is important and it makes you see your  
223 parents through different eyes.

224 **Indeed, as grandparents.**

225 It makes me see my parents through my son's eyes. It is a different way at looking at people  
226 as they see your parents as grandparents. Well that was, I just think it's perhaps interesting to  
227 add a question about that but that is all, it was very complete otherwise.

228 **Is there anything else that you would be keen to share or anything you wish to clarify?**

229 Not really. I shared that with you, of course there are things I keep for me but otherwise no I  
230 do not think I have anything else to add.

231 **Well thank you so much V for sharing your personal experience, it's a very intimate**  
232 **interview.**

233 Well it is but I think you are very discreet in your questioning; it's very well done the way you  
234 have done it. And it's good because it made me think, think about things I have not thought  
235 about for years now and it's positive. It's nice.

236 **Okay well I am glad, thank you so much for your precious time and opening up about it.**

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(33:32)

## Appendix F9: Interview 9\_18June19

Comments: The interview took place over the phone.

Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Could I please ask you to present yourself?**

2 Yes, I am MPB, my birth name is M, I am from a family of six children. I am married and  
3 have three children and five grandchildren.

4 **Right. Could I ask you for your age please and for how long you have been married for?**

5 Yes. I reached seventy years, on the 25th of May so I was born in 1949 and I have been  
6 married for forty-five years, on the last 15th of June.

7 **Can I ask about your parents, to inquire on if you have lost a parent or both parents?**

8 I have lost both my parents years ago.

9 **Can I ask you about the circumstances of those events and how old you were?**

10 Yes. My father was aging more and more and he finally got Alzheimer and he nearly died  
11 once summer in July, the weather was very hot but he was taken to the hospital and they  
12 brought him back to life. So the last 6 months of his life where very sad because he should not  
13 have been pushed to live again so he was in bed for six months, not recognizing anyone  
14 anymore and finally died. And he was (exhales) oh I can't remember how old he was, he was  
15 eighty or something. I may precise you later if you need?

16 If you say eighty that is all good.

17 **And how old were you?**

18 I was sixty, nearly sixty. And my mother died, she was ninety-three and she was aging for the  
19 last three years. So she went to live first with one of my brother's for a year and a half, with  
20 many people to take care of her during the day and night and finally, as she shouted a lot at  
21 night, nobody could sleep so she was sent to a hospital for old people and after six months  
22 there she died.

23 **Hmm. And how old were you when she passed away?**

24 I was sixty-three, so then I was younger when my father died I must have been fifty-three.

25 **Right, so there is a ten-year gap between their passings.**

26 Can you say that again?

27 **So there is a ten-year gap between their passings.**

28 Yes, exactly.

29 **Right, okay. And can I ask you how was it for you to lose your parents?**

30 I saw my father as he had been quite absent minded for several years and physically he was  
31 getting worse and worse, not moving and no recognizing anyone, we nearly wished that he  
32 would go, it was better for him. And, so I was not surprised when he died and I thought at that  
33 time that it was okay and that I would not suffer from his death but exactly a fortnight after  
34 his death. I was doing some shopping in the supermarket and I was pushing my caddie or my  
35 trolley, I don't know how you call it.

36 **Hmm.**

37 And suddenly, I had no legs and I fell down and afterwards I realized that it was the shock of  
38 his death. But yes, it was a shock for me anyway, even if I had been waiting for it.

39 **Hmm. Thank you for sharing and please take your time if you need to take a break.**

40 No it's okay.

41 **And with regards to the passing of your mother did you experience the same sense of  
42 shock?**

43 My mother, she had said for such a long time that she wanted to die because she had a good  
44 life with six children and twenty-six grandchildren and already one grandchild. She was not  
45 bitter about it but she thought she had to finish her time. But after she had a bad six months

46 without speaking so we could not communicate except for the eyes and even the eyes were  
47 not so meaning very much. And she was, I think it's very bad conditions for old people not to  
48 die in their home and to be in hospital because when you are there the nurses look nice but  
49 you know, you have heard from many many people, they are not very well taken care of  
50 really and one day when she could speak at the beginning when she was in the hospital. She  
51 told me " oh, when I get out of this place, I will have a lot of things to say". It was tough for  
52 me to hear that because then I realized that when we were not there, nurses were not so good  
53 with the people. Even if it was a nice place apparently. So you feel guilty, not to have been  
54 able to keep your parents at home with you.

55 **Would you qualify those events as difficult to experience?**

56 Yes, I think it is what I write to my friends when they lose their parents, is that, no matter the  
57 age, no matter the time, no matter the health, it is always your parent and your mother that  
58 you miss afterwards (cried) sorry (...)

59 **No, no please, it's a process that brings back a lot of emotions so it's up to you to set the  
60 pace and when you need some time you can just indicate that.**

61 (...)

62 **Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent or both parents, would you say  
63 that this was the case for you?**

64 Not really because they died when they were already very old, so it's normal, we all have to  
65 go one day. And also the last years were not very nice for them with physical and mental  
66 suffering so it's always difficult for the rest of the family.

67 **Hmm.**

68 And (exhales deeply) so it's okay, the guilt we accept it of course but it's always those who  
69 remain, those who are gone don't suffer anymore and it is the occasion to have a lot of  
70 flashbacks of childhood with them. And sometimes, what we have missed in our dialogues  
71 from their part or from our part because we were young and there are things (sobbed) we  
72 would not have done (...) with more experience now. But I think it's the loss, for every one it's  
73 the same. This is the difficulty of education and of being parents and of being children.

74 **And bouncing back on what you said, would you say that those vents changed you as a  
75 person?**

76 Those events have changed me as a person? No I don't think so really. Maybe you get more  
77 indulgent with others, especially with other parents, who remain for example my husband's  
78 parents, maybe we are more careful to take care of them, not leave them alone, to ring them  
79 once or twice every week.

80 **Hmm. And did you feel that it was difficult to open up or talk about your grief or any  
81 difficulties you might have had when you lost your parents?**

82 Talk to whom (forced laugh).

83 **Hmm**

84 Eventually with my brothers and sisters because we have had the same parents but maybe we  
85 had not had the same story.

86 **Hmm.**

87 Because it's very particular to see that even in the same family with the same parents, children  
88 don't go the same way and don't feel the same and then have another story, so maybe my  
89 parents are not received by my brothers and sisters the same as for me. I don't know why, it's  
90 very peculiar. Sometimes my brother, my eldest brother says something about my parents and  
91 I don't really recognize them in what my brother say but the circumstances were different as  
92 they were born during war, they were born in North Africa, my father was a military so I was  
93 born after the war and conditions were different and my parents had been through so much  
94 horror and difficulties that maybe I was (...) not (unsure) but I don't know, it's very particular.  
95 And my brothers and sisters are younger because my brother JB is seven years and a half  
96 younger than I and Benedict is nine years and a half younger and my parents were older so we  
97 did not receive the same education as the first children and that okay. After having six  
98 children, it's very beautiful but it's very difficult also.

99 **Indeed, and did you open up to your own family or friends or to professionals about  
100 your grief?**

101 No, not really. Hmm, we have just sold last week our house in Brittany, it was our holiday  
102 home and on this occasion, of course some of us have said a few sentences about how nice it  
103 was and all the good souvenirs we had but except with my younger sister, we are very close,  
104 my eldest sister is dead, that was six years ago and so my brother the eldest are not so close to  
105 me but my younger is close to me so maybe with the two younger siblings, sometimes we  
106 share something but not really in a deep psychological way. Just a few words like that.

107 **And did you experience any differences in losing your father and losing your mother?**  
108 (...) I adored my mother even if when I was young she was not so young sometimes, she was  
109 probably afraid of my structure. And my father, I always quarrelled with him because he was  
110 very authoritarian, is that correct? (Laughs).

111 **Yes authoritative.**  
112 Being in the military, he was a very peculiar person, being very military and organized and at  
113 the same time he was suffering from a lack of love probably, childhood or I don't know, or  
114 maybe the traumas of the war but he needed so much to be loved that he thought that "if  
115 people are not agreeing with me it's because they don't love me". So for us to grow up with  
116 him, it was very difficult because anytime, we expressed a will or a wish that was not  
117 convenient to my father, he got cross saying that we did not love him because we did not  
118 think the same way as he did.

119 **Hmm.**  
120 So I thought I did not like him so much as I did my mother but in fact of course I loved him.  
121 And I told him just before that fortnight after his death that I collapsed in the supermarket and  
122 it's true it was that and very very strange, I did not have that with my mother. Strange really.  
123 (Unintelligible segment due to overlapping speech/cross-talk)

124 **Would you say that the process of grief was more complex with the parent with whom  
125 you had the strongest bond?**  
126 Probably (...) because when I was young I had not acknowledged what I told you about my  
127 father, about his need to be loved and his confusion between being loved and being agreed  
128 with.

129 **Hmm.**  
130 When you are young, you can't think about that in those terms. You just try to grow up and  
131 leave. And sometimes I think it's very sad that children don't have any experience and are not  
132 able to be the parents of their parents and try to explain to them but of course it's impossible  
133 because you are just young. And you can't. So probably when we have a fight with someone,  
134 like with one our parents, you feel a little guilty not to have been able to have better  
135 relationships. When I say feeling guilty, I am not saying crying all day about that it's just kind  
136 of nostalgic.

137 **Hmm. An inner feeling. And in your opinion, what makes it more difficult to talk about  
138 losing a parent compared to other losses in life?**  
139 Can you say that again?

140 **Yes of course. And in your opinion, what makes it more difficult to talk about losing a  
141 parent compared to other losses in life?**  
142 (Exhales)

143 **To put it in a more simple way, why is it difficult to talk about losing our parents?**  
144 I don't find it difficult to talk about it in terms of saying; it's difficult because of crying  
145 (cried). I think it's because of our roots. We come from them and what we give to our own  
146 children comes from them. So they are part of us.

147 **And in your opinion, is there something special that happens when you lose a parent?**  
148 (...) Ah yes. You become the next one to go, it's our time now. So yes, we are the next ones to  
149 go so (clears throat) maybe we have more to think about. Of our own lives.

150 **Hmm. And have you made any sense or found any meaning in your parents' death?**  
151 Can you say that again?

152 **Have you made any sense or found any meaning in your parents' death?**  
153 (Exhales) (...) Not really, it's a normal thing in life to die and I am not rebelling about that. It  
154 has to happen and of course the relationship before could have been better but it was not so  
155 bad, so a lot of respect, now anyway.

156 **And do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your parents?**  
157 Yes of course, I think of them, I talk to them. For example, we have bought a house in the  
158 South of France. A very big nice house and sometimes, I think of my parents and I know they  
159 would have loved the house; they would have loved to come there.  
160 **Hmm.**  
161 And it happens sometimes, well as I said.  
162 **Would you qualify this as an ongoing bond?**  
163 Can you say that again?  
164 **Would you qualify this link as an ongoing bond?**  
165 I don't understand bond? I don't understand the word.  
166 **It's essentially quite similar to the word link but it's stronger. But you can forget about**  
167 **the ongoing bond. If you think about the link with your parents, do you think it helps to**  
168 **cope, or on the contrary, does it make it more difficult to move on.**  
169 No it's not more difficult because they have given the basis of values in life; "les valeurs"  
170 (values in French) and I thank them for that. Honestly.  
171 **So that dialogue that you still have with them occasionally helps to cope you would say?**  
172 Yes but it comes very naturally, it's not "ça n'est pas pesant" (it is not burdensome in French),  
173 it's like breathing, very natural for me.  
174 **And do you think that your view on losing your parents has changed over time?**  
175 No (...)  
176 **Would you say you have come to terms with losing your parents?**  
177 That I have come to terms with losing my parents? I don't understand the meaning.  
178 **To put in another way, are you okay having lost your parents.**  
179 Yes.  
180 **And what has helped you to overcome this experience, where did you find support?**  
181 Nowhere, I think it's very personal.  
182 **Would you say within yourself? No I don't hear that? You were saying personally so**  
183 **would you say yourself?**  
184 Yes and my faith, yes of course.  
185 **Did you experience any changes in your health or your well being, having accepted their**  
186 **passing?**  
187 Hmm, my health is not improving as I am aging and there are a lot of things that are not okay  
188 so not really for the moment. And I would not link that to the death of my parents in one-way  
189 or another.  
190 **And in terms of family dynamics, would you say that the loss of your parents has**  
191 **brought you closer to your siblings or not?**  
192 Closer to my?  
193 **To your brothers and sisters?**  
194 Really, I am the one of the families who has always gathered my brothers and sisters, even  
195 during my parents time and since after. Because I think I have to forgive (sobs) my brothers  
196 or sisters, well some of them, because they are the children of my parents. So I have kept a  
197 bond with my eldest sister who died and my two eldest brothers, even though there are things  
198 that hurt a lot at the time, because they are my brothers and sisters I want to keep a bond with  
199 them And they are happy to come and see me anyway now, even if they don't, it's difficult,  
200 my brothers and sisters, some of them were very unhappy with their childhood or maybe they  
201 invented a childhood once they were adolescents or all grown up. Sometimes I think it's easier  
202 to accuse parents than to try to grow up really and it is probably what happened with the three  
203 eldest in the family.  
204 **And with your relationship with your children, would you say that this was impacted**  
205 **when you lost your parents?**  
206 No I don't think so really.  
207 **And if it were possible to provide recommendations to people who grieve their parents,**  
208 **what would be like, a message you would like to share to someone in this situation?**  
209 Well the first message is I think is you have to take care of your parents while they are living  
210 and not after. And so we should do what needs to be done and to give the love that needs to

211 be given when they die you don't feel guilty because you have done your part.  
212 **Right. Well that takes us to two final questions. First of all, is there a question that you**  
213 **think we should have asked you in this interview, to better understand people's**  
214 **experience?**

215 No, I can't think of any, maybe in three days I will think of it.

216 **And the last thing is, do you have anything you wish to share before we conclude this**  
217 **interview?**

218 After their death, I don't see what else to do than to keep the bond with the rest of the family.

219 **Hmm. Yes.**

220 And before they died, is to be as loving as one can be with the parents because they have not  
221 been perfect, they have done their most, just as we try to do.

222 **Absolutely. Thank you so much for taking the time to open up on this sensitive and very**  
223 **personal experience. Thank you so much.**

224 Thank you.

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(35:17)

## Appendix F10: Interview 10\_24June19

Comments: The interview took place over the phone with the use of video.

Before kicking off the interview, a reminder of the purpose of the study and data confidentiality and treatment was provided. Candidates were also recommended to take their time and ask for breaks if required during the process.

### BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW

1 **Could I please ask you to present yourself?**

2 Okay, my name is S, I am thirty-three years old and I come from XXX in the western part  
3 of XXX but I have been living in XXX for, hmm, eight years now. I work as a CRM project  
4 manager for a French company and I think that's it.

5 **Could I please ask you to explain your family structure?**

6 Yes, hmm, so I have one brother and I grew up with my two parents and my brother. My  
7 brother is sixteen years older than me, he was born in 1970 so my parents were young when  
8 he was born and I am the last child, of course and I was born sixteen years after and so, my  
9 father died six years ago, almost six years ago now in October 2013.

10 **Okay, right. Can I ask you about the circumstances of his passing?**

11 Yes, so actually I called him for his birthday when he was going to be seventy years old on a  
12 Tuesday and my mother said that the emergency came to take my father to the hospital, so I  
13 was really surprised. And so the same day, as I was surprised I went to Brittany, I informed  
14 my company and I said, "okay I need to go to the hospital as my father is there" and so I  
15 went to the hospital. My father seemed very tired and comment tu dis maigre (skinny in  
16 French)?

17 **Hmm. Slim. Skinny?**

18 Yes, skinny. I thought actually that he was depressed when I saw him like this because a few  
19 years before maybe six years before, he got a surgery but they did a mistake during the  
20 operation and so his knee was, or something with the leg I can't remember exactly but they  
21 did a mistake with the surgery and so after this, he was not in a good shape, he was not able to  
22 walk as before and so I think after this he stayed too much in the house and did not go out  
23 enough and so when I saw him on the Tuesday I thought he was depressed because he had  
24 stayed too long inside the house but actually, so the day after I went back to work because I  
25 thought he was just depressed etc., and so I planned to come back in Brittany on the weekend  
26 because it was his birthday so it was already planned that I come. When I came by train, my  
27 cousin was with a nurse, je ne sais pas comment on le dit pour un mec (I am not sure how to  
28 say it in English when it's a man in French)?

29 **Yes a nurse** (laughs).

30 So he called me and I was on the train and he told me that they had done some medical  
31 examinations on my father, that they had got the results and that he had a metastasis  
32 everywhere. So he told me that when I was on the train and so he had metastasis everywhere  
33 so he got cancer but, comment on dit déjà (how do we say already in French)? Comment cela  
34 s'appelle, je trouve plus mes mots (I forgot how it is called, I can't find my words in French)?

35 **Généralisé (generalized in French)?**

36 Oui généralisé, voilà (yes, a generalized cancer, that's it in French) and that he would die and  
37 so I, I was really shocked because it was a surprise and, hmm, of course I went back to the  
38 hospital on the Saturday and the day after on the Sunday and on the Sunday he was really  
39 really weak, I cannot really detail because it's a bit weird but I knew, when I saw how he was,  
40 I knew that he was going to die in a few days and actually he died the Sunday night.

41 **Right.**

42 Yes so it was really quick between the day he went into the hospital and the day he died  
43 because it was yes from Tuesday to Sunday. Hmm, so yes it was not like an accident but it's  
44 almost the same between the time I learned that he was sick and the moment he died, I  
45 learned that he had a cancer just the day before he died.



46 **Did you feel that it was unexpected then?**

47 Yes.

48 **Did you feel that you were prepared for this event?**

49 No but (...) of course not but actually during the week I was thinking okay what I can do for  
50 my father, should I work from Brittany etc., I was trying to think about how I could help him  
51 and so, I think because of course for, some people can guérir (get cured in French), how do  
52 you say this?

53 **Get better, cured?**

54 They can beat cancer but I know that a lot of people don't and especially when it's a lung  
55 cancer, I think a lot of people die from lung cancer, it's difficult to stay alive so finally I think  
56 my father was really strong as he did not say anything and he went into the hospital really at  
57 the end. He was really strong and I think for us his family I think we were kind of lucky  
58 because we did not have to worry too much about him.

59 **Did he know that he was ill or was it a surprise for him?**

60 No it was a surprise for me, I did not know. My mother and my brother lived with him, in the  
61 house that we grew up in and even my brother who was living with them, I lived in XXX but  
62 even them who lived with him, they did not know that he was sick. They saw that he was  
63 weak as in the last days or weeks he had difficulty walking, he was weak but even the doctors  
64 did not see it. They gave him des compléments alimentaires, une sorte de crème vanille  
65 protéinée (food supplements, a kind of vanilla protein shake in French). And so it's crazy that  
66 the doctors gave him that, rather than sending him to the hospital. But I do not know if I am  
67 the only one to think about this but maybe he was aware that he was sick but he did not want  
68 to, well he wanted to keep it for himself. Yes because a few months before also, he got a  
69 surgery on his nose, something on his nose, something (coughs) really anodin (Benin in  
70 French) but I think it was in February and he died in October so the doctor's should have  
71 identified something, I think, because of course when you have an operation they take your  
72 blood and do some checks etc. So I do not know if he knew or not but actually, we, my  
73 mother, brother and I, we did not know he was sick.

74 **And how was it for you to lose your father?**

75 (...) Hmm, yeah, it was a big shock because it was completely unexpected and also I felt  
76 really like, because I said I felt different things, you lose your father, you lose someone you  
77 love but also in a more egoistic way you always lose a part of yourself, someone who of  
78 course thinks about you, you know who has worried about you and also someone who has a  
79 lot of souvenirs (memories in French). Now that I do not have my father anymore, of course  
80 my father saw me growing etc. but as he is dead now, all the history is like gone with him, I  
81 don't know if you understand what I mean?

82 **Yes, I understand.**

83 So yes of course there are different things, you lose someone you love which is the most  
84 expected thing but something I had not thought about before I lost him, I was "okay I am a  
85 half orphan and how it feels is like this", because you lose your father and you lose someone  
86 who loves you (coughs) and yeah what was the most, it was really, the first year of course you  
87 think about this everyday, very often in the day of course and it is really hard for, it was really  
88 hard for Christmas, he died in October so Christmas was a family celebration just after this  
89 and it really is a family gathering so it was difficult to see that he was not there anymore. Also  
90 what I felt difficult and maybe unfair is to lose him and maybe because I was just thinking, I  
91 think I was twenty seven when I lost my father and for me what was weird is that I normally,  
92 I know there is no normal situation but in the normal way of things you don't lose your father  
93 at twenty seven. I mean, normally you should lose your parents when you are I don't know  
94 fifty, when you already have your own family. And for me it was like too early because I had  
95 not built my family yet and you know for those family celebrations, Christmas is with my  
96 parents and my brother, when you are older or when you have already your own family, you  
97 have also, it's a bit ridiculous but it's the way I see it, you have your own Christmas tree, your  
98 own family celebrations but with the family you built actually.

99 **Yes, I hear what you are saying yes.**

100 Yes so for me it was not the case yet, I was losing a part of my family whereas I did not have  
101 my own family yet and that's why I thought it was really early.

102 **Hmm, some people feel very vulnerable when they lose a parent, would you say this was**  
103 **your case?**

104 I think so, seeing how I reacted also, I worked for an exigent company so all the people there  
105 were really hard workers and maybe to think about other things or for the life to carry on, I  
106 worked a lot the year after and maybe to not think about this, I wanted to succeed and a lot of  
107 things and yeah i almost (...) I almost did a burn out the year after because I did not have a  
108 break, I think, after this. Instead of having a break, I did the contrary and I worked harder than  
109 I should.

110 **Did you feel that this event changed you as a person?**

111 Yes I think so because no, enfin, more and more I know that there are some people of course  
112 of my age who experience this, of course, not the majority (coughs) and yes this is something  
113 that (...) changes you as a person of course and also so the days after he died, you have a lot of  
114 things to do, administrative things, the ceremony to organize etc. and yeah it, you need to be  
115 very strong and like, I think I became, I don't know if I became an adult at this time but I was  
116 surprised by myself because (...) I don't know how to say it, because we did all this  
117 administrative stuff (...) I am thinking (...) je vais peut être le dire en français car du coup je  
118 vais avoir du mal à ( I might say it in French because I might find it difficult to in French)

119 **Hmm.**

120 No wait, je vais essayer en anglais (I will try in English in French). So yes, after he died, you  
121 have a lot of administrative stuff to do at the hospital at the Mairie (city council in French),  
122 how do you say Mairie (city council in French)?

123 **Yes like the city council.**

124 Yes, so, hmm, and also the worst thing is the pompes funèbres (undertaker in French) were  
125 you need to, je vais le dire en français car je n'ai pas le vocabulaire mais tu vas dans une  
126 espèce de show room ou tu dois choisir le cercueil, un mec qui embaume, enfin c'est  
127 complètement, c'est trop bizarre, tu n'as jamais pensé a cela avant ( I will say it in French as I  
128 do not have the vocabulary but you go in some kind of show room where you have to choose  
129 the coffin, if he gets embalmed, well, it's very strange, you never think of those things before  
130 in French) and I think I did well during this period as I was really, I knew what was good for  
131 him, it's a bit weird but you know the good thing to choose for him, for instance, sur la  
132 plupart des cercueil, il y avait des croix de Jésus en plaqué or, enfin c'est pas du plaqué ( on  
133 most coffins there were Jesus' cross in fake gold, it's not fake gold but in French) or but I  
134 knew that it was not his style, he was not a really practicing person, of course he grew up in  
135 Catholicism but he did not practice a lot but only for the Toussaint, he only went once a year  
136 to Church or for weddings. I knew it was not his style to have those kind of things and I felt,  
137 hmm, relieved to be able to do this actually. Just the day after he died, yeah, I was able to  
138 decide, because my mother and my brother did not really decide, I decided for them so I think  
139 I, yeah I felt like more adult, it's weird and I was so relieved by the organization of the  
140 ceremony of the church. I think it was a gift for him and yeah it was, I was also, I don't know  
141 if it's relieved, it's not happy of course but I knew what was, I was satisfied that we offered  
142 him a beautiful ceremony at the Church with songs, a lot of people came etc. and so (laughs)  
143 all of this administrative and also organization just after he died, yeah it's something that of  
144 course changes you because not everybody has to do that.

145 **Hmm.**

146 And of course after for the daily life you don't have your father but for me i am quite  
147 independent because I didn't live in the same city as them and since I am eighteen I left my  
148 home to do some studies in another city so I am quite independent but of course I did not  
149 expect to lose my father so early and also I, it was also hard as I have never met my  
150 grandparents. As my parents were also old and they also lost some of their parents early, for  
151 instance my mother lost her mother when she was seven so, my, the last living grandparent  
152 was my mother's father and he died actually the year I was born, so he did in 1986 so I have  
153 never met my grandparents so it's hard to lose other, my parents it's the hardest thing but to  
154 lose again my family members and especially when you don't have your family yet.

155 (Technical issue with my cable)  
156 **Did you feel that it was difficult to open up and talk about your grief?**  
157 No, I did not find it difficult at the time, I think it's more the people around you, who do not  
158 know how to discuss this kind of topic with you, I mean they are like gênés (embarrassed in  
159 French)  
160 **Hmm, yes.**  
161 But me no, I was not, my friends, my boyfriend were really helping.  
162 **Hmm.**  
163 Yeah and I could easily talk about this with them so it was not hard to talk about my grief.  
164 But it was more at work, I tried not to show, of course I was absent the week after but after I  
165 tried to continue with my life but it was also a way to escape this and to think about other  
166 things and to continue but yeah I did not have difficulties in expressing this. And yes another  
167 thing that changed, before it happened to me I was also, comment tu dis gênée (how do you  
168 say embarrassed in French)?  
169 **Embarrassed?**  
170 Yes, I was really embarrassed by death and when someone lost someone from his family, I  
171 did not know how to react or what to say, because I experienced this, whatever the words, just  
172 the message, yeah and anything that you can say is just great already.(laughs)  
173 **Hmm. I know what you mean. Do you think that there is something special that happens**  
174 **when you lose a parent?**  
175 What do you mean?  
176 **You already provided some insight previously when you said that you became an adult**  
177 **and had to be strong. I wanted to see if you had something to add on to that, is there**  
178 **something special that happens when you lose a parent?**  
179 (...)  
180 **Or is there any sort of meaning that you put on the loss of your parent?**  
181 Not really (...) actually what was weird was, I think it is easier when you are a believer you  
182 know and at this period I was not and so yeah (laughs) this is I think more complicated. It's  
183 just like the end and I don't feel or believe, for me it was the end so that is why it's maybe  
184 harder. What other things changed? Yeah, maybe the way we live with my brother and my  
185 mother because we needed to take responsibility for everything, it's also because my mother  
186 is not really, I don't know how to say that but my father was the one responsible for the  
187 administrative stuff, for the work at home, everything you know and (...) my mother could not  
188 take this role and so it's up to my brother and I to do all the things for instance, if we need to  
189 do some work at home on home, we manage this.  
190 **Yes, it's up to you and your brother to handle like admin or decisions those kind of**  
191 **things.**  
192 Exactly.  
193 **Right. And would you say you still have a link with your father, like an ongoing bond?**  
194 Ongoing bond?  
195 **Yes, like do you feel that you are still linked to each other?**  
196 It depends on days (...) I said it before that I was not a believer in the catholic way of  
197 thinking, but I am not totally, I don't know exactly about life after death and I don't know if I  
198 want to think about this actually, maybe it's weird but I really focus on my life on earth and I  
199 don't need to focus on my life after. What I do on earth matters more. If there is a life after ok  
200 great but I don't expect anything. So no I don't think I have a link with my father. Of course,  
201 what can be a bit contradictory is just that it was really important for me to do the ceremony  
202 at the church and to do it well properly etc. and also it's meaningful for me to go to the  
203 cemetery, to go to the graveyard when I go to Brittany. I don't know, it's a bit of a  
204 contradiction. It's just that maybe I don't think about religion or life after death in my daily  
205 life but as I grew up, I did not grow up with religion but I went to bible class and it's my  
206 culture, the ceremony at the Church and the graveyard is part of my culture so there may be a  
207 contradiction here but maybe it's just that I do not want to think about this.  
208 **And do you have situations where you like talk to him?**  
209 Nope (...)

210 **Or where you have some communication line with him?**

211 Sometimes, I have thoughts that he may protect stuff or me, sometimes I have thoughts like

212 this but I don't know really. I am not sure. It's not that I am not sure, it's just a thought, I

213 don't really think it's true and no I do not talk with him but I think about him and think of

214 stuff. It's actually more the things he has done or things he has said during his life that

215 impacts me. I think more about the things he has said during his life than talking with him

216 now. I think about things but I do not know. More about things that he was doing during his

217 life.

218 **Would you say that it qualifies as a presence? As you do think about certain memories**

219 **and things? Would you say that he is still present in a way in your life?**

220 (...) I did not think of it like this but yes, I don't know (...) it's a bit philosophical. I think I

221 have written something like this recently. Hmm, so yeah, yeah, yeah, I did not think of it like

222 this but yeah as the memories impact the present maybe it's also a presence. His life still

223 impacts me today on a lot of stuff. For instance, I am afraid of crossing the roads, I am a bit

224 afraid of cars and hmm, I think it's mainly the, because of the way they told me when I was a

225 child and even after so yes because, maybe it's another topic but my father also experienced a

226 mourn.

227 **Grief, you mean he had to mourn someone?**

228 Yes, actually his brother died from a bike accident when he was, when my father was

229 seventeen, it was a shock and I think that is why when he drove the car he was really slow and

230 yeah, I mean every time I needed to cross a road, they were like "ah be careful", they were

231 really anxious and I kept this anxiety, so yes he impacted me a lot.

232 **And, do you think your view on losing your father has changed over time?**

233 Yeah totally, because I think the first year (...) obviously it was really hard, but the two first

234 years, because I, you think about this really often and it is something that hurt me, but now, I

235 don't know since when, maybe one or two years, hmm, I feel better because I can talk about

236 this without crying, or without being so sad actually because now it's more, of course it's sad

237 but now I have learned to live with this.

238 **Hmm.**

239 C'est un peu comme cicatrisé, c'est comme cela que je vois les choses, c'est à dire que tu as

240 une blessure, cela t'as fait mal, c'était dur etc., il y a un temps de cicatrisation, et maintenant

241 que c'est cicatrisé ben voilà, ça existe toujours, c'est à dire que c'est quelque chose que tu as

242 vécu qui est dans toi, tu vois inscrit dans toi mais voilà maintenant tu n'as plus la douleur. Je

243 peux en parler sans pleurer ou être totalement (it's a bit like healed, that's how I see things,

244 that is, you have an injury, it hurts you, it was hard, etc. There is a time for it to scar, and now

245 that it's healed well, it still exists; it's something that you lived that is in you, you see inscribed

246 in you but here you are now no longer feeling the pain. I can talk about it without crying or

247 being totally) emotionally overwhelmed.

248 **And would you say, as you are using the metaphor of the scar that heals but that**

249 **remains a scar, hmm, would you say that you have come to terms with losing your**

250 **father?**

251 C'est quoi (what does in mean in French)?

252 **Coming to terms, it's like a form of acceptance, to say in another say, I could say are you**

253 **okay having lost your father today?**

254 Yeah, yeah, it's just what I said now. It's part of my life, I live with this, it's fine now, it's in

255 the past, I have learned to live with this and now I am not as sad as before, it's like normal,

256 not normal but yeah it's a, I just learned to live with this, it's really like a scar.

257 **And what helped you to be able to have that process?**

258 Time (laughs) time, I think and also

259 **Did you have support, resources to help you to come to terms with this situation?**

260 Yes my boyfriend and friends were very supportive but even, I mean I think only time can

261 help with those kinds of situations but maybe not only but even if you are supported by a lot

262 of people you still need time, this is sort the sentence I would use, you still need to complete

263 the process.

264 **And, did you feel that you experienced any changes in your health?**

265 Yes, this is a really good point because he had a cancer, I thought about other things, before I  
266 go on this, I also feel more anxious for my mother, of course as now my only remaining  
267 parent is my mother, I am really more anxious about her. Each time I have a phone call from  
268 home, I am anxious, I really need to answer the call as I think there might be something that  
269 might have happened to my mother so yes this really changed something in me, in my life as  
270 well. Maybe because I thought my parents were really older than the average age of people of  
271 my age, I was, I have always been, more, not anxious, I thought more about their health than  
272 people of my age because they are older. It's like what you can think about with your  
273 grandparents, you are more anxious about their health. And this was the case for me but for  
274 my parents.

275 **Hmm.**

276 And so yes, this has increased after the death of my father regarding my mother. Also because  
277 I don't live with her, I go to my home every six weeks or two months and something can  
278 happen and this is what happened also with my father for I don't know that year, it had been  
279 three months I had not gone back home and when I saw him again he was skinny and  
280 depressed, so I felt a bit (...) je n'ai plus mes mots (I lost my words in French) je ne sais même  
281 plus le mot en français (I can't even remember the word in French in French)?

282 **Is it guilty?**

283 Yes, voilà (that's it in French), I felt guilty because I yeah did not go home more often and so  
284 now I try to go home more often just to check that everything is okay, to see my family and  
285 spend time with them and to see if my mother is okay. And so yes, this is something that has  
286 changed, this anxiety. And also, after he died, I was curious about cancer, where does it come  
287 from, why? I was really, I have done some research about cancer etc. and I started to change  
288 the way I eat, my food, to eat organic food and so yes it started just after this. And also, I tried  
289 to eat healthier, reduce sugar; all these changes happened after this, this prise de conscience  
290 (awareness in French), how do you say?

291 **Awareness?**

292 Yes awareness exactly, it increased after this because when you are young, you do not care  
293 about this, but then it's like "okay cancer happens because of the shit we have around us,  
294 industrial food", so now I am more careful about this.

295 **And, can I ask you in terms of family dynamics, with your relationship with your  
296 mother and brother, did it change anything?**

297 In our relationship?

298 **Yes.**

299 After his death we were closer because we needed to affronter cela ensemble (deal with this  
300 situation together in French) and to manage all the stuff I talked about before but now just as I  
301 said, the relationship between us did not change, but my brother and I needed to take our  
302 responsibilities so that's what changed.

303 **Yes, so it did bring you closer then?**

304 Yes, I would say during the year after his death but now it's like it was before, the same as  
305 before.

306 **Alright, we are towards the end of the interview, hmm, my last question would be what  
307 would be a recommendation or a message that you would like to share to someone going  
308 through that process, what would you share to that person?**

309 That it's a process that takes time and that it is important to understand that it takes time and  
310 to understand it but after you can live with this and continue living. But yes I think the most  
311 important thing is to accept that it takes time to complete the process and that in fact it's  
312 normal to have pain and grief during a long time and it's not, yes the advice is also because I  
313 think some people try to switch, to try to go back to a normal life really too soon and I think  
314 it's important to feel the pain, to accept the pain and to accept to cry etc. but that it takes time,  
315 it's normal to think about the person who died but after you go back to a normal, well kind of  
316 a normal life.

317 **And, do you think in this interview process, is there a question missing to try to  
318 understand better how people are impacted. Is there something else that you would like  
319 to share that maybe I did not ask a question about?**

320 I replied but you did not ask the question, about religion and how religion can help through  
321 this process but for me it's not really the case. I find it interesting to see if you can understand  
322 the spiritual side of things, what is the part of religion in the process.  
323 **Is there anything else you wish to share?**  
324 No that's it.

Formal thank you and conclusion of the interview process.

END OF INTERVIEW

(53:07)

## Appendix G: Interview canvas

1. Could you please present yourself?
2. Could you please explain your family structure?
3. Have you lost a parent or both?
4. Could you please provide information on the circumstances of this or those events?
5. How was it for you to lose your parent or parents?
6. Was that an event that was difficult to experience? Please elaborate. (Practical aspects i.e. financial dependency, everyday life, emotional aspects i.e. emotional dependency)
7. Some people feel very vulnerable after losing a parent, was it your case? Please elaborate.
8. Did this event change you as a person? Could you explain why? (Or those events if both parents are deceased)
9. Did you feel that it was difficult to open up, talk about your grief, about your difficulties when you lost your parent? Why do you think this was the case?
10. Have you lost both parents? Did you find it difficult? Could you explain why?  
If answered yes: Did you experience any differences in both situations, when losing both parents? If so why? Did you feel the process of grief was more complex with the parent with whom you had the strongest bond?
11. In your opinion, what is it that makes it more difficult to talk about losing one's parent compared to other losses in life? (i.e. old wound, unfinished business, social acceptance, private process, special relationship that cannot be replaced)
12. In your opinion, is there something special that happens when you lose a parent?  
If so what do you think it is?
13. Have you made any sense or found any meaning in your parent's death? (If answered yes: How have you done so? If answered no: Can you tell me why you feel that way?)
14. Do you feel that you still have some sort of link to your parent?  
If so, how so? Do you think it helps you to cope or, on the contrary, does it make it more difficult to move on?
15. Do you think that your view on losing your parent has changed over time?  
(Technical version: Has your personal narrative about losing your parent changed over the course of time?)
16. Did you come to terms with losing your parent? (If answered yes: What helped you to overcome this experience? Where did you find support? If answered no: Please could you describe what is hard for you to come to terms with?)
17. Did you experience any changes in your health or your well being since you came to terms with losing your parent? Or parents?
18. What would you recommend to people when they grieve their parent or parents?  
Is there anything else you are keen to share about your personal experience?
19. Is there a question you think we should have asked you in this interview?

## Appendix H: Questionnaire

### An exploratory study on how adults experience the loss of a parent

As discussed following the interview, here is a questionnaire which should take between 5 and 10 minutes of your time. Once again thank you so much for participating to this process. I will be sure to send you a link to access the study once it's available. Many many thanks. Gabrielle

\* Required

1. What is your age? \*

---

2. What gender do you identify with? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Female  
 Male  
 Prefer not to say

3. What is your nationality? \*

---

4. Are you currently in a relationship? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- No  
 Yes

5. Do you have children

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No

6. Would you qualify yourself as a religious person? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No  
 I prefer not to say  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Would you qualify yourself as a spiritual person, in the sense that you have your own personal beliefs about life? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No  
 I prefer not to say  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you lost your mother? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No



**9. Have you lost your father? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**10. Did you carry out any of the following activities for your mother? Leave blank if not.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Daily care in person
- Provided financial help
- Managed finances and or administrative services
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Did you carry out any of the following activities for your father? Leave blank if not.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Daily care in person
- Provided financial help
- Managed finances and or administrative services
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. How often did you need to work to avoid conflict with your mother?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**13. To what extent could you count on your mother for help with a problem?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**14. How upset did your mother sometimes make you feel?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**15. How much did your mother make you feel guilty?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**16. To what extent could you count on your mother to help you if a family member very close to you died?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**17. How positive a role did your mother play in your life?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**18. How significant was the relationship with your mother in your life?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**19. If your mother were still alive, how close would your relationship be with this person in 10 years?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**20. If your mother were still alive, how much would you miss this person if the two of you could not see or talk with each other for a month?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**21. To what extent could you count on your mother to listen to you when you were very angry with someone else?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**22. How angry did your mother make you feel?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**23. To what extent could you really count on your mother to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?**

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**24. How often did your mother try to control or influence your life? \***

Please answer if your mother passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**25. How often did you need to work to avoid conflict with your father?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**26. To what extent could you count on your father for help with a problem?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**27. How upset did your father sometimes make you feel?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**28. How much did your father make you feel guilty?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**29. To what extent could you count on your father to help you if a family member very close to you died?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**30. How positive a role did your father play in your life?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**31. How significant was this relationship with your father in your life?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

**32. If your father were still alive, how close would your relationship be with this person in 10 years?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

33. **If your father were still alive, how much would you miss this person if the two of you could not see or talk with each other for a month?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

34. **To what extent could you count on your father to listen to you when you were very angry with someone else?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

35. **How angry did your father make you feel?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

36. **To what extent could you really count on your father to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

37. **How often did your father try to control or influence your life?**

Please answer if your father passed away, otherwise thanks for leaving blank  
Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4

---

Not at all               Very much

38. **People's thoughts are a mystery to me \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

---

Strongly disagree                        Strongly agree

39. **It's easy for me to figure out what someone else is thinking or feeling \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

---

Strongly disagree                        Strongly agree

40. **My picture of my parents changes as I change \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

---

Strongly disagree                        Strongly agree

41. I worry a great deal about what people are thinking and feeling \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

42. I pay attention to the impact of my actions on others' feelings \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

43. It takes me a long time to understand other people's thoughts and feelings \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

44. I know exactly what my close friends are thinking \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

45. I always know what I feel \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

46. How I feel can easily affect how I understand someone else's behaviour \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

47. I can tell how someone is feeling by looking at their eyes \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

48. I realise that I can sometimes misunderstand my best friends' reactions \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

53. I don't always know why I do what I do \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

54. I have noticed that people often give advice to others that they actually wish to follow themselves \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

55. It's really hard for me to figure out what goes on in other people's heads \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

56. Other people tell me I'm a good listener \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

49. I often get confused about what I am feeling \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

50. I wonder what my dreams mean \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

51. Understanding what's on someone else's mind is never difficult for me \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

52. I believe that my parents' behaviour towards me should not be explained by how they were brought up \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

53. I don't always know why I do what I do \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

54. I have noticed that people often give advice to others that they actually wish to follow themselves \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

55. It's really hard for me to figure out what goes on in other people's heads \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

56. Other people tell me I'm a good listener \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

57. When I get angry I say things without really knowing why I am saying them \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

58. I'm often curious about the meaning behind others' actions \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

59. I really struggle to make sense of other people's feelings \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

60. I often have to force people to do what I want them to do \*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

Strongly disagree        Strongly agree

61. Those close to me often seem to find it difficult to understand why I do things \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

62. I feel that, if I am not careful, I could intrude into another person's life \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

63. Other people's thoughts and feelings are confusing to me \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

64. I can mostly predict what someone else will do \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

65. Strong feelings often cloud my thinking \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

66. In order to know exactly how someone is feeling, I have found that I need to ask them \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

67. My intuition about a person is hardly ever wrong \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

68. I believe that people can see a situation very differently based on their own beliefs and experiences \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree



69. Sometimes I find myself saying things and I have no idea why I said them \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

70. I like to think about the reasons behind my actions \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

71. I normally have a good idea of what is on other people's minds \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

72. I trust my feelings \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

73. When I get angry I say things that I later regret \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

74. I get confused when people talk about their feelings \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

75. I am a good mind reader \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

76. I frequently feel that my mind is empty \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

77. **If I feel insecure I can behave in ways that put others' backs up \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

78. **I find it difficult to see other people's points of view \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

79. **I usually know exactly what other people are thinking \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

80. **I anticipate that my feelings might change even about something I feel strongly about \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

81. **Sometimes I do things without really knowing why \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

82. **I pay attention to my feelings \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

83. **In an argument, I keep the other person's point of view in mind \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

84. **My gut feeling about what someone else is thinking is usually very accurate \***

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

85. Understanding the reasons for people's actions helps me to forgive them \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

86. I believe that there is no right way of seeing any situation \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

87. I am better guided by reason than by my gut \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

88. I can't remember much about when I was a child \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

89. I believe there's no point trying to guess what's on someone else's mind \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

90. For me actions speak louder than words \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

91. I believe other people are too confusing to bother figuring out \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

## Appendix I: Complete table with themes, sub-themes and quotes

Theme	Sub theme	Sub code	Quotes
ENTERTAINING THE NOTION OF DEATH	Build experience with death		<p><b>232. P3:</b> No, we are all sharing that risk as humans. It's the most dramatic risk but it's something we should all be able to talk about, a lot more.</p> <p><b>139. P3:</b> Yes it's true, it's the start to something totally different and there is also the spiritual aspect of thinking where is he and you know, it's just like going to a restaurant with death, it's like opening the subject, it's time to talk about it now man.</p> <p><b>61. P5:</b> Well you see, I don't really like talking about still but I still was doing terminal care work and in fact it brought back the death of my aunt who was mum's younger sister. She died when she was forty four from breast cancer and she was a bit like there was mum and F and me and we were like equi-distance in age, so she was like my big sister and it sort of brought back all the loss from that time as well.</p> <p><b>69-71. P5:</b> And I lost my father again when mum died because we use to talk about dad a lot and she was the last of the older generation and you lose the whole of that generation, apart from my brother and sister.</p> <p><b>88-90. P5:</b> I am going back to work, I am doing half time general practice and half time palliative care, so I am going to be re-visiting that all the time but I am going to take with me some of the things I learnt from</p>

		<p>being with people I love who have died.</p> <p><b>90-92. P5:</b> And looking after people who are in the process of dying and it is going to hurt a bit, I know that but I have a lot of insight into dying and how to comfort people.</p> <p><b>123-127. P5:</b> unfortunately I carried it through from that to my father's death, no sorry my aunt's death, my father's death and my mother's death and it's still sort of rattling around in my head, catching out from time to time. And there will always be things, things on the television that I am watching and then I think I am going to cry. I have to leave the room and just get myself under control again.</p> <p><b>243-244. P5:</b> So four big events one after the other, you are looking for the next person to die.</p> <p><b>263-267. P6:</b> It depends on the age of the person you are talking to. If you are talking to a younger generation who has not experienced loss then yes they think your parents are going to reach a certain age and they are going to die. That's a lack of experience. For people of your own age who have already experienced loss then I think there is a lot more understanding and sharing of comfort in that age group.</p> <p><b>84-87. P6:</b> Well I never had in my life before, well I had it once before when I lost my sister as I said, she was only thirty seven, she died in very tragic circumstances as she died in childbirth so that was really an appalling experience as well. So</p>
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	<p>Generational awareness</p>	<p>losing my mother was very very difficult.</p> <p><b>293-294. P6:</b> After my sister's death of course (unintelligible segment) the death of my sister and the death of my parents.</p> <p><b>170-172. P10:</b> Yes, I was really embarrassed by death and when someone lost someone from his family, I did not know how to react or what to say, because I experienced this, whatever the words, just the message, yeah and anything that you can say is just great already (laughs).</p> <p><b>83-85. P1:</b> There is a realization, I would say even stronger after losing a second parent; there is a realization that you are next in line to going yourself so from that point of view it does hit it home, yes.</p> <p><b>165-166. P1:</b> it brings it home to you that you are in line to dying yourself.</p> <p><b>168-169. P1:</b> All that brings it home to you that you are next in line. So, there is an awareness of perhaps the shortness of the passage that is left to live.</p> <p><b>135-137. P5:</b> my two children and my brothers' children don't have any children so we are going to come to a full stop. When I peg out, we are probably going to end on a full stop. So it's nicer when you got a bigger family to share things with but we are getting to smaller and smaller families now.</p> <p><b>143-147. P5:</b> Well I have to say, my brother is the eldest of us now and he is 70 and I shall be 70 next year, I suppose we have to take the role of</p>
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		<p>the senior members of the family and to be responsible and hmm, I suppose and that's the biggest thing. When we lose our parents, we are now the senior generation, that's quite a responsibility really; I think I will have to stop being so stupid really.</p> <p><b>65-70. P6:</b> And, you are also confronted with death in a very drastic way and probably with your own death as well. You really keep coming to the full realization that life does come to an end, that even those very close to you that you love very much disappear and you know that one day you will go yourself as well so it's a very dark confrontation with loss and with the meaning of death.</p> <p><b>75-76. P6:</b> it was in a way that "well that generation is gone, now it's us that have to be there and we have to be strong for our children".</p> <p><b>178-183. P6:</b> It's just this very strong bond you have with your parents and that you don't fully realize how strong it is until the day they are no longer there. It is a bond, hmm, that really comes to the form when you have children of your own and you become a mother and know the love that you have for your child and you realize that your parents have this intense love for you as well and they give up so much of their life for your well being.</p> <p><b>186-188. P6:</b> That very strong bond between us human beings and our parents it's something that lasts all your life until the day they go and until the day you leave this world as</p>
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		<p>well (trembling voice).</p> <p><b>353-356. P6:</b> no as I said I wanted to be strong for them. I felt now that I replaced that generation which is gone and we are now that generation and would have to try and be strong for them and would have to be there for them to support them if they have problems in their lives. That was all very important.</p> <p><b>356-362. P6:</b> Yeah, I am not sure if I answered the question properly but looking I remember holding C (daughter) in my arms at the funeral, they were very supportive as well, it was a very difficult thing to go through if I had not had my children and I think once they saw their grandparents go as well, they all became very conscious of the fact that at some stage we will go too.</p> <p><b>360-362. P6:</b> It is something you have to integrate in your life, that it will happen to all of us and that at some stage we will go too.</p> <p><b>401-403. P6:</b> life was not eternal but passing, it's something we all have to deal with and sometimes-quite present in my mind.</p> <p><b>105-107. P8:</b> Yes, because you realize that you are next, when your second parent dies, you are an orphan and then you are next on the line, they are not the older generation in line anymore, it's you or it's me.</p> <p><b>109-113. P8:</b> I think it made me a better person and it, I sort of saw them as adults for the first time, as an adult to an adult when they died and that's made quite a difference because up till when, where they still</p>
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	<p>Reenactment process</p>	<p>alive, you are their child, even though you are sixty years old, you are their child but when they are not there anymore, you see them as you know not only, well not as parents but as adults.</p> <p><b>145-146. P9:</b> I think it's because of our roots. We come from them and what we give to our own children comes from them. So they are part of us.</p> <p><b>148-149. P9:</b> You become the next one to go; it's our time now. So yes, we are the next ones to go so (clears throat) maybe we have more to think about. Of our own lives.</p> <p><b>58-62.P5:</b> Well you see, I don't really like talking about still but I still was doing terminal care work and in fact it brought back the death of my aunt who was mum's younger sister. She died when she was forty four from breast cancer and she was a bit like there was mum and F and me and we were like equi-distance in age, so she was like my big sister and it sort of brought back all the loss from that time as well.</p> <p><b>69-71.P5:</b> And I lost my father again when mum died because we use to talk about dad a lot and she was the last of the older generation and you lose the whole of that generation, apart from my brother and sister.</p> <p><b>75-84. P5:</b> But my brother and sister were very good. They are less emotional but I think my brother felt it as well as he lost his wife, when she was sixty five, she had really horrible death, she's had an auto-</p>
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		<p>immune disease that affected her blood vessels and she bled to death in the end. So I was him, when she died, and it's all that re-visiting with death, every time you revisit previous deaths and it depends how close you were to what impact it had on you. I think it brought back my grandfather's death as well.</p> <p><b>88-90. P5:</b> I am going back to work, I am doing half time general practice and half time palliative care, so I am going to be re-visiting that all the time but I am going to take with me some of the things I learnt from being with people I love who have died.</p> <p><b>123-127. P5:</b> unfortunately I carried it through from that to my father's death, no sorry my aunt's death, my father's death and my mother's death and it's still sort of rattling around in my head, catching out from time to time. And there will always be things, things on the television that I am watching and then I think I am going to cry. I have to leave the room and just get myself under control again.</p> <p><b>243-244. P5:</b> so four big events one after the other, you are looking for the next person to die.</p> <p><b>84-87. P6:</b> Well I never had in my life before, well I had it once before when I lost my sister as I said, she was only thirty seven, she died in very tragic circumstances as she died in childbirth so that was really an appalling experience as well. So losing my mother was very very difficult.</p>
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	Imagining death		<p><b>293-294. P6:</b> After my sisters death of course (unintelligible segment) the death of my sister and the death of my parents.</p> <p><b>296-297. P6:</b> Even my sister is, it's been, how many years, thirty two years so now, hmm, even my sister it's still a very deep wound for all of the family in fact, a very very deep wound.</p> <p><b>225-226. P10:</b> maybe it's another topic but my father also experienced mourning.</p> <p><b>224-229. P6:</b> It's the way I imagine death. I mean a read a book, you probably heard about it, I can't remember the name of her "near death experiences" there were many researchers done on near death experiences in many countries and she collected experiences of people who were actually declared dead and have come back to life but not quite and she describes the processes of seeing the light and flying into a tunnel and seeing people that they loved and really do believe that that is what is going to be.</p> <p><b>242-244. P6:</b> so I cling to that story to that sort of belief that at the moment of going it's an experience that you will see the people you have loved very closely in your life.</p>
POSITIVE FEELINGS	Gratitude	Towards life	<p><b>114-116. P4:</b> I was extremely lucky that my parents lived that long and that I was a grown fully independent person.</p> <p><b>376-377. P4:</b> I was incredibly fortunate that the parents were there</p>

		Towards parents	<p>during my forties and when I was fully independent.</p> <p><b>378-379. P4:</b> I must admit, it was, I was unbelievably fortunate that I lost them as such a late age in their life and mine so being anything.</p> <p><b>331-332. P6:</b> we can always wish for more but that does give you great strength</p> <p><b>53-54. P8:</b> I was lucky it was not an illness that dragged on, it was better that it happened quickly for her</p> <p><b>153-157. P8:</b> what they taught me, perhaps it came back even more after they died, when they were not there anymore. I don't think I am exaggerating there. I think it's because you remember more, when they are not there to communicate with them, I am not idealizing them, as I am seeing them as adults now, from one adult to another but I think that a lot of what they gave me and passed on to me, I am aware of it now which I was not when they were alive.</p> <p><b>316-317. P4:</b> For this I am eternally grateful to them, eternally grateful that they never interfered in my choices in any shape or form.</p> <p><b>451-453. P4:</b> I just have this immense appreciation of how they handled things and I try to implement this in my life. Not to allow myself to be preoccupied by my daily interests, I try to separate these in my own actions but reminded by how fabulously they handled it.</p> <p><b>470-473. P4:</b> I can't call it otherwise</p>
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	Relief	End of suffering	<p>than immense appreciation for the way they actually were because they have never finished any super fancy school or anything like that so it's like just a natural talent, I would not know how else to call it or instinctual behavior which was proper so I tried to raise it and perpetuate it in my life.</p> <p><b>523-524. P4:</b> That's why I have this immense feeling of appreciation and maybe in a huge part I am the way I am because they allowed me to be.</p> <p><b>153-155. P9:</b> It has to happen and of course the relationship before could have been better but it was not so bad, so a lot of respect, now anyway.</p> <p><b>57-58. P10:</b> He was really strong and I think for us his family I think we were kind of lucky because we did not have to worry too much about him.</p> <p><b>155-156. P3:</b> I am sometimes scared about life and for me it was a relief to know that he was free.</p> <p><b>25-27. P3:</b> So for me, it was like a chapter that I had to turn emotionally speaking as I lost my best friend but it was also releasing as the disease aspect was very dark and full of suffering.</p> <p><b>223-226. P4:</b> I was sad to lose them from that perspective but knowing how hard their lives were in general and knowing they were struggling with each other for a very long time. I knew that technically from a certain angle it was a relief to pass away.</p> <p><b>475-478. P4:</b> I really saw it as much as you can see it, such a dramatic</p>
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		<p>event I saw it as the most natural when it comes to the timing and how they passed away that there was not prolonged (...) they were both preoccupied by undignified old age which is a very relative thing.</p> <p><b>173-176. P5:</b> And my dad, of course I say that but it is not as fresh in my memory as mum's death and in some ways it was of course almost a blessing when dad died because you know he stumbled on for another twelve months and not enjoy it at all.</p> <p><b>143-145. P6:</b> I could not help to have a certain sense of relief as he was not suffering anymore and the poor man was told to have to go home and was told that he had to go to a medical institution.</p> <p><b>149-151. P6:</b> at the end we were feeding him but he had his mind completely, up till the moment that he died, he was fully conscious of what was happening so I think to a certain extent there was a certain relief that he was not suffering anymore.</p> <p><b>38-40. P6:</b> For my father it was expected, I mean, because sometimes when I'd see him suffering and I saw him suffering quite a lot and I would be like "oh poor daddy, I hope it does not go on for too long"</p> <p><b>45-47. P7:</b> There are a lot of things to explain also because of the role of my father in the family. So when he died, when he passed away, the things changed and so first it was a little bit better for our life. It was a little bit appeasing.</p> <p><b>196-197. P7:</b> And for him also, I was</p>
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		<p>For the life of the remaining parent</p>	<p>relieved for him, he was suffering a lot, so I found a reason for him too.</p> <p><b>53-54. P8:</b> I was lucky it was not an illness that dragged on, it was better that it happened quickly for her</p> <p><b>55-58. P8:</b> And he changed from a very vital person to a very old man, so in a way it was a sort of deliverance when he died for him and for me.</p> <p><b>30-32. P9:</b> I saw my father as he had been quite absent minded for several years and physically he was getting worse and worse, not moving and no recognizing anyone, we nearly wished that he would go, it was better for him. And, so I was not surprised when he died.</p> <p><b>43-45. P9:</b> My mother, she had said for such a long time that she wanted to die because she had a good life with six children and twenty-six grandchildren and already one grand child. She was not bitter about it but she thought she had to finish her time.</p> <p><b>65-66. P9:</b> And also the last years were not very nice for them with physical and mental suffering so it's always difficult for the rest of the family.</p> <p><b>169-173. P4:</b> So in a way I was almost relieved when (...) until my father had a stroke, when he died, I realized that my mother was pretty, you could say relieved in a way. She lost a partner, a lifetime partner but she was relieved that there was no cause of fight between them anymore so she could be finally what</p>
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		<p>No more hospital phone calls</p>	<p>she wanted to be.</p> <p><b>178-180. P4:</b> So I saw the friction developing between them and I am happy that, well technically my mother was relieved when he passed away.</p> <p><b>228-230. P4:</b> So they spent quite a few years torturing each other because they could not brake away from each other but they could not also be with one another. So I am guessing that from a certain angle it was a relief for both of them to pass away.</p> <p><b>150-153. P6:</b> I think to a certain extent there was a certain relief that he was not suffering anymore and that the last fifteen years were finished and that my mother might be able to have some sort of a quality of life for the few years or for the number of years that she might have left, as it turned out it was only four years in fact.</p> <p><b>231-234. P2:</b> We call it in Spanish " consuelo de bobo" which is a stupid consolation which is well at least I don't need to have that phone call in the middle of the night to say that mum has been rushed to the hospital because I already had it for both. At least, I am done with it you know. I don't have to worry anymore.</p> <p><b>348-349. P2:</b> At least you are done with the call. Done with that call, you don't have to have that call saying that they have been rushed to hospital and they might not come back anymore.</p> <p><b>373-375. P2:</b> And that is the only</p>
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			<p>thing I can tell people who are grieving, thank god you are never going to have to get that call again.</p>
<p>NEGATIVE FEELINGS</p>	<p>Loneliness</p>		<p><b>101-102. P2:</b> Nobody asked me about my grief.</p> <p><b>207-211. P2:</b> Why is it difficult, because other people they have not gone through it, they don't get it. They don't get it that I lost a parent, I don't have a radar, I don't have my compass. You steer but you steer by yourself. You are bushwhacking; nobody's telling you that this is the road to take. You don't even have your cheerleading squad behind you " you are doing so well, go for it, I am really proud of you".</p> <p><b>10-11. P3:</b> So my family experience is really about my parents and my sisters, which was already very rich.</p> <p><b>37-39. P3:</b> It was difficult because of this feeling of absence, this feeling of being a little bit like alone, it was difficult because I felt a lot of love. It was the first time that I lost someone that was so close to me.</p> <p><b>27-28. P4:</b> I have very limited contact with our relatives since I technically, apart from my parents, which have passed away for a couple years; I have nobody, nearly nobody else.</p> <p><b>54-57. P4:</b> I came into Serbia, very limited contact with cousins and relatives so when my grandfather died, technically since then and although I left thirty years ago, I had 0 contact with anybody from back home and there was no social media so it was impossible to communicate</p>

	Loss	<p>with people even monthly.</p> <p><b>67-68. P4:</b> So technically I am all alone, let's put it this way.</p> <p><b>181. P4:</b> Well, you feel alone.</p> <p><b>201-202. P4:</b> I felt not for long but alone. You really realize at some point, well when they both passed away that was it.</p> <p><b>218-219. P4:</b> It was sad, it was sad to be alone you know and not having anybody else.</p> <p><b>89. P7:</b> I did not talk about that a lot. We did not talk about that at home.</p> <p><b>125-128. P7:</b> I was a kid before because my father was there to hug me or to have physical contact and after I decided to be very at a distance with everybody. I was already at a distance with my mother, I was kissing my father but not my mother so of course when I lost my father I realized that I was a little bit alone with this feeling of love.</p> <p><b>171-172. P7:</b> So of course it changes you, I am not the same as everybody, I have a part of myself who is alone so I have to be okay with this part in me. I need to take care of me.</p> <p><b>190-193. P1:</b> but actually I wish that someday along the line my eldest daughter had a conversation with my mother, in America when it was about two weeks before she died and they had a more honest conversation I think than I was ever or allowed myself to have.</p> <p><b>74-75. P3:</b> Emotionally speaking I lost my best friend so I kind of felt I had to move on in a whole different</p>
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		<p>world.</p> <p><b>62-63. P5:</b> It does not matter at what age you lose the people you love; there is a big loss to it.</p> <p><b>183-186. P6:</b> Yeah I fully came to realize what they meant for me and for my children because my children weeped them very deeply, they were very attached to them and you know they came over to us regularly and I can't help think about them too.</p> <p><b>356-362. P6:</b> Yeah, I am not sure if I answered the question properly but looking I remember holding C (daughter) in my arms at the funeral, they were very supportive as well, it was a very difficult thing to go through if I had not had my children and I think once they saw their grandparents go as well, they all became very conscious of the fact that at some stage we will go too.</p> <p><b>218-223. P8:</b> perhaps it's not important because it concerns me and my parents but F. my son and nieces and nephews were all affected, especially by my mother's death and it either created problems or brought the families closer together. So I think it's important to ask as well, and it made me see my mother differently how affected my son was and how much he loved her. I think that is important and it makes you see your parents through different eyes.</p> <p><b>225. P8:</b> It makes me see my parents through my son's eyes. It is a different way at looking at people as they see your parents as grandparents.</p>
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	<p>Guilt with ageing parents</p>	<p>Sunday night.</p> <p><b>65-66. P10:</b> And so it's crazy that the doctors gave him that, rather than sending him to the hospital.</p> <p><b>54-58. P5:</b> So she took ten days to die, which was very hard and as a doctor I felt we should be able to do things much better. My sister and I have done a lot of terminal care work and I still did not think we had done enough to help her to die with dignity and you know well.</p> <p><b>51-54. P9:</b> It was tough for me to hear that because then I realized that when we were not there, nurses were not so good with the people. Even if it was a nice place apparently. So you feel guilty, not to have been able to keep your parents at home with you.</p> <p><b>283. P10:</b> I felt guilty because I yeah did not go home more often</p>
	<p>Sadness</p>	<p><b>57-60. P1:</b> So I think that I can say it hit me harder a few months after, having left my family home and come back to France and taking up my everyday life, I did have, definitely, probably about 3 to 6 months of deep sadness inside me and (...) missing her (cried)</p> <p><b>65-70. P1:</b> I had moments like this where I would cry driving in the car on my own, never in front of my children, but driving on my own in the car, I use to put on (laughed) I, it's almost as if I was enjoying letting go, I would put on very loudly Queen which was the mama song and I would put it full burst in my</p>

	Regret	Deceased missing out on family moments	<p>car and I was driving along with tears dribbling down (laughed) but I would just be living the moment of missing her (laughed) but i think and it did me good to do that</p> <p><b>83. P1:</b> No I am just thinking about it, did I feel vulnerable (...) no more sad.</p> <p><b>223-224. P4:</b> I was sad to lose them from that perspective</p> <p><b>93-94. P5:</b> It affected me a lot to begin with, I cried a lot to begin with, well yes it is me, I am the more emotional person.</p> <p><b>42-43. P6:</b> You are never prepared; it's at the same time a terrible shock and an immense sadness.</p> <p><b>66-68. P7:</b> Of course I was sad and I cried at night because I missed him and I did not like for things to change like everybody but no, to answer the question I would say no. (mutual laugh).</p> <p><b>89-91. P7:</b> Sometimes we were crying together but like it was once a month the first year and once a year the year after and after ten years, it never happens.</p> <p><b>100-101. P7:</b> I think I was only sad and with my very close friends and with myself actually (expires strongly).</p> <p><b>53. P8:</b> So it was very hard.</p> <p><b>99-101. P1:</b> So, although it was tough because I feel she missed out on so much, I think to myself goodness, she did not see my third brother's second child, she did not see my youngest brother's children which is very sad</p>
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		<p>Unfinished communication with the deceased</p>	<p><b>215-216. P1:</b> now I'm in this, I have lost so much weight, I can wear really nice clothes and stuff like that, I wish that he could see me like this.</p> <p><b>218-219. P2:</b> I wish they could come here to see the way I live which I love it; it's really my kind of life.</p> <p><b>221. P4:</b> you feel sad that your parents are not there to enjoy our kids.</p> <p><b>255-257. P6:</b> as I said when something happy happens in the family, you know the birth of a baby or when I see my grandchildren, I often think " oh mum I would love to share this with you" then you realize ouch she is no longer there.</p> <p><b>112-114. P6:</b> it was a happy moment, and at the same time the three of us, the three sisters were terribly sad that my mother was not here because you know she was really looking forward to being there.</p> <p><b>125-127. P8:</b> Sometimes, I really wish she was there, to share something, usually when it is something positive, it's very difficult to think that she is not there, to enjoy it with her, to see it with her, to feel it with her because you can't when somebody is gone.</p> <p><b>158-159. P9:</b> I think of my parents and I know they would have loved the house; they would have loved to come there.</p> <p><b>184-188. P1:</b> I would say the only regret I have which probably hurt me because I wish I would have said something while my mother was alive, was the recognition, to be able</p>
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		<p>to talk about the fact that she was or might die was never an issue because one always had to remain positive that you did not want to risk making the person who was ill not believe that they could get better.</p> <p><b>273-275. P1:</b> I perhaps, things that I can see today that perhaps I would have liked to tell him, could have made my life easier or my childhood better.</p> <p><b>144-145. P7:</b> I wish I knew that person now, I wish I could have some understanding of life, some discussions about life but maybe he could not do that.</p> <p><b>70-72. P9:</b> And sometimes, what we have missed in our dialogues from their part or from our part because we were young and there are things (sobbed) we would not have done (...) with more experience now.</p> <p><b>130-133. P9:</b> When you are young, you can't think about that in those terms. You just try to grow up and leave. And sometimes I think it's very sad that children don't have any experience and are not able to be the parents of their parents and try to explain to them but of course it's impossible because you are just young. And you can't.</p> <p><b>135-136. P9:</b> When I say feeling guilty, I am not saying crying all day about that it's just kind of nostalgic.</p>
IDENTITY	Building strength	<p><b>27-28. P1:</b> I was the one who talked to my mother who told her that we were all there.</p> <p><b>33-34. P1:</b> So, funnily enough, I think I was very strong at that stage.</p>



		<p><b>249-250. P1:</b> I think I probably really do feel stronger today than I did when I was younger and more dependent on them.</p> <p><b>23-24. P1:</b> I think I took a lead role in her departure</p> <p><b>88. P2:</b> Maybe stronger, it made me start to really count on myself and not on everybody else.</p> <p><b>93-94. P2:</b> I really learned how to count on myself.</p> <p><b>57-59. P3:</b> My girlfriend knew it was happening, my manager also, I took a year off, it I had some free time and I felt vulnerable but at the same time we agreed with my father that I would be strong and that I had to take care of the family.</p> <p><b>76-79. P3:</b> What people say is that those kind of experiences help you to be stronger. I think the fact that I lost my father at the beginning of the trip, at the end of the trip, I was feeling stronger, not because of the trip but because of the loss of my father.</p> <p><b>76-80. P6:</b> so no, I don't think I remember feeling vulnerable, I remember feeling I needed to be strong now and you know to take the place of my mother in the family, because I am the eldest now of our family, so I suppose I felt I had to take the role of the older figure in the family if you like, so I tried to be as strong as possible</p> <p><b>60-62. P7:</b> There is a before and after, everything changing so much so during the first two, three months I was very lost but after I went back home, I went to University two months after but I think it gave me</p>
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	<p>Leadership and new responsibilities</p>	<p>strength.</p> <p><b>114-117. P10:</b> you need to be very strong and like, I think I became, I don't know if I became an adult at this time but I was surprised by myself because (...) I don't know how to say it, because we did all this administrative stuff</p> <p><b>41-46. P3:</b> So this was really like the emotional aspect and this was the reality of losing someone in France, so the administration, the pressure and all the paperwork and managing the relationships with people closer and not that closer to the family and all the communication that I had to implement just to explain the situation, just like, really time where I had to be very intimate with my heart but at the same time very exposed to the society and to move on where I just wanted to take a break and think about what was going on.</p> <p><b>57-59. P3:</b> My girlfriend knew it was happening, my manager also, I took a year off, it I had some free time and I felt vulnerable but at the same time we agreed with my father that I would be strong and that I had to take care of the family.</p> <p><b>239.240. P3:</b> I became a bit the head of the family in terms of, not like leading but at least making sure that we were going in the same direction</p> <p><b>76-80. P6:</b> so no, I don't think I remember feeling vulnerable, I remember feeling I needed to be strong now and you know to take the place of my mother in the family,</p>
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		<p>because I am the eldest now of our family, I felt I had to take the role of the older figure in the family if you like, so I tried to be as strong as possible</p> <p><b>62-63. P7:</b> I was really; I took his role in the family.</p> <p><b>107-108. P7:</b> I had to have a new role as I think my mother was more lost than me.</p> <p><b>110-112. P7:</b> Not lost because she was a fighter too but she really needed someone. I mean I. It was not my responsibility but I felt she needed an adult with her so of course, I was a kid before but as I told you, yes University changed me</p> <p><b>137-138. P10:</b> Just the day after he died, yeah, I was able to decide, because my mother and my mother did not really decide, I decided for them</p> <p><b>184-189. P10:</b> Yeah, maybe the way we live with my brother and my mother because we needed to take the responsibilities for everything, it's also because my mother is not really, I don't know how to say that but my father was the one responsible for the administrative stuff, for the work at home, everything you know and (...) my mother could not take this role and so it's up to my brother and I to do all the things for instance, if we need to do some work at home on home, we manage this.</p> <p><b>302. P10:</b> I needed to take our responsibilities so that's what changed.</p>
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	Personal change	<p><b>80-81. P3:</b> I feel that I am a different person, I see life in a different way, I talk to people in a different way, there is definitely something that has changed.</p> <p><b>127-128. P3:</b> life has a whole different taste. It's a game changing point; nothing has the same taste or the same colors.</p> <p><b>183-188. P3:</b> Yes it has changed as two years ago I had a mountain to climb, emotionally, personally but also in terms of administration and just like supporting the family and today I am back in a normal life but it was a big big focus of my last two years. I spent the last two years thinking of that in terms of paperwork but also in terms of emotional work and today I am again thinking more about my family and my friends and my work so it's yes, it's a funny thing, you know it's part of the cycle, you cannot wish it to anybody.</p> <p><b>210. P3:</b> I became someone calmer.</p> <p><b>210-212. P3:</b> I don't know if it was the age or the factor of losing my father but physically speaking I changed a lot in the last two years. I am not sure if it was because of my father.</p> <p><b>227-229. P3:</b> In the last two years, it's true that I have been in so many emotional states that today it's like my identity but it could be different in five years. What is the progression about death over time?</p> <p><b>89-91. P6:</b> I think it made me much more sensitive, hmm, I think I</p>
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		<p>became much more aware of all she had brought me in my life and what I wanted to give to my own children.</p> <p><b>43-45. P7:</b> I think I have changed a lot. I began to listen to people, to be more into I don't know, I was less, I had a kind of violence before, psychologically a little bit in anger and after that weirdly, after that, it went better.</p> <p><b>82-83. P7:</b> Spiritual and maybe the relationship with people about the anger or sadness or listening to people</p> <p><b>117-120. P7:</b> So to answer your question, of course it changed me a lot in terms of independence and so my way to be an adult. An adult in a way because I always skipped a very very big part of child in me but I think it's a different topic. So yes I became very independent very quickly.</p> <p><b>242-244. P7:</b> Yes definitely, at the beginning it's a nightmare and then you understand it happens for a reason and you are better and after after you understand that you are the person you are now because you lost that father. I am who I am because I lost him, because I began to fight, because I wanted to.</p> <p><b>70-73. P8:</b> I think it's silly at sixty but I think I actually quite grew up and became a nicer person when my mother died because I. I remember all the good things about her and there were an awful lot of them and I suppose I try and be like that a little bit which brings out a nicer side to me.</p>
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			<p><b>76-79. P9:</b> Maybe you get more indulgent with others, especially with other parents, who remain for example my husband's parents, maybe we are more careful to take care of them, not leave them alone, to ring them once or twice every week.</p>
VULNERABILITY	To be or not to be		<p><b>85-86. P2:</b> Talking to my mum, yes I talked to her all the time but I did not feel that I could not continue.</p> <p><b>19-20. P3:</b> He was a good man for us and we did suffer a lot emotionally and socially about his disappearance.</p> <p><b>57-59. P3:</b> My girlfriend knew it was happening, my manager also, I took a year off, it I had some free time and I felt vulnerable but at the same time we agreed with my father that I would be strong and that I had to take care of the family.</p> <p><b>126-127. P4:</b> And we did not live together for a very long time so that all left relatively minor impact, let's put it this way.</p> <p><b>66. P5:</b> Yes. I suppose there is vulnerability on two fronts. As a daughter and as a doctor.</p> <p><b>80-83. P6:</b> when you are going through it, you feel vulnerable, it's a terrible experience of, hmm, suffering and waiting for it to happen and wanting for it to happen as you don't know how long you are going to be able to deal with the tension and the fear and when it does happen, there is the shock of it all happening.</p> <p><b>38-39. P7:</b> At this moment it was a real nightmare. For me it was really</p>

		<p>unfair and I was always repeating to myself “why why me?”. It was unbearable but yes.</p> <p><b>202-204. P7:</b> I don't have that link everyday and I don't need that but sometimes when I am feeling very alone and like a child, I need to find that link so I am searching for it, calling for it and sometimes it happens.</p> <p><b>62-64. P7:</b> I took his role in the family. I was not vulnerable because I was not allowed to be vulnerable, so I got back home and I was like okay let's go, I have to support my mother, to be there for my brother.</p> <p><b>94-100. P7:</b> Today, I have a lot of tools to understand my feelings, to take some distance and five years after I lost my grandfather, I had the distance and the tools to understand but at this moment no. I did not want to cry at school or university, my life was new so I to build it, I really don't remember, that's crazy, I really don't remember having any moment of vulnerability at University, like it was a new life, so I had to be me without my father, so I had to be a new one by myself but not into sadness and not into "omg she is such a poor person" so I fought a lot.</p> <p><b>78-80. P8:</b> No, immediately after I did not, it was funny for both my parents but a year after when I saw my brothers and sisters, we spent the summer together and that brought it all back and that was very difficult but at the time no.</p> <p><b>104-109. P10:</b> I think so, seeing how I reacted also, I worked for an</p>
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	<p>Feeling exposed</p> <p>Missing emotional support and affection</p>	<p>exigent company so all the people there were really hard workers and maybe to think about other things or for the life to carry on, I worked a lot the year after and maybe to not think about this, I wanted to succeed and a lot of things and yeah I almost (...) I almost did a burn out the year after because I did not have a break, I think, after this. Instead of having a break, I did the contrary and I worked harder than I should.</p> <p><b>85-88. P3:</b> I had to send so many letters to so many institutions and government bodies, I had the feeling that the thing was becoming public; I had a lot of support from my friends and families. This also made it very public. I had a lot of support from my friends and families, which also made it very public.</p> <p><b>113-116. P1:</b> But again the problem I had was the problems I had later with my own family and children that I did not have her to help me. So yes, in that respect there was a definite sadness that I did not have the possibility of her confidence and help.</p> <p><b>220-221. P2:</b> You know that is what I miss is that part. Being cuddled.</p> <p><b>223. P2:</b> Yes and having your parents say that I am really proud of you and how you managed your life</p> <p><b>226. P2:</b> I miss their approval and their pride.</p> <p><b>237-241. P2:</b> The only thing is, had they still been alive now, would I continue to and had I continued to</p>
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	<p>Not having one's own family</p>	<p>come to them to ask for advice would have I lived my life and marital differently or would have I managed my marital life differently. Because there is really a lot of times where you know for that you don't know if it's good to come to your parents for help or not because they always take your side.</p> <p><b>256-257. P7:</b> you are vulnerable, because I did not build any family of my own</p> <p><b>92-98. P10:</b> normally, I know there is no normal situation but in the normal way of things you don't lose your father at twenty-seven. I mean, normally you should lose your parents when you are I don't know fifty, when you already have your own family. And for me it was like too early because I had not built my family yet and you know for those family celebrations, Christmas is with my parents and my brother, when you are older or when you have already your own family, you have also, it's a bit ridiculous but it's the way I see it, you have your own Christmas tree, your own family celebrations but with the family you built actually.</p> <p><b>100.101. P10:</b> Yes so for me it was not the case yet, I was losing a part of my family whereas I did not have my own family yet and that's why I thought it was really early.</p> <p><b>153-154. P10:</b> but to lose again my family members and especially when you don't have your family yet.</p>
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	<p>Lack of preparation to parents death</p>	<p><b>194-195. P1:</b> I did not allow myself to believe that she was going to die. I could not put that into words (...). And somewhere, somewhere along the line you have your head in the sand and you don't want to believe it.</p> <p><b>7-9. P1:</b> I think, even though you know it is going to come to that end, you don't want to believe it, you always think that something else like a miracle will happen to make it ok.</p> <p><b>49-52. P2:</b> You could see it was really heavy so ok we were not expecting, we thought that she was going through a hard period but we did not expect that she would die from it. But you could see it was not easy for her, they were so linked together. So expecting and not expecting.</p> <p><b>129. P4:</b> what happens is that everybody has his own idea of what is an old age and you know</p> <p><b>67-69. P5:</b> I knew mum was eighty nine but apart from the cancer, she was a very fit eighty nine years old and I wanted her to go on and on as a mum because we shared such a lot together.</p> <p><b>42-43. P6:</b> I was expecting it but you are never prepared for the death of your parent. You are never prepared, it's at the same time a terrible shock and an immense sadness.</p> <p><b>154-155. P6:</b> Whereas, when my mother was concerned, I was not ready to let her go, I was not ready to lose her at all, that was really devastated and as I said it happened over just a few months.</p>
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		<p>lose apart of themselves, they have to grieve that part.</p> <p><b>85-86. P8:</b> My feelings. Yes, as I said it was perhaps more of a shock because of the circumstances of my mother's death and also because we were like, it was sort of like a part of me went away.</p> <p><b>96-98. P8:</b> Well I think because it's part of you. If you have always been part of a close family, the way we were, are, you sort of grow into one another so when one dies there is a little part of you that dies as well or that just is not there anymore</p> <p><b>75-81. P10:</b> it was a big shock because it was completely unexpected and also I felt really like, because I said I felt different things, you lose your father, you lose someone you love but also in a more egoistic way you always lose a part of yourself, someone who of course thinks about you, you know who has worried about you and also someone who has a lot of souvenirs (memories in French). Now that I do not have my father anymore, of course my father saw me growing etc. but as he is dead now, all the history is like gone with him</p>
<p>A LONELY PROCESS</p>	<p>Protecting children from grief</p>	<p><b>65-66. P1:</b> I would cry driving in the car on my own, never in front of my children</p> <p><b>250-251. P5:</b> Well for me it's difficult to cry as it upsets other people and I don't like upsetting other people.</p> <p><b>251-256. P5:</b> The other thing is to be able to talk to your family about</p>

		<p>pictures photographs that you got, going through your photograph albums and being able to comfort each other, share the comfort and not to have to be strong all the time which is the problem about being the senior generation as you have to comfort the ones below you and they should not have to be comforting you. That is silly because why would not they want to comfort you.</p> <p><b>257-259. P5:</b> So how can you put that on somebody you really love. You can't put your grief on that person. I don't really know how she coped as she was away from home, I could not comfort her.</p> <p><b>73-76. P6:</b> I don't remember particularly feeling vulnerable, I was at a time you know when I had teenage children and very busy with my family and taking care of people, it was in a way that "well that generation is gone, now it's us that have to be there and we have to be strong for our children"</p> <p><b>91-93. P6:</b> I feel very much, that I, the process of growing older as we are now experiencing, I don't want my children to be aware of that because I want my children to experience their lives as fully and, young as they are today</p> <p><b>95-99. P6:</b> I want to protect them from what the difficulty of life can be when people close to you become ill and the suffering that it can cause. I want to be strong, I try to prepare them, I want to be strong for them. I think that is what I really learnt from that experience. And give strength to</p>
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	<p>Lack of social recognition and support</p>	<p>them to help them with the difficult situations, they will have to come across in life.</p> <p><b>98-101. P2:</b> Nobody asked me about my grief. Everything was straight away to the financial and all the pressing needs of the moment so ok I had people asking me how I was feeling, my close friends " are you ok" but you know it stopped there, no one really went in depth to process.</p> <p><b>101-102. P2:</b> So as nobody asked, I never asked myself.</p> <p><b>430-433. P4:</b> So when I was traveling back on the plane, he already had passed away and you back here and nobody gives a damn about how you feel or about this or that so I just had to continue as if nothing happened and then later only in my spare time I would remind myself what happened and what was going on and the same happened again with my mother.</p> <p><b>91-93. P7:</b> Sometimes on the eighteenth of July we send each other something, a message but we never talk about that and with friends it's so hard to understand for people what are going through.</p> <p><b>82. P9:</b> Talk to whom (forced laugh).</p> <p><b>157-159. P10:</b> No, I did not find it difficult at the time, I think it's more the people around you, who do not know how to discuss this kind of topic with you, I mean they are like gênés (embarrassed in French)</p> <p><b>136-139. P6:</b> yes, discreet, private,</p>
	<p>Grieving a</p>	

	<p>private affair</p> <p>Boys will be boys: gender stereotypes</p> <p>Lack of spiritual discussions in the family</p> <p>Appreciation for the interview process</p>		<p>yes, you do not want to show your emotions to everybody either hmm, when you are a certain age, maybe when you are twenty years but when you are at a certain age as I was you have to put a face to a certain extent and let people understand that you are coping with the grief that you are going through.</p> <p><b>83-84. P4:</b> You know especially where I come from, male kids are encouraged into less, you are expected to shake it off and move on so you don't dwell too much.</p> <p><b>261-262. P4:</b> So I never dwell on anything that happens so you carry the physical pain and any other problems.</p> <p><b>161-162. P3:</b> we never talked with the whole family about emotions and spirituality and beliefs. This is weird.</p> <p><b>225. P3:</b> No it is actually the first time that I am digging into it. I really like it.</p> <p><b>156-158. P7:</b> I love crying about that because I am opening things so I like speaking about my father but I don't have a lot of opportunities to do it.</p>
<p>COPING MECHANISMS</p>	<p>Ongoing bond</p>	<p>Keeping a dialogue</p>	<p><b>69-71. P1:</b> it did me good to feel that she was still up there somewhere and I still feel that she is somewhere, she is somewhere.</p> <p><b>217-218. P1:</b> And I do still sort of look up and feel as though I can talk to her and she is looking down on me so yes I have that aspect.</p> <p><b>269-270. P2:</b> yes I still speak to them</p>

		<p>of course and I really ask them to guide me, especially for my kids, for my marital life.</p> <p><b>276-278. P2:</b> I tell my parents look I am sure you would have been proud and it would have been nice to see being proud. So that is the spiritual bond that I keep with them.</p> <p><b>172-175. P3:</b> He is still here and I feel him, the more I think of him, the more he is alive and I have a few ashes of him in my garden and I'm doing a couple rituals to make sure the connection is still alive and I have cried sometimes about him and I have pictures and you know I am always thinking he is still inspiring me.</p> <p><b>175-178. P3:</b> when I have issues in my life, I think "ok what would he say" and then I kind of feel that he is telling me something. So yes I believe the connection is still there for sure and I believe in that. Maybe he is less active than he was but he is still very present.</p> <p><b>180-181. P3:</b> I think life is easier like that, just to think that he is still there that he is somewhere and part of everything, no no it definitely helps me.</p> <p><b>248-249. P3:</b> We all know the wishes of my father was to be close to each other and I think we will get to it. It just takes time, it takes a lot of time.</p> <p><b>165-162. P5:</b> Yes I still talk to my mum. And the strange thing of course, every once in a while, I want to pick up the telephone and ring her because there will be a thing and I</p>
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		<p>Internalizing the deceased</p>	<p>will go " oh mum will want to know about this".</p> <p><b>255-257. P6:</b> as I said when something happy happens in the family, you know the birth of a baby or when I see my grandchildren, I often think " oh mum I would love to share this with you" then you realize ouch she is no longer there.</p> <p><b>205-207. P7:</b> I sometimes have thoughts for him, it's more like hope " I hope you are around" no it' s not around it's a part of you.</p> <p><b>115-116. P8:</b> Yes with my mother, I often feel she is there and if I am doing something that I know is like a naughty schoolgirl, I know I should not be or, I can just hear my mother.</p> <p><b>157. P9:</b> Yes of course, I think of them, I talk to them.</p> <p><b>71-73. P1:</b> I think you don't lose the person you knew and loved so fell when you feel they are with you because you know what they would say or what they would feel in certain situations</p> <p><b>76-78. P1:</b> I think I would know what her opinion would be in certain things, so on that point she is still with me, I know what she would say so she is still sort of there in my mind.</p> <p><b>37-38. P1:</b> It was almost as if she was still there.</p> <p><b>280-284. P2:</b> I really strongly believe that whatever I am doing is still linked to them, affected by them, by the way they brought me up by the way, they still play a role. Even if they are not physically here, and this</p>
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		<p>might even be better. They are still playing a role; I still for me believe that they are playing a role in my life now, until now. By knowing things for me things I cannot know.</p> <p><b>81-82. P3:</b> I miss him a lot also, he was someone who allowed me to be an adult and someone who allowed me to be a child.</p> <p><b>166-167. P5:</b> I still think about her a lot, sometimes dream about her actually.</p> <p><b>171-172. P5:</b> We will always continue, as children we will always continue to think about our parents</p> <p><b>173. P5:</b> And the more we have shared then the more I am likely to be talking to her, in my brain or dreaming about her.</p> <p><b>180. P5:</b> it's a bit like having her with me, which is a comfort, which is a comfort.</p> <p><b>55-58. P6:</b> even today, when something nice happens in the family, I want to share it with her and I can't share it with her anymore but she is still very much a presence in my life, a very strong presence in my life.</p> <p><b>264-266. P6:</b> I think it helps to cope, it's a way of still keeping them in your lives, someway or another. Of making sense of what a life is because every individual is unique and extraordinary, every individual.</p> <p><b>207-209. P7:</b> Spiritually, if you believe in things existing after death so I would not enter this subject but I think you have a part of him in you and this part you can call it back sometimes. Even if it's outside or</p>
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		<p>inside, you can call it.</p> <p><b>245-249. P7:</b> In a way to be like him but I did not realize that. There was a part of me that wanted to be the part of him that was the best part. The funny guy, the artist guy, the passionate guy, you know all those things. I mean I am that but I did not realize at first that I was going to be that so of course you, and when you get the distance on your thirties of course it changes everything.</p> <p><b>70-73. P8:</b> I think it's silly at sixty but I think I actually quite grew up and became a nicer person when my mother died because I. I remember all the good things about her and there were an awful lot of them and I suppose I try and be like that a little bit which brings out a nicer side to me.</p> <p><b>116-117. P8:</b> So she is here somewhere, I can't say where but she is just there. She is in my awareness.</p> <p><b>145-148. P8:</b> I think probably because my mother helped me or maybe it's just me, I do a lot, I wake up most mornings now and I am just happy to be alive and in good health and I think very positively about a lot of other things but it's easy to say that when you are happy and in good health. I think probably, my parents gave me that gift to be able to see things positively.</p> <p><b>174-178. P8:</b> I think they should listen to Peguy's poem, they are not gone, they are in the room next door because if you think about them really hard, they are still there, you cannot pick up the phone and jump</p>
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		<p>Keeping the parents memory alive</p>	<p>in the car to go and see them but you can make them alive in your mind and that really helps when you are grieving. They are just in the next room, if you think positively like that it works, well it worked for me.</p> <p><b>221-223. P10:</b> I did not think of it like this but yeah as the memories impact the present maybe it's also a presence. His life still impacts me today on a lot of stuff.</p> <p><b>104-106. P6:</b> And we still talk quite often about my mother, even though it's quite a number of years later. We talk about them as a couple as well. So no, I talked about it and I think you have to talk about it.</p> <p><b>92-93. P8:</b> when you are feeling grief you somehow remember the very good things and it diminishes the grief or it did for me.</p> <p><b>134-137. P8:</b> It's not the same as not being there at all but I see them in my brothers and sisters and it brings them back. Especially with one of my sisters who has my mother's character and I see my mother and I see her well I suppose her faults but I see her as an adult, not as my mother.</p> <p><b>200-203. P10:</b> Of course, what can be a bit contradictory is just that it was really important for me to do the ceremony at the church and to do it well properly etc. and also it's meaningful for me to go to the cemetery, to go to the graveyard when I go to Brittany.</p> <p><b>211-217. P10:</b> Sometimes, I have thoughts that he may protect me or</p>
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		<p>Keeping belongings</p>	<p>stuff, sometimes I have thoughts like this but I don't know really. I am not sure. It's not that I am not sure, it's just a thought, I don't really think it's true and no I do not talk with him but I think about him and think of stuff. It's actually more the things he has done or things he has said during his life that impacts me. I think more about the things he has said during his life than talking with him now. I think about things but I do not know. More about things that he was doing during his life.</p> <p><b>254-255. P3:</b> my father gave me his ring as a symbol of like you will take care of your mother. It was just a deal that we had with my father.</p> <p><b>250-251. P6:</b> I have a photograph of her and I have something in my handbag which never ever left her, rosary beads.</p> <p><b>253-255. P6:</b> And I have them on me all the time so that's my way of keeping a close bond with her. I also have a piece of jewelry as well that belonged to her so yes that's the way of keeping a close bond.</p> <p><b>209-214. P7:</b> I was at the beginning of a concert and I was talking to him" maybe you can send me a link, a symbol, something to tell me you are around" and I did not realize that, but just before the concert, we were chilling with the musicians and one of them began to sing something. But something and I had my eyes opened like this and I did not know that this song was known from a lot of people as I had only heard from</p>
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	<p>Developing narratives about grief</p>	<p>Financial arrangements</p> <p>A new chapter</p>	<p>my father singing it, as he had made a cd with that so he sang that and I thought yes that's my father.</p> <p><b>278-280. P2:</b> In terms of financial bond, in terms of assets, I am still managing all the assets that they gave to us. The different assets that they have to us that helps a lot so I am still in contact in the Philippines.</p> <p><b>27. P3:</b> When he passed away it was kind of a new chapter</p> <p><b>128-129. P3:</b> It is kind of like childhood becomes memories. It was the start of a new chapter. There was a first chapter and then this is the second chapter.</p> <p><b>133-135. P3:</b> We are all rebuilding our life after that. We are rebuilding our lives, not in a bad way or a good way but it is definitely a game changer.</p> <p><b>141-142. P3:</b> I was lucky enough not to have lost friends or close relatives so for me it was really the first boom, so definitely it was the end of a chapter.</p> <p><b>23-25. P7:</b> I was eighteen and I think I was really a kid, I was, it was the end of my childhood. I was really beginning to become someone, just the year after.</p> <p><b>60-62. P7:</b> There is a before and after, everything changing so much so during the first two, three months I was very lost but after I went back home, I went to University two months after but I think it gave me strength.</p> <p><b>71-72. P7:</b> Yes it did, definitely but</p>
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		<p>Becoming your own parent</p>	<p>it came with the moment that could have changed me whatever because it was the end of my childhood.</p> <p><b>88-92. P2:</b> Before it was so easy, I had a very close relationship with my mum especially but you know, we would, I would ask her for any kind of advice and without her I did not have anymore compass in my life so I really had to look within myself, look for other people, try to weigh and balance</p> <p><b>59-60. P3:</b> So I also feel like I became very mature, very adult with this chapter.</p> <p><b>70. P3:</b> It made me grow and I think death is a very growing chapter.</p> <p><b>125. P3:</b> And I grew from it rather than just feeling empty about it.</p> <p><b>117-120. P7:</b> So to answer your question, of course it changed me a lot in terms of independence and so my way to be an adult. An adult in a way because I always skipped a very very big part of child in me but I think it's a different topic. So yes I became very independent very quickly.</p> <p><b>128-132. P7:</b> It's a moment you grow up of course because you say okay it's my responsibility to care about my own love so you grow up because you don't wait for your mother or your father, sorry, your mother or your brother to give you the love you need. I don't know why but I realize that now (laughed). So yes of course I grew up a lot.</p> <p><b>172-173. P7:</b> So you begin to be your own parent, your own hugger.</p>
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		<p>Cycle of life</p>	<p><b>137-140. P10:</b> I was able to decide, because my mother and my mother did not really decide, I decided for them so I think I, yeah I felt like more adult, it's weird and I was so relieved by the organization of the ceremony of the church.</p> <p><b>32-36. P2:</b> So, I mean, it's sad to say but like maybe I was ready or there are things in my life compared to other situations where I am really scared or very sad. This one, did not figure, I could not do anything anyway so I just, it was an event in my life and I moved on. So difficult, ok but you know it's like, it happens, you deal with it, then you move on. I don't know if that makes sense.</p> <p><b>31-32. P4:</b> I am not sure it is offered to everybody to go through such a natural process with so many intellectual aspects.</p> <p><b>154-155. P3:</b> I am quite simple about that for me it's like the cycle of life, how it should be but I am not so scared about death but I have seen him suffering.</p> <p><b>156-157. P3:</b> It sounds simple but I do respect the cycle of life, life and death, reborn, rebirth, death</p> <p><b>188. P3:</b> you know it's part of the cycle</p> <p><b>199.P3:</b> it's part of the cycle</p> <p><b>196-197. P3:</b> For me it's natural and there was not a worst time or a better time, it was just the time.</p> <p><b>201-202. P3:</b> I like nature and nature is about dying and rebirth and this is basically what is happening.</p> <p><b>114. P4:</b> I had to live on to losing</p>
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		<p>them both.</p> <p><b>125-126. P4:</b> Secondly, they were at an advanced stage and I was at an advanced age as well.</p> <p><b>217-218. P4:</b> the second when they both passed away was just a, because they were at an advanced stage and because of my advanced stage it was kind of natural.</p> <p><b>379-385. P4:</b> I think losing a parent that way is the most normal event possible as much as the death can be normal but as an inevitable part of life you know like a cycle finishing so I did not see it as anything traumatic in terms of what am I going to go through this now, how am I going to cope with this or anything like that. I did not have those issues. It happened at such a stage in my life and theirs that it looked like the most natural thing to happen, I did not expect them to live on till a hundred and fifty years because I need them or because, you know what I mean.</p> <p><b>475-478. P4:</b> I really saw it as much as you can see it, such a dramatic event I saw it as the most natural when it comes to the timing and how they passed away that there was not prolonged (...) they were both preoccupied by undignified old age which is a very relative thing.</p> <p><b>530-533. P4:</b> The way I lost them was in brackets the most natural way so it was very difficult to give somebody advice, I am trying to cope with anything that life throws at me, pretty much like kickboxing, you just get hit and you continue,</p>
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		<p>unless you get crippled by the hit, you just continue. I instantly reset, delete and move on.</p> <p><b>150-152. P5:</b> I think it's just a fact of life. Losing your parents, you get to a certain age and we were lucky ours got to eighty-nine. I think it was quite an achievement for that generation. And they lived hard lives really.</p> <p><b>297-299. P4:</b> Your parents, it's a both way, it's the natural process of things; you know they grow old, they become ill and you know it's going to happen.</p> <p><b>366. P6:</b> To accept their grief, it's a process that you have to go through, it can take some time.</p> <p><b>373-376. P6:</b> All that to say that, it's a way of explaining, that letting people know that you are in a stage of grief and that it is a process that you have to go through and it can be longer for others, some more than others but it's a natural process that you have to go through.</p> <p><b>380-385. P6:</b> So that is the natural process of grief, I think there are different stages in it and you have to accept them.</p> <p>(Unintelligible segment) It's a natural process that has to be gone through. Accept it, if you have to cry and pour your heart out. If you want to hold their picture or something that belongs to them do it. You have to exorcise it from your system, it has to be gone through and it is a painful process.</p> <p><b>64-65. P9:</b> Not really because they died when they were already very</p>
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		<p><b>140-142. P1:</b> So for me, I thought, "wow" they are in the same alignment, they gone up together. It was a very meaningful position in the house that he happened to be in for his ending.</p> <p><b>142-145. P1:</b> So (...) in its weird way, my mind is sort of reassured that they are together somewhere, because the connection with my mother's best friend and where he died in the house, made me believe that there was a strong connection to both of them going somewhere.</p> <p><b>255. P1:</b> I think the circumstances of the loss is important</p> <p><b>283-284. P1:</b> I guess I had double support the other side so it evens out.</p> <p><b>46-50. P1:</b> It was, she died in piece (...) knowing we were all there, full of love, everybody's support. Obviously too young because now that I am myself have passed through and am a lot older than the age she died, it made me realize how young she was but I do say that the life she led was perhaps too short but also very happy, privileged. She had a loving family, she had a loving husband</p> <p><b>24-25. P1:</b> she was lucky enough not to die in hospital, in a noisy or unfamiliar place. She died at home, in her own bed</p> <p><b>197-198. P3:</b> I think the age also helps, he had a good life, I believe, he was a happy man, he did not have problems, he was just a simple and a good man.</p> <p><b>479-482. P4:</b> But some people embrace the notion that as long as</p>
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	<p>Questioning their spirituality</p>	<p>you can live a dignified life, so they never needed anybody's help so in their own terms they passed away elegantly from that point of view, they were very happy and accepted it as a reasonably natural cycle.</p> <p><b>58-59. P7:</b> It was during the summer and two days before my eighteenth birthday. I really love symbols and things like this. Why now and why at all?</p> <p><b>154-156. P7:</b> I think everything has a reason so I really don't think there are hard parts. I suffered but it's okay if I suffered and that is why today I am an artist, so it's not hard to speak about it or to cry about it when I related you the events.</p> <p><b>39-42. P8:</b> she probably stopped taking her hypertension pills and went to bed one night with a bad headache and did not wake up. Which was in a way a lovely death for her but quite difficult for her and her husband because it was very sudden</p> <p><b>146-150. P3:</b> I would like to explore the spiritual life but it's like my day to day does not allow me to be like that. Looking at my past I have never been like that, it's part of my DNA but it definitely brings colors and identity to a more metaphysical aspect of life for sure (...) I remember the first weeks and months chasing religious and spiritual books and I was wandering more like how do humans behave in front of death.</p> <p><b>138-139. P3:</b> Yes it's true, it's the</p>
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	Relying on faith	<p>start to something totally different and there is also the spiritual aspect of thinking where is he and you know</p> <p><b>75-78. P7:</b> But of course it changed me (silence) into, with all the spiritual things. I mean at the moment, you are forced to believe in something or not to believe in something because you need to have this person who disappeared somewhere, I mean in your heart, in your head in the sky.</p> <p><b>80-82. P7:</b> But so you are moving your thoughts towards something. What it is, I don't know but your brain is really moving. Is there something after life? Is he around me? I don't know, can I feel him? Can I speak to him?</p> <p><b>217-220. P7:</b> So I don't know if I believe in those symbols but now I want to believe. I decided, you know it's all about the beliefs. Now I am ok if I believe that the link exists so okay, I decide that I believe so yes there is more or less a link between us. It depends on my energy of the day and my spiritual energy.</p> <p><b>321-322. P10:</b> I find it interesting to see if you can understand the spiritual side of things, What is the part of religion in the process.</p> <p><b>274-275. P2:</b> With especially, areas where I cannot physically help, so I pray, I ask them "you are a dad you understand, please help my husband" or my mum</p> <p><b>287. P2:</b> It helps me to cope a lot. This spiritual link that I have, it helps</p>
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		<p>me a lot.</p> <p><b>205-207. P6:</b> I am catholic and a lot of the time I believe deeply in god. My mother was very religious and transmitted her love of god to me and my belief in god and my belief in an afterlife. There are moments when I doubt of course like everybody.</p> <p><b>208-210. P6:</b> I truly believe that where she is concerned, my father was too in fact, that they lived on and rest in eternal peace and I hope and I pray regularly that they rest in eternal peace.</p> <p><b>212-214. P6:</b> I think if something happens to me tomorrow, the first people I would meet or speak, whether it be a question of religious faith or the actual death process, I think the first people I would see would be my mother.</p> <p><b>246-247. P6:</b> After that to describe an afterlife would be very difficult. There are days I believe and there are days I find it hard to believe.</p> <p><b>270-273. P6:</b> it's very difficult to make sense of what life is, and what is the meaning of life and why death, why do we all have to face that so yes for me and my husband.... it's very difficult to make sense. I am catholic, I try to hold on to the beliefs of the afterlife and that we will meet again and there has to be some sense of life, above and beyond this life on earth. It's very difficult to express Gabrielle. I am sorry it's very difficult to express.</p> <p><b>309. P6:</b> Well again, in my faith</p>
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	<p>Focusing on the family as a source of joy</p> <p>Having an introspective capacity</p> <p>Being patient</p>		<p><b>324-327. P6:</b> Yes because your children are youth and are, you know, projects in life and wonderful things happening, sharing their happiness when things go well for them so that gives you strength as well and it makes you happy. It gives your life a purpose and wanting to grow and prolong that happiness for as long as you can.</p> <p><b>218. P9:</b> After their death, I don't see what else to do than to keep the bond with the rest of the family.</p> <p><b>86-89. P4:</b> my whole life I try to make an effort. I make a conscious effort not to leave a single aspect of my life unturned, unanalyzed, explored so the only thing with all the possible pains and struggles you experience throughout your life I was just handling them from a position of: it happens and you just continue.</p> <p><b>463-465. P4:</b> My whole life, I was totally preoccupied with understanding myself and others in the process and I, so these are my topics, psychology and philosophy and literature and whatever.</p> <p><b>187-189. P7:</b> So the everyday life was really really hard and my life before eighteen was really hard for six or seven years and I realized that three years ago when I began to analyze me. I realized I had a lot of shame, fear, feelings like this.</p> <p><b>202-204. P5:</b> I suppose it's adjusted through time. Is it as painful,</p>
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		<p>obviously not as there is a distance from it. Thinking know. I don't think it's any less painful, not less painful but maybe I don't think about it much but when I do think about it it's still as painful.</p> <p><b>376-381. P6:</b> The first stage is the shock, pure shock, the deep sadness, wanting to cry constantly, wanting to see the person, wanting to hold to them for as long as possible, their physical presence, their clothes, having their pictures around you. All that is very intense in the first month and then as time goes by it becomes more (unintelligible segment). So that is the natural process of grief, I think there are different stages in it and you have to accept them.</p> <p><b>65-66. P8:</b> I was not depressed. I did not go through or have any panic attacks or any after effects, it was just sad but with time, the sadness sort of diminishes which it has.</p> <p><b>233-237. P10:</b> I think the first year (...) obviously it was really hard, but the two first years, because I, you think about this really often and it is something that hurt me, but now, I don't know since when, maybe one or two years, hmm, I feel better because I can't, j'ai pris du recul, on va dire, now I can talk about this without crying, or without being so sad actually because now it's more, of course it's sad but now I have learned to live with this.</p> <p><b>260-263. P10:</b> I mean I think only time can help with those kinds of situations but maybe not only but even if you are supported by a lot of</p>
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	Rationalizing	<p>people you still need time, this is sort the sentence I would use, you still need to complete the process.</p> <p><b>173-174. P1:</b> I mean we all have to die so it will happen in one way or another. The moment you are born, I guess you are going to die so the meaning is just that the life goes on.</p> <p><b>273-277. P1:</b> I perhaps, things that I can see today that perhaps I would have liked to tell him, could have made my life easier or my childhood better. But now being a parent, I know very well that you cannot do everything right and that you do your best in the character that you are and what you are and how you think you cope with things.</p> <p><b>281-284. P1:</b> That was probably a generation thing with my parents so you can't blame for how he was but today if he was a father today, he would not have been supportive enough to his daughter (laugh). I guess I had double support the other side so it evens out.</p> <p><b>60-63. P3:</b> It happened really quickly actually so in my case, I kind of understood it was part of a natural process that it was better to lose a father rather than a sister or a child and I think that the fact that we really exchanged and share with my father helped me to be like strong rather than feel left by the side and alone.</p> <p><b>442-445. P4:</b> At the end of the day, certain processes would be inevitable to hit you but just the fact that they died at a reasonably advanced aged for themselves and mine and me</p>
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		<p>living so far away from them and being naturally very independent and not having daily closeness.</p> <p><b>87. P5:</b> As a person. I think I rationalized it. Both my parents were eighty-nine.</p> <p><b>51-54. P7:</b> I still have a big frustration about that but my life after from eighteen years old was a little bit more peaceful and calm than before. So I understood that everything was happening for a reason and so it was okay. It was really hurting for a few months and after that it was okay.</p> <p><b>154-156. P7:</b> I think everything has a reason so I really don't think there are hard parts. I suffered but it's okay if I suffered and that is why today I am an artist, so it's not hard to speak about it or to cry about it when I related you the events.</p> <p><b>193-197. P7:</b> The thing is was that I was thankful to the universe for that. But it was so complicated to have all those feelings inside. i felt guilty inside. I had guilt, sadness because I missed him but I was also relieved at the same time but the smile was back. There was more smiling and happiness than before so of course I found a reason.</p> <p><b>53-55. P7:</b> So I understood that everything was happening for a reason and so it was okay. It was really hurting for a few months and after that it was okay. And thanks because my life is different and that is okay.</p> <p><b>197-200. P10:</b> I don't know exactly about life after death and I don't</p>
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		<p>know if I want to think about this actually, maybe it's weird but I really focus on my life on earth and I don't need to focus on my life after. What I do on earth matters more. If there is a life after ok great but I don't expect anything.</p>
<p>OBSTACLES TO THE GRIEVING PROCESS</p>	<p>Struggle to find time to grieve</p>	<p><b>198-201. P2:</b> I had to make sure the bed sheets were set out, yeah you can't like stop and cry when you have your parents in law you barely know and then this new baby. I mean you just can't there is no space, no room for that. Does that make sense?</p> <p><b>192-194. P2:</b> I was a new mother, I also got caught up in the logistics of that, you can't stop to process anything at all. My mum was really living her grief like a dress, you know, she was living it.</p> <p><b>339-342. P2:</b> You only have like ten, fifteen minutes at best to talk to the aunt so what it's the most pressing topics that come out first and so of course what comes out first is how do we deal with your brother and sister who are fighting like crazy.</p> <p><b>369-373. P2:</b> You have your seven months looking at you and going what is going on? You have your new family, aunt and uncle who barely know you in the other room and they are coming over to see what is going on. Knowing that you, they know that you had just lost your father seven months ago and how come you are here now shouting like this, what the heck. I hope you don't get a call like that.</p> <p><b>150-152. P3:</b> But the society is like,</p>

	<p>Professional obligations</p>	<p>today, not allowing me to go back to that, I had enough time, I missed it. Even though I had a full year, I still feel I have to do some work on that. Just like yeah.</p> <p><b>108-110. P3:</b> You know I was surprised to see how fast my father had to be burned, how fast we had to close bank accounts. Everything was extremely well organized and efficient, very industrialized.</p> <p><b>111-114. P4:</b> So my profession does not tolerate any, I cannot dwell on anything too much because any erosion of my performance would cost me dearly. I could hurt my career, which would be unacceptable because I would hurt people who live with me so I had to move on instantly.</p> <p><b>268-272. P4:</b> my previous company had a policy that if they would hear that anybody is in a divorce process or having a problem with finance or gambling or with debt, they would automatically ground you. Then they would wait for a confirmation of a psychiatric confirmation so nobody even noticed that I was divorcing and that I was in four or five years of an exhausting mental process.</p> <p><b>272-279. P4:</b> If nothing shows on me on the outside so I stayed fully functional and then my natural propensity to do that was further cemented by my unforgiving profession that technically whatever happens, you have to delay your natural responses and handle the situation first and then later on in</p>
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		<p>your own time analyze whatever issues you had. You become fairly it might appear to somebody as cold but it's not, it has nothing to do with that, it's just very early on in life those decisions were made of how I was going to live the punches and then it becomes your nature, then you do the things to stay fully functional but inside you fight your own battles and whatever.</p> <p><b>436-442. P4:</b> And you can't be part of it, you can't be there and you can't do anything but one thing that takes away all the prolonged thing is that you instantly get preoccupied with things, you know at your destination so these are the things that keep you busy because probably when you are not too busy you have more time to think and analyze but when you live this idiotic lifestyle that I do, you can't entertain these notions for too long and you have to act quickly, very quickly and close down the topics very quickly, so that is one thing.</p> <p><b>111-115. P5:</b> I went back to work very quickly, I had been off work for three weeks. My sister was working because it could not be the two of us at the same time so she was working while I was looking after mum and so I went straight back to work and I did not go through that proper stage of grieving and like talking through it and I did not want to upset the children.</p> <p><b>214-217. P5:</b> But I did not seek support elsewhere either. That was my fault and it was offered to me.</p>
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			<p>Then it's quite difficult to offer doctor's support, it is difficult. If I was a laypeople, they might have offered counseling but as a doctor you don't get offered those things.</p> <p><b>220-223. P5:</b> I have no idea what is going on and I was not offered counseling so there are certain things that are not offered to professionals that are offered to laypeople. So it's an interesting common but it's quite common, you have to be careful with doctor colleagues, especially grief counseling.</p> <p><b>231-234. P5:</b> I was quite depressed when I lost mum and I don't think I recognized how depressed I was, as I was working at the same time so you can't, you have to be on the ball, you can't allow yourself to be overwhelmed or depressed if you are working and looking after a lot of people</p> <p><b>117-119. P5:</b> I am a typical doctor, I hold it inside and I don't do whatever I recommend others to do, to seek grief counseling. I did not do any of that</p> <p><b>71-73. P5:</b> It was an expectation I had with myself to help my mother to die with dignity so it puts questions in your brain, are you a good enough doctor and it affected my brain and my performance when I was back at work. And I think it did in a way.</p>
<p>PROTECTIVE FACTORS</p>	<p>Preparation</p>	<p>Parent's acceptance</p>	<p><b>198-202. P1:</b> I think, the only thing that helped me was my mother's one sentence because she knew, but you know it could not be put into words,</p>





		<p>Saying goodbye</p>	<p>it was not a shock like an accident or yeah anything like a heart attack or, it was an illness where one knew it would end up with losing a loved one.</p> <p><b>22-23. P1:</b> I think that the shock of losing her, knowing that it was coming, the preparation for her departure was imminent and accepted</p> <p><b>41-45. P2:</b> Well my parents were on maintenance medicine already, the lifestyle that they were dealing in terms of food and drink and you know exercise, you could see it. I mean medically, it was logical. My dad was also in and out of the hospital for a few months but it was not deterioration. My parents for every small thing they would go into the hospital so actually we were prepared and not prepared</p> <p><b>22. P3:</b> because of the disease, we kind of knew it was going to happen.</p> <p><b>10-11. P1:</b> What is impregnated in my mind is the last time I was able to take to her (...) was when I was literally saying goodbye to her.</p> <p><b>27-31. P3:</b> When he passed away it was kind of a new chapter and I think that the important aspect was that I could engage with him, I was preparing the fact that things were going to be new and we had time for him to share his intimate garden, his feelings and his memories and his achievements, his family. So it was kind of a journey. A journey that was necessary and I think I was lucky to live.</p>
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	Age of child	<p><b>200-201. P3:</b> I talked with him so much about it, we were prepared and I think this is something that can be beautiful.</p> <p><b>427-429. P4:</b> I had just started and it was ultra demanding, my father was not feeling well, they told me he was going to pass away eminently so I flew back, I was elated that I managed to come on time and he was just waiting for me to see me and then he passed away.</p> <p><b>159-165. P6:</b> She herself realized that she was very ill and in fact we had one extraordinary evening with her and my sister, as I said we nursed her in my sister's house and we were having a good glass of wine and we started talking and she was saying that she was sad at the idea that she was going to leave and of course her level of consciousness went down after quickly after the, (unintelligible segment due to overlapping speech) evolved and we took care of another two weeks before she died, she had to go into palliative care.</p> <p><b>320-323. P4:</b> Losing parents, I think that it's first much easier to cope with loss of parents at a later, later stages in your life, it's much easier. I must imagine that it must be very difficult when you are still dependent on them (...) It must be a shocking affair so I was exceptionally fortunate to lose my parents when I was already in my very advanced age. It made it much easier to cope with.</p> <p><b>93-94. P7:</b> I was too young to analyze what happened in me, what</p>
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	<p>Emotional independence</p>	<p>changed in me.</p> <p><b>173-176. P7:</b> But you are not old enough to do that after you lose your parent at eighteen. It's not the same if you loose your parent at the beginning of your adulthood. If I lost my other parent now, it would be completely different as I have yet understood what is my independence towards people and parents and all the people around me.</p> <p><b>89-90. P1:</b> I think it's hard for people who have not had that separation to be strong enough to leave their parents to go on their own path, strong on their own.</p> <p><b>279-282. P4:</b> So basically with parents not having any issues, not having daily closeness and not sharing anything with them, a place of residence or whatever, made it much less stressful for me than it would have been probably otherwise.</p> <p>287-288. P4: You know because, you know from the studies, the parents technically help to do you a favor and decide at some point to let you go. So it does not matter what mistakes you make, they have to let you, they have to decide to let you go.</p> <p><b>324-325. P4:</b> Secondly, they did not tie me up to themselves emotionally or financially which would have made it much more difficult to bear.</p>
	<p>Financial independence</p>	<p><b>91. P1:</b> I think it's easier if you are very independent</p> <p><b>27-29. P2:</b> I don't know, there are things for example, it did not make</p>

		<p>me afraid, I was already independent from them financially, physically so it's not like, compared to my brother and sister, I think I was the least affected.</p> <p><b>68-72. P2:</b> My mind was there and since it had been already five or six years that I had left the Philippines. I was no longer in contact with even the basic logistics of who is the best funeral parlor to contact, how do we go about inviting the friends, if they want to give a tribute. All that, even that, I was no longer considered as a point person.</p> <p><b>84-85. P2:</b> we had our own income and budget and whatever so financially I was not vulnerable.</p> <p><b>114-116. P4:</b> I was extremely lucky that my parents lived that long and that I was a grown fully independent person.</p> <p><b>123-125. P4:</b> So where I come from, I did not have this because I left it very early, I am an extremely independent and self sufficient person so there was one contributing factor to having relatively, relatively low impact on the whole thing.</p> <p><b>186. P4:</b> Since I was extremely self sufficient and strong headed (...) being so independent, I never developed a dependency type of relationship to my parents so it was like very early I fought for my own freedom of choices and they realized that they would not have a chance to control me even using force so they gave up very early.</p> <p><b>221-22. P4:</b> But since I was fully independent from very early on, it's</p>
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	<p>Tight social network</p> <p>Geography</p>	<p>a, I did not have that daily closeness.</p> <p><b>129-131. P6:</b> I still tried to keep up the face, I tried to do that several times with people, you try to get on with your family and you know that everybody loses their parent at some stage, so you don't try and stick that on others but, no people like very close dear friends</p> <p><b>100-101. P7:</b> I think I was only sad and with my very close friends and with myself actually (expires strongly).</p> <p><b>132-134. P7:</b> And I got a lot of new friendships at that moment, because I needed some love and that was the only way I found to have it, with friends because I did not have any boyfriends for like three years after.</p> <p><b>161-165. P8:</b> I think with very close friends, when both of them especially mummy both died, I did not talk at first, I did not want to talk with anyone, I didn't really need to but afterwards about a year later, I sat with my sisters and brothers and with very close friends. It did comfort me to express what I was thinking or feeling which is unusual for me because I do not usually express things if I feel them very strongly, I keep them inside.</p> <p><b>161. P10:</b> I was not, my friends, my boyfriends were really helping.</p> <p><b>126-127. P4:</b> And we did not live together for a very long time so that all left relatively minor impact, let's put it this way.</p> <p><b>173-175. P4:</b> But I was so I was only</p>
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		<p>coming rarely to Serbia, like every couple of years because from New Zealand it was nearly impossible, it was costing a fortune in time and money so since I was busy with my own career and family all those years in New Zealand.</p> <p><b>279-281. P4:</b> So basically with parents not having any issues, not having daily closeness and not sharing anything with them, a place of residence or whatever, made it much less stressful for me than it would have been probably otherwise.</p> <p><b>325-327. P4:</b> And then eventually, very unusual circumstances, I lived thousands of miles from my parents for such a long time, so they were free, it reduced the impact on the scales of stress.</p> <p><b>412-417. P4:</b> You go on vacation and the whole emotional processes activate when I go back, so I get plugged in. You know like a Tesla car. So I go back, I live up and remember my supper and what I use to but then unfortunately because of this. Then you come back to where you live and in a very painful manner, you have to unplug in a painful manner and you have to perform instantly twenty four seven and that I find extremely difficult with this experience. I cannot naturally come back.</p> <p><b>13-15. P8:</b> But on my mother's side we are very close, they lived in England and Ireland, most of them and those who left and my cousins are scattered in the States, England and Ireland.</p>
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	Primary family	<p><b>80-83. P8:</b> Perhaps because I live far away, of course I went back for the funeral for my mother and my father but I suppose when you have your feet in both countries, you don't feel as much as those who are "sur place" right there. Because I have a totally different life here.</p> <p><b>207-209. P8:</b> Yes, because when you are geographically away it can work both ways. Well you miss them of course but you are more detached about certain issues and that is an easy way out because you are not right there in the middle of it and then I can work the other way as well.</p> <p><b>209-214. P8:</b> Not being there when you want or need to be closer but you are not because there is a thousand kilometers or two thousand or three thousand. I think it works both ways. I think it is more positive than negative because every time you see them again, you are happy to see them and there is not time for every day disagreement or rubbing one another the wrong way because that just does not happen when you live far away.</p> <p><b>146-148. P10:</b> And of course after for the daily life you don't have your father but for me I am quite independent because I didn't live in the same city as them and since I am eighteen I left my home to do some studies in another city so I am quite independent.</p> <p><b>357-359. P6:</b> I remember holding C (daughter) in my arms at the funeral,</p>
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		<p>they were very supportive as well, it was a very difficult thing to go through if I had not had my children</p> <p><b>80-81. P1:</b> I am lucky to have a strong and loving husband so I don't feel vulnerable.</p> <p><b>105-108. P2:</b> I would say that of all the closest people, I would expect to ask me, I would have expected my husband to ask me. But he is a guy so he did not. He was also; his way of helping me was to cover all the logistics of our move here so that was his way of support.</p> <p><b>313-314. P2:</b> Of course the one who really helped is F (husband) Really in his own way; he caught a lot of the backlog or the things that I could normally have dealt with probably during our move.</p> <p><b>322-323. P2:</b> I would say that F was a really strength of support.</p> <p><b>63-67. P3:</b> And also of course, I am sharing my life with my fiancée and she lost both her parents six years ago in the matter of 6 months, so she also went through that and she really helped me to build bridges between the past and the future, so I was surrounded by someone who had experience dealing with that. And I think that that was also a critical point in the fact that I was not feeling lost.</p> <p><b>309-310. P6:</b> but also with my husband C, who is a very supportive and strong person, I am blessed with him, he is very optimistic and you know has a very good way</p> <p><b>64-65. P8:</b> I had a very very loving husband. Of course he did not</p>
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		keep them inside.
COMING TO TERMS	Acceptance	<p><b>247-248. P1:</b> Well, I think I have come to terms with it because you cannot not, there are not there anymore but that does not mean to say that there is not a regret or a sadness that lingers</p> <p><b>206-209. P5:</b> I have had to come to terms with it, because life goes on and you know, she would have been ninety nine if she was still alive and her family died in their seventies so as I said, we were very lucky to have her until she was eighty nine because she was such a dynamic little person.</p> <p><b>249-252. P7:</b> And of course your vision is changing all the time. So now I would not say I wish he would be there, of course I wish I could meet him for one hour you know but I know I would not have the same life if he had not disappeared. So I am happy with everything.</p> <p>269. P7: I mean of course yes, I have come to terms but you can feel some sadness.</p> <p>127-130. P8: So I do feel sometimes that it is quite difficult and then I say to myself, "Oh don't be silly, c'est comme ça". You become accepting with time, it's been ten years now.</p> <p><b>139-142. P8:</b> Yes, I have because I think that when you lose them and you realize as I said that you are the next in line, well you just sort of automatically accept the order of things so I have come to terms.</p> <p>It does not stop me from missing her but it is something I accept now. I don't like it but I accept it. It does not</p>

	<p>Never really come to terms</p>	<p>stop me from missing her but it is something I accept now. I don't like it but I accept it.</p> <p><b>243-247. P10:</b> (it's a bit like healed, that's how I see things, that is, you have an injury, it hurts you, it was hard, etc. There is a time for it to scar, and now that it's healed well, it still exists; it's something that you lived that is in you, you see inscribed in you but here you are now no longer feeling the pain. I can talk about it without crying or being totally) emotionally overwhelmed.</p> <p><b>254-256. P10:</b> Yeah, yeah, it's just what I said now. It's part of my life, I live with this, it's fine now, it's in the past, I have learned to live with this and now i am not as sad as before, it's like normal, not normal but yeah it's a, I just learned to live with this, it's really like a scar.</p> <p><b>310-316. P10:</b> But yes I think the most important thing is to accept that it takes time to complete the process and that in fact it's normal to have pain and grief during a long time and it's not, yes the advice is also because I think some people try to switch, to try to go back to a normal life really too soon and I think it's important to feel the pain, to accept the pain and to accept to cry etc. but that it takes time, it's normal to think about the person who died but after you go back to a normal, well kind of a normal life.</p> <p><b>48-49. P5:</b> her death was very hard and in fact it is still hard. I find it very difficult talking about it.</p>
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			<p><b>52. P5:</b> And I think I am the softer one of the two of us as I quite never recovered from her death.</p> <p><b>101-102. P5:</b> Yes, partly because I still want to cry now, even after ten years. When I talk about it I get very emotional and I have never recovered</p> <p><b>52. P6:</b> even I speak now, I want to cry again as I don't think I will ever get over my mother's death.</p> <p><b>58-60. P6:</b> We were talking about it the other day, so it's a grief that you never really come to terms with. It's a huge loss; it's a huge loss.</p> <p><b>267. P7:</b> I am not sure if you ever feel that you get to terms.</p>
<p>UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP: PARENT &amp; CHILD</p>	<p>Only one mother and one father</p>		<p><b>159-163. P6:</b> Well because I guess you only have one mother and one father. You have many friends hopefully, other family members but (...) your parents are your parents therefore, you obviously don't choose them but there is a bond that is strong and you only have one of each and when they are gone they are gone. (Laughs) They can't be replaced or moved on to another parent. You could move on to another friend but you can't move on to another parent.</p> <p><b>94. P2:</b> Nobody has replaced that role.</p> <p><b>54-55. P8:</b> for my father well, I was sad because he was my father.</p> <p><b>56-58. P9:</b> I think it is what I write to my friends when they lose their parents, is that, no matter the age, no matter the time, no matter the health,</p>

	<p>References to unconditional love between parent and child</p>	<p>it is always you parent and your mother that you miss afterwards</p> <p><b>189-192. P4:</b> You know like one thing is like pure love when you don't have emotions for them and it is a totally different relationship when you need them to support you financially, emotionally, in making decisions, these are totally different things, mixing apples and pears.</p> <p><b>212-213. P4:</b> I was sad not to have them anymore as they gave me anything else than unconditional support.</p> <p><b>130-133. P5:</b> Because of shared memories and I come from a very loving family, we were all very close as a loving family, brother and sister, and mum and dad and aunts and uncles, the immediate family were very close as well so each time we lost a member of the family, the ones that remained became more precious to us.</p> <p><b>199-2-2. P6:</b> They had great love for each other and they transmitted that love to us. I think it's a very precious gift in life and I think it makes the difference into having children that are well balanced and who can deal with the problems they will come across in life and overcome the obstacles that you have to overcome.</p> <p><b>220-221. P9:</b> And before they died, is to be as loving as one can be with the parents because they have not been perfect, they have done their most, just as we try to do.</p> <p><b>83-86. P10:</b> So yes of course there are different things, you lose</p>
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	<p>Losing a parent as a unique experience</p>		<p>someone you love which is the most expected thing but something I had not thought about before I lost him, I was “okay I am a half orphan and how it feels is like this”, because you lose your father and you lose someone who loves you</p> <p><b>191. P2:</b> It was surreal, it was not the norm definitely, that one for sure.</p> <p><b>83-84. P6:</b> So it's a mixture of very very strong emotions, a rollercoaster that you never had in your life before.</p> <p><b>257-261. P6:</b> So yes it's a bond Gabrielle that impregnates your whole being forever. But I have to say I had a very happy relationship with my mother, overall I had a very good relationship with my mother, my younger sister was not the case, it was quite different for her, I think her life was quite a different experience but yes. But she would not deny either that my mother was a very loving and kind person.</p> <p><b>84-90. P9:</b> Eventually with my brothers and sisters because we have had the same parents but maybe we had not had the same story (...) Because it's very particular to see that even in the same family with the same parents, children don't go the same way and don't feel the same and then have another story, so maybe my parents are not received by my brothers and sisters the same as for me. I don't know why, it's very peculiar.</p>
<p>QUALITY OF THE</p>	<p>Close</p>		<p><b>62-65. P1:</b> She was my mother but</p>

RELATIONSHIP	Complicated	<p>she was also my great close, best friend. I think, she was the one I would tell things too that I would say my deepest feelings and things so (...) apart for my husband of course. But she was like a sister or a best friend, so (...) of course I missed her</p> <p><b>216. P4:</b> Life wise, personally, so we had really a relationship of closeness</p> <p><b>222-223. P4:</b> We really understood each other well, they were really my best friends</p> <p><b>242-244. P4:</b> When I was younger, I was closer to her than him but later on life it became totally an even relationship. So I felt the same thing when he passed away and when she passed away.</p> <p><b>44-45. P5:</b> I had mum live with us, with B and I when I moved back in Preston in 2002, so we were much much closer then and it was a very powerful bond.</p> <p><b>257-259. P6:</b> So yes it's a bond Gabrielle that impregnates your whole being forever. But I have to say I had a very happy relationship with my mother, overall I had a very good relationship with my mother</p> <p><b>51-53. P8:</b> Fortunately or unfortunately, I resemble my mother in every way, physically, in character, etc etc and as I got older, she was almost like a sister.</p> <p><b>141-142. P2:</b> And then after we really grew apart because he told me that he had another son, he had another son that was my age</p> <p><b>146-149. P7:</b> My memories about him are really non existent because I</p>
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	Consequence on family dynamics	Negative	<p>had a lot of bad memories with him and I don't want to remember about that, it's like a box in my mind and I really don't want to open it, sometimes I do it with psychological therapies and everything.</p> <p><b>108-110. P9:</b> I adored my mother even if when I was young she was not so young sometimes, she was probably afraid of my structure. And my father, I always quarreled with him because he was very authoritarian</p> <p><b>293-294. P2:</b> Not towards them, not towards myself but more towards my brother and sister, because the loss brought out the ugly side you know.</p> <p><b>297-301. P2:</b> The time distance between the two deaths was so short that my brother and sister were really put, really had to go on 5th gear, you know to accelerate a lot of the declarations and taxes, so it put a strain on their relationship and it resurfaced a lot of issues with which they never dealt with, because my parents were the ones who were dealing with it for them.</p> <p><b>47-52. P3:</b> Yeah it was also a very weird time for the family, I saw my mother breaking down, she had an emotional and nervous breakdown, she really became a crazy person for almost a year. My younger sister who like freaked out and really could not like deal with her life anymore. My older sister who tried to be like protective but internally she was building so much emotional trouble. Just the whole family transformed, it</p>
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		Positive	<p>was hard, it was very transformational for every body.</p> <p><b>243-249. P3:</b> We use to be a very close family without any people who felt more loved than others but it's true that my older sister and my mother their relationship really broke down and collapsed. My two sisters, their relationship also collapsed and for a year they were not talking to each other and being very mean to each other and now they are rebuilding slowly day after day. But for my mother she lost her lover so she is feeling lonely, so yes it has changed the whole dynamic. We all know the wishes of my father was to be close to each other and I think we will get to it. It just takes time, it takes a lot of time.</p> <p><b>259-261. P3:</b> It was just sad that the depression of my sister and my mother, their depression they could not really accept that they were depressed and they could not really accept that their relationship suffered from it.</p> <p><b>259-260. P7:</b> the link with your mother and brother it's really hard to work on it, it's really hard to do it, everybody knows that.</p> <p><b>34. P1:</b> There was a very strong connection between everybody</p> <p><b>37. P1:</b> it brought us very close together.</p> <p><b>42-43. P1:</b> But I do remember a very, very close knitted feeling between us all.</p> <p><b>189-195. P8:</b> it brought us closer together and I think it's, you would</p>
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		<p>not say normal as everybody is different but we did not automatically meet for at least twice a year as we did when my parents were there, for Christmas and the summer we would all gather at their house but now, after they died, we all have to make the effort to organize and to be together and just having to make the effort and plan and see things differently. It has brought us closer we are doing it because we want to, not because it's a tradition to be home for Christmas or the summer. So it has made us closer.</p> <p><b>198-204. P8:</b> I think so because there is perhaps it's the same with every family there is less rivalry because the parents are not there anymore, it's just us now and I do not hesitate if I remember something of my mother or my father, you know I can say it to my brother and sister.</p> <p><b>203-204. P8:</b> So of course we have different memories. It's always nice to think of those memories and it does bring us closer.</p> <p><b>194-196. P9:</b> Really, I am the one of the families who has always gathered my brothers and sisters, even during my parents time and since after. Because I think I have to forgive (sobbs) my brothers or sisters, well some of them, because they are the children of my parents.</p> <p><b>299-302. P10:</b> After his death we were closer because we needed to affronter cela ensemble (deal with this situation together in French) and to manage all the stuff I talked about</p>
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	<p>Relationship with surviving parent</p> <p>Shift in communication hubs</p>	<p>before but now just as I said, the relationship between us did not change, but my brother and I needed to take our responsibilities so that's what changed.</p> <p><b>190-191. P2:</b> We were together, we were at home and we were missing my dad, especially my mum. But we also had this baby.</p> <p><b>239-241. P3:</b> Well for me, I became a bit the head of the family in terms of, not like leading but at least making sure that we were going in the same direction, so this of course was something very new in terms of relationship with my mother and with my sister.</p> <p><b>311-313. P7:</b> maybe the relationship with the other parent. What changed in the relationship with the parent. In the beginning, I was losing every night that I was going to lose my mother.</p> <p><b>295-305. P1:</b> I would say an important factor about losing your parents is that they were very much in our family the tie between everybody and the sending of the news around the family came from the parents. Parents hosted you know the Christmas that we all got together for; parents were in contact with each child and exchanged all the news with everybody and family news. I did not know what was happening in my aunt or my cousins' life because I did not have that connection anymore, through my mother. I think Facebook has helped</p>
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			<p>that, it did not exist at the time but now that there are things like Facebook again I definitely have a stronger link up with the rest of the family. Family members on Facebook means that one can have a connection but because there is no longer the parents bringing everybody together it has to be an initiative coming from the children now</p>
<p>IMPACT ON WELL BEING AND HEALTH</p>	<p>Negative physical consequences</p>	<p>Anxiety</p>	<p><b>341-346. P6:</b> I think what might have happened is to become more anguished and more vulnerable. Yes, I think you do become a more anguished personality. I was not like that at thirty years of age, it's sort of life's experience as well. And you know that you have to find ways of dealing with that anguish, we all ways of dealing with it.</p> <p><b>265-267. P10:</b> I also feel more anxious for my mother; of course as now my only remaining parent is my mother, I am really more anxious about her.</p> <p><b>267-270. P10:</b> Each time I have a phone call from home, I am anxious, I really need to answer the call as I think there might be something that might have happened to my mother so yes this really changed something in me, in my life as well.</p> <p><b>283-286. P10:</b> I try to go home more often just to check that everything is okay, to see my family and spend time with them and to see if my mother is okay. And so yes, this is something that has changed, this anxiety.</p>

	Positive physical consequences	<p>Depression</p> <p>Weight loss</p>	<p><b>231-234. P5:</b> I was quite depressed when I lost mum and I don't think I recognized how depressed I was, as I was working at the same time so you can't, you have to be on the ball, you can't allow yourself to be overwhelmed or depressed if you are working and looking after a lot of people</p> <p><b>92-96. P1:</b> I was definitely internally affected, probably without realizing it, because I lost a lot of weight. I had people ask me if I was ill because I lost four or five kilograms without, unintentionally. I guess you don't eat as much so (...) there was a consequence to the action but I believe that to be absolutely normal. When you lose somebody you love, of course you are going to have a reaction</p> <p><b>223. P1:</b> No, I feel stronger and healthier today.</p> <p><b>345. P2:</b> I am healthier but I think it's a change of lifestyle in France.</p> <p><b>214-219. P3:</b> I was kind of prepared for that so I quit smoking before my father passed away, I quit drinking and started doing a lot of sports, I just did not lose any of those good and bad habits following the twelve months after the death of my father. Physically speaking, I was good. I was taking care of me, I was trying to eat healthy but I don't know I am thirty four so it's difficult to say if it's linked to my father's death or just the natural fact of aging.</p>
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		<p><b>292-294. P10:</b> Yes awareness exactly, it increased after this because when you are young, you do not care about this, but then it's like "okay cancer happens because of the shit we have around us, industrial food", so now I am more careful about this.</p>
<p>IMPACT OF CULTURE</p>		<p><b>90-92. P3:</b> I also had the chance to travel in different cultures the following twelve months, especially in Mexico where people were very talkative about death and the concept of how to behave in front of death. I felt I could express myself quite easily.</p> <p><b>93-96. P3:</b> I really like dug into my heart, I met some shamans in central America and they made me travel about ancient beliefs about death so I really feel like I was really expressing myself and it helped me be a happier man you know.</p> <p><b>106-108. P3:</b> in our European, Western society, death is something extremely hidden from the population and that it is something people should not talk about it. And if they do talk about it, they have to be polite.</p> <p><b>113-116. P3:</b> I think that losing a parent today, the society is trying to make it sound normal or something that is just a step but we a bit of substance about it, we lose the substance about it</p> <p><b>118-122. P3:</b> I mean I think it is weird the death aspect of society. You don't see any dead people anymore. You don't see death</p>

		<p>anymore. You don't see it anymore on the street. You see a lot of death on the TV but you don't see it in real life, it seems like it is totally artificial but part of the artistic and movie world. And it is something that is difficult to understand.</p> <p><b>122-125. P3:</b> I wish there was something more deep into it. Like in those central American cultures, they play with it, they go into it, they make it into flowers, I was lucky to be at that time over there and people were really talking about it and being very intellectual about it. And I grew from it rather than just feeling empty about it.</p> <p><b>251-252. P4:</b> I guess it's quite selfish where we come from; we are quite loud about anything that is affecting us.</p>
<p>DEAD PARENT CLUB</p>		<p><b>382-385. P2:</b> If there is somebody grieving for their parents, the very, I have the comfort of being able to tell them I understand how you feel, it's going to be bad, especially for the first few years but at least you are not going to get that call any more.</p> <p><b>188-190. P3:</b> when I meet humans who lose their father and their mother, I feel very empathic to them, I feel very close to them, very intimate.</p> <p><b>226-229. P7:</b> And it's funny as that friend who just lost her father. She called me first on Christmas day. She called me and said you understand. It's absolutely outside your question but you have a special link with people who have lost somebody in</p>

			their family. I can't explain that but it is really.
CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH	Accident		<p><b>360-367. P2:</b> Can you imagine she was just biking on the gym and that had to bring her in a wheelchair because she had fallen asleep and they could not raise her and here they are standing on top of the bed at the foot of the bed of my mum and they were shouting and telling me " A (participant's name do you want to resuscitate her or not? A (participant's name) what do you want to do, because she signed a DNR (do not resuscitate consent form)" in that case " don't we are not suppose to DNR" and they are "are you sure" and alternatively hey were shouting " wake up mum, we love you mum". Do you know that this is how, who wants to get a call like that?</p> <p><b>299-305. P6:</b> In the case of my sister she was only thirty-seven and she had only given birth to this little baby. It was probably a month and a half old when she died and that was just completely (unintelligible segment) and so you can never come to grips with a tragedy like that and you never come to grips with that. I have never been able to understand how even from a religious point of view it's always been a problem, I just felt incredibly angry at God at the time and could never understand how, you know, how God is good and how he could take a young mother away from her children. That was very very hard.</p>



	Illness	<p><b>18-21. P7:</b> I was on holiday with my father and it was the beginning of my holidays and in the morning he was not in his bed because he was out the night before and a friend of his called me and told me that he found my father in the harbor, in the water. So it was a little bit traumatizing.</p> <p><b>20. P2:</b> Both are heart failure, heart attacks.</p> <p><b>42-47. P2:</b> I mean medically, it was logical. My dad was also in and out of the hospital for a few months but it was not deterioration. My parents for every small thing they would go into the hospital so actually we were prepared and not prepared, in the sense that when my dad felt something, he would move into the hospital and you would always think he would come out again and in really good health so I did not expect it at all.</p> <p><b>15-16. P3:</b> We found out four years ago that he had cancer and for the next two years he fought the disease</p> <p><b>198-199. P3:</b> He suffered the last two years because of his disease; it's part of the cycle.</p> <p><b>72-74. P4:</b> My father was a victim of a stroke and mother was mowed down by a pancreatic cancer, which was the result of this depleted Uranium shell bombing of Serbia.</p> <p><b>435-436. P4:</b> You go and see her and the doctor tells you she won't be able to live much longer, I think she had three months tops you know from the onset of the diseases.</p> <p><b>23-24. P5:</b> my mum died from</p>
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		<p>blood pressure but hated taking any medication, hated seeing doctors so when she lived in Ireland with my father, she would come to France and I would take her to see a cardiologist.</p> <p><b>42-43. P8:</b> my father, who's world was centered around my mother, he did live for three, four years afterwards and then died from septicemia.</p> <p><b>10-14. P9:</b> My father was aging more and more and he finally got Alzheimer and he nearly died once summer in July, the weather was very hot but he was taken to the hospital and they brought him back to life. So the last 6 months of his life where very sad because he should not have been pushed to live again so he was in bed for six months, not recognizing anyone anymore and finally died.</p> <p><b>19-22. P9:</b> So she went to live first with one of my brother's for a year and a half, with many people to take care of her during the day and night and finally, as she shouted a lot at night, nobody could sleep so she was sent to a hospital for old people and after six months there she died.</p> <p><b>30-33. P10:</b> So he called me and I was on the train and he told me that they had done some medical examinations on my father, that they had got the results and that he had a metastasis everywhere. So he told me that when I was on the train and so he had metastasis everywhere so he got cancer.</p>
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	<p>Death of parents close in time</p>	<p><b>124-126. P1:</b> I think the thing with my father was a shock, again, six months after my mother died so it was pretty close to losing one's mother then my father died.</p> <p><b>159-163. P2:</b> And then with my mum since we were just reeling from the sudden loss of my dad, regardless of how we considered him or how I considered him. A loss is still a loss so we were reeling from that and trying to get everything sorted out.</p> <p>My mum (...) it felt like a continuation of the loss, you know. I don't know what it means.</p> <p><b>297-301. P2:</b> The time distance between the two deaths was so short that my brother and sister were really put, really had to go on 5th gear, you know to accelerate a lot of the declarations and taxes, so it put a strain on their relationship and it resurfaced a lot of issues with which they never dealt with, because my parents were the ones who were dealing with it for them. So that also played a role.</p>
	<p>Death of one parent as the loss of both</p>	<p><b>49-52. P2:</b> You could see it was really heavy so ok we were not expecting, we thought that she was going through a hard period but we did not expect that she would die from it. But you could see it was not easy for her, they were so linked together. So expecting and not expecting.</p> <p><b>153-155. P2:</b> They were solid according to their definition of being a couple. I can say that. So the death</p>

	Losing a parent before physical death		<p>of my dad was really more in how was my mum going to continue without him. Basically, how long would it take for her to grow old.</p> <p><b>172-176. P2:</b> The thing is after losing my pap, I, you could, it was as if I also lost my mum because she was so, she had to go back into herself you know to try to process her grief. To try to come to terms with everything that she was facing, so it's as if I also had to stop asking her as well. So losing her, it's not like I had her the way she was before. It was like she had already to deal with stuff myself in those seven months.</p> <p><b>27-30. P5:</b> I think I lost my father actually a year before he died, it sounds like an odd thing to say but he had pneumonia, a year before he died and so I sort of lost the essence of my father at that time and he was very (...) frail after that. So the year after that he was very frail and not the dynamic person that I knew up until then.</p> <p><b>32-33. P5:</b> So I went through that process of mourning a year before he died and we knew he was dying.</p>
ADMINISTRATIVE AND FUNERAL LOGISTICS			<p><b>62-64. P2:</b> When you say death of a parent, at least in our case, you cannot isolate it to the death itself, the emotional death itself but also the admin and financial things that are linked to it.</p> <p><b>68-72. P2:</b> My mind was there and since it had been already five or six years that I had left the Philippines. I</p>

		<p>was no longer in contact with even the basic logistics of who is the best funeral parlor to contact, how do we go about inviting the friends, if they want to give a tribute. All that, even that, I was no longer considered as a point person.</p> <p><b>72-74. P2:</b> It's sad to say, I was just like a guest, they are welcoming people and talking to them but the logistics of that I was not involved.</p> <p><b>111-114. P2:</b> They were grieving themselves so sometimes, we would grieve together but the immediate concern was ok how do we manage the assets of our parents so that it would come out equal for all of us and then also we would not be hindered by external persons who were also interested in the assets of my parents. So we had to manage that as well.</p> <p><b>326-330. P2:</b> So instead of processing my grief I would say, I was really more, because we had an aunt also who was a mediator because of the death of my parents so close and the fact that we had to work together as brothers and sisters so we had to. We had to focus on the business side, so we could not even had cleared the air in terms of emotional, deep-rooted misgivings that everybody could have had because we had to focus on the business side.</p> <p><b>70-73. P3:</b> Just first of all by the administrative workload, facing the reality of the society and the financial aspects. I always worked for a company but there is</p>
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		<p>independence with that and this was the first time where I had to deal with society and being fully responsible as an individual so I learned from it.</p> <p><b>158-160. P3:</b> the death of my father triggered a lot of discussions about how the family should be organized and where my mother should be living and the relationship between my mother and my sister and financial aspects</p> <p><b>257-259. P3:</b> there was definitely a heritage, which was transferred and managed. There was no really question or debate about that.</p> <p><b>112-113. P3:</b> Everything was very strict with a lot of policies and regulations and it was done. After three weeks everything was done.</p> <p><b>113-114. P10:</b> also so the days after he died, you have a lot of things to do, administrative things, the ceremony to organize etc.</p> <p><b>124. P10:</b> and also the worst thing is the pompes funèbres (undertaker in French)</p> <p><b>120-122. P10:</b> So yes, after he died, you have a lot of administrative stuff to do at the hospital at the mairie (city council in French)</p> <p><b>128-130. P10:</b> you go in some kind of show room where you have to choose the coffin, if he gets embalmed, well, it's very strange, you never think of those things before in French)</p> <p><b>140-144. P10:</b> I think it was a gift for him and yeah it was, I was also, I don't know if it's relieved, it's not happy of course but I knew what</p>
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			was, I was satisfied that we offered him a beautiful ceremony at the Church with songs, a lot of people came etc. and so (laughs) all of this administrative and also organization just after he died, yeah it's something that of course changes you because not everybody has to do that.
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