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MIDDLE EAST

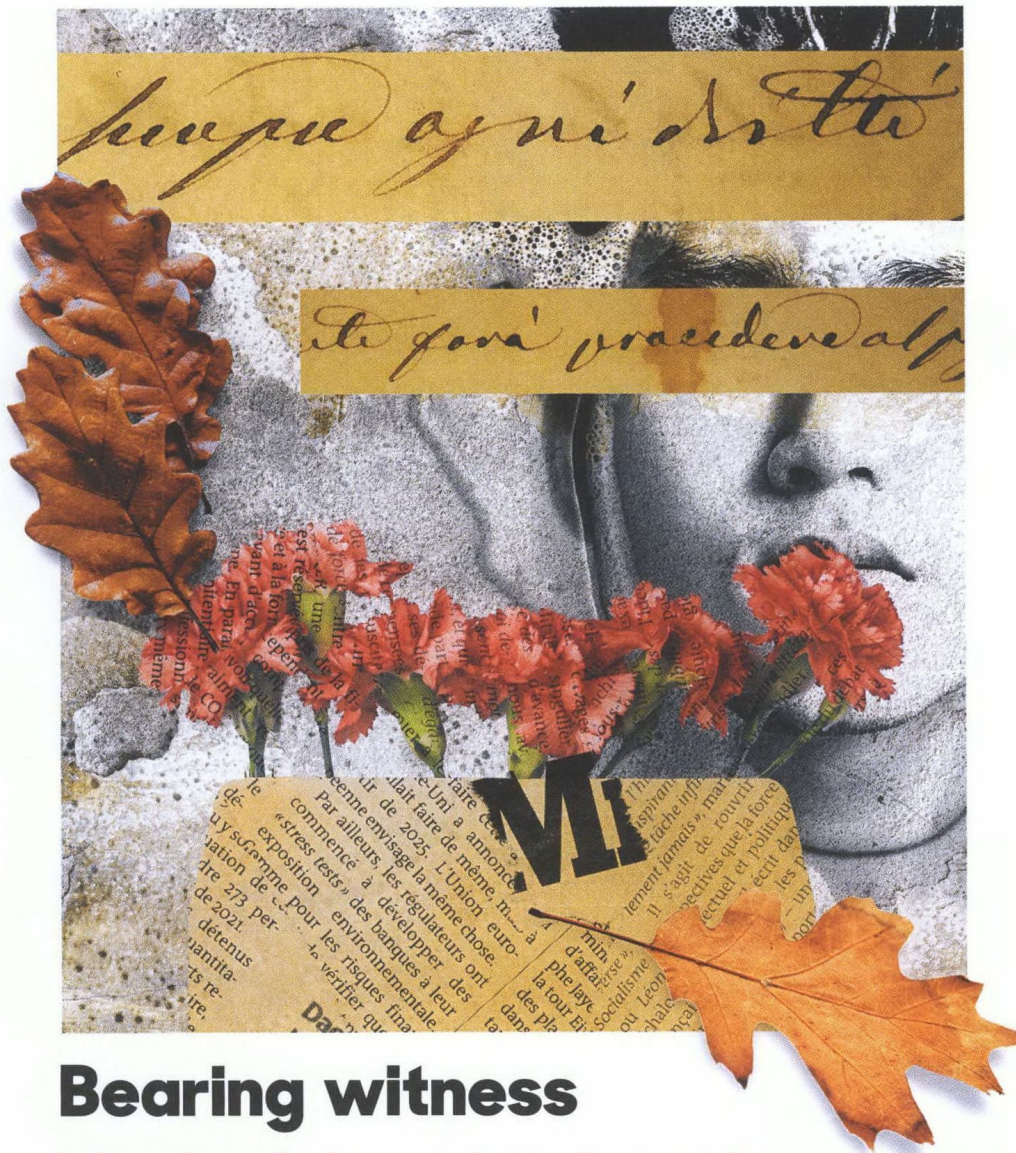


MAN OF ACTION

MOHAMMED MOSTAFA
AND THE GENERATION OF
EMIRATI CHANGEMAKERS



THE CULT OF THE BARISTA / WATCHMAKING'S HIGHEST LEVEL
ESQUIRE'S ALTERNATIVE AWARDS 2023 / CAPS + KHANDORA
OZWALD BOATENG MAKES SOFAS NOW / ABDALLA ALMULLA
WHY MEN LOVE SNIPERS / HOW TO WEAR PERFUME



Bearing witness

Dr Dana Jammal on how to deal with collective grief in the shadows of socio-political unrest

The emotional terrain of grief is immense, encompassing a range of human experience. Grief however takes on a distinctive and profound dimension when experienced collectively. Collective grief occurs when groups of people who share something in common (e.g. a race, a country) experience significant loss, such as in the wake of wars or natural disasters that result in mass casualties and tragedies. It extends beyond individual losses into the shared consciousness of communities and nations worldwide.

Research shows that you do not have to personally know individuals who have passed to feel grief. Collective grief can feel overwhelming and trigger feelings related to your own experiences of personal grief such as losing someone you loved. In response to the

current socio-political climate, I have noticed that many clients have reported exacerbated psychological distress, increased thoughts about death and dying and some have even reported increased anxiety about their own health. If a crisis continues, we can also experience anticipatory grief, if we anticipate further loss and suffering in the future. This can generate feelings of anxiety, helplessness and even despair.

Many individuals wonder if what they are feeling is normal. Experiencing emotions such as anger, rage, guilt, numbness, irritability and agitation are common responses to grief. Grief manifests in a number of different ways including physically (e.g. sleep difficulties, weight change), cognitively (e.g. difficulty concentrating, confusion) and socially (e.g. withdrawal, lack of interest in seeing other people).

While some of these manifestations may feel debilitating or scary, it is crucial to give yourself permission to mourn rather than to suppress your emotions. Acknowledging and bringing what you are feeling into awareness allows you to initiate the necessary steps to move through grief.

It can be difficult to limit our consumption of news, particularly social media, during critical times like these. However, exposing ourselves to traumatic events repetitively has been shown to bring about exhaustion, hopelessness as well as symptoms of depression. Taking breaks and engaging in tangible actions (e.g. making donations or volunteering) can empower individuals to transition from a sense of helplessness to a more proactive approach that aligns with their values.

One tactic that can be particularly helpful is to switch between loss and restoration-oriented coping. A loss orientation involves coping with issues directly related to the loss—for example allowing yourself to cry if you come across traumatic footage of people who have died. This form of coping can generate powerful emotions that are important to process grief. Restoration-oriented coping involves focusing on things in your life that are unrelated to the loss (e.g. learning a new skill). Balancing a loss orientation with restoration is a healthy way to navigate your experience of collective grief without being consumed by it.

We encourage individuals to share their experience of collective grief, whether in a therapeutic context or with supportive others. This allows an articulation of pain, creates space to validate one's feeling, can cultivate a sense of unity and resilience and honour our shared humanity. 🌱

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