

©Death Unfiltered: The Podcast

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Hello, welcome to death unfiltered, where we talk about all things death and dying. I'm Staci Sokol, an end of life coach, dementia trainer and educator, and a southern sassy sister. And I'm Jeanne Bain an end of life navigator, dementia consultant and improviser, who loves the ocean, but currently lives in the land of 10,000 lakes. Let's jump right into this episode called What's your death story? Our guest today is Jane Jarman, a dementia trainer and consultant and entrepreneur, a mother of two, a wife of a great guy, she's been married almost 30 years in March. She's got a story to tell today about experiencing death at an early age.

Staci Sokol: Jane, please share with us how you found out about our podcast.

Jane Jarman: Well, thanks for having me today. I learned about it through our mentoring group, that we meet every Monday night, and heard that you were putting together a podcast about just interviewing people on death and dying and wanting to hear more about their story, and so it kind of intrigued me, and then when I saw your message on Facebook, I thought, What the heck? I'm here to share it out, it was a long time ago when I lost my father and I... I hope I can help someone out there.

Staci Sokol: So Jane, you wanna go ahead and share your story with us,

Jane Jarman: Yeah, it happened a while ago leading up to it, my dad... He was an older dad, he was born in 1917, and I was born in 63, so he was in his late 40s when he passed away, and he actually had polio, he contracted it as a young child, and that didn't have anything to do with his death but He also smoked the pipe and inhaled it, so he contracted lung cancer, and.

Jane Jarman: What I found really interesting was he passed away in 1971, and it was at a time, I think, time period for a lot of parents and family members to really not talk about the big "c" word, cancer. And they really didn't tell me that he was dying, which I found really... I wasn't really aware of it because I was seven when he actually passed away and a half, but I find it really interesting how the parents approached illness, serious illness, chronic illness, and even as a family member, and not telling the children... And I think they do it out of fear of not wanting to... Wanting to protect the child and not wanting to put them through maybe the stages of grief. So I would go and visit my dad when he was going through chemotherapy and radiation, and he was getting it done up at Stanford University, and they were really in the early stages of treating lung cancer. And it was terminal, but I didn't know this. And on the day he died, it was weird, we just had breakfast and I was taking a bath, and my mom came into the bathroom and she was screaming and she said, Get out of the tub. I was About to get out of that sub and I said... I said, Okay, and I got to ask... And she said, Hey, you to go across the street. And as I was leaving, I

saw just the image of my dad in his chair with all these firefighters all around him, and I went outside in the yard, or the street was just filled with fire trucks and ambulances and things like that. And I was thinking, Oh, I wonder... And I didn't put two and two together because at a young age, sometimes it's just not... The connections just can't be made, and if the conversations are not happening with the family, the mom and a dad telling the kids... I'm explaining it to him. It just wasn't there. And so when I came back after my time with our neighbors, my mom was a wreck and my brother who was 16, was very stoic and not really talking. And for me, it was like, Oh yeah, He died. Wow, that's weird. And I didn't really have any sense of finality... Final-ness to it. It was really strange. So yeah. Jen, did you have any moments of fear when she had you get out of the bathroom or go to the neighbors? No, it was all a very confusing rushed... I didn't really have any... I was worried, but I didn't have any fear. I remember I was worried 'cause I still have that image in my head of just being pushed away, not pushed away, but just taken out of the house, very kind of abruptly to get me out of the scene. Protect me again, which I find really interesting. And at any point during that you can remember during his illness, did you think that my dad's going to die... No, not at all, because my parents just didn't have that, did it and sat me down and have that conversation with me, they had it with my brother who was 8 years older than I was, but not with me. And it was kept from me. So his hospital stays, I thought, were attributed to the Polio that he suffered from 'cause he walked but he used crutches, he could still, but he was, You could see he was visibly disabled, and I remember... I remember the very last few weeks, he had lost his voice because of the vocal cord, his vocal cords were affected by it as well, so I just thought it was just really strange, and I think it kind of is attributed to the time period that... And I think my mom was an older mom too, she was born in 1922, they just didn't really talk about death and dying and illnesses, and everything was just hush... You don't talk about it.

Staci Sokol: What do you remember being like... Or if you do, in the days that followed.

Jane Jarman: It was a lot of... My mom was grieving incredibly, she was just about lost it, just... And my brother, being close by and lots of family friends, my father was a music teacher for an elementary school, and he was acquired director for two parishes in two Catholic churches. So we had lots of friends, so lots of food being brought in, which is very typical of a memorial service funeral, and then a huge funeral. And the other thing was, he was not cremated, he was... My mom went all out on a nice big fancy casket, and this was the weird part, going to the funeral home and seeing him in the casket and still going... This is just so weird. And then having a nightmare a couple of nights later of him actually sitting up in the casket and coming alive again, which is kind of, I think as a little kid, you would have these... 'cause it's just so weird to see a casket with somebody in it, that was my first experience and my mom let me have that experience and we went, but it was just very surreal. Really? And almost like I wasn't really processing it. So she did actually, a few months down the road, I didn't do very well in... So school was really hard for me at that point because my mom was really upset and it was just... It was in November, it was right around the holidays, she did actually, she said, I'm hiring you a tutor for math, and I said, Okay, 'cause that was my my weakest subject, and I would go to see this guy and he was just a nice gentleman who's probably in his 30s, and he taught me

how to play blackjack, and basically all he did was he talked to me and he was a counselor, but I thought it was my math tutor, which I thought was a really cool idea. It just really hit.

Jeanne Bain: Really brilliant.

Jane Jarman: I'm not going like lane on a couch and having somebody sit there and tell you how you feel, we talked as we played Blackjack, and he taught me how to count numbers, and it was just a really clever way to bring out a child's bring out the conversation in a child really and truly so... Kudos to my mom for that.

Staci Sokol: Kudos.

Jane Jarman: Yeah.

Staci Sokol: Did you feel alone in that process, like you said, your mom grieved, but who was there for you? My mom, she was... And I had friends, my little friends, my neighborhood friends, I had lots of... We lived in a nice neighborhood with lots of kids, but they all were... "I'm sorry about your dad," but all of us work and then we go and play, because it was something that you just don't... As a child, I think my mom was a little worried about me 'cause I really wasn't crying as much, I started crying a lot more, when I got to junior high and high school when I was really hitting me and I was really... I was missing them, but I was missing him in different ways, Eustache thought that was really strange that I wasn't really expressing my emotions, and I think it was because I was just trying to categorize it and trying to deal with it in my own way.

Jeanne Bain: I once heard at a grieving seminar that we grieve as adults, we grieve, so we have a loss and we grieve. It's grieve and then play the GRE and then play, and there's no... They come out of it, just a lot of it, and I think that that can be really scary for adults.

Jane Jarman: I feel like they're not doing the one, and I did want my friends to feel sorry for me and go, Oh... And I'd be like, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine. So I think I just kind of swept a little bit of it under because I didn't wanna stand out, I didn't wanna stand out because I was the only one back in the day, in the 70s, when everybody had their mom and dad and no one got divorced, in my little bubble, and then it soon change after that, we moved up to about five years later, but I just didn't want things to just completely go so bad that I stood out 'cause I'm not that type of person that wants to stand out and be noticed Oh, that she was the one that lost her dad and so forth and so on, so I really tried to downplay it, I think...

Staci Sokol: Jane, you had said that, you know your mom let you go to the funeral, but did anyone actually say to you that, Hey, your dad passed away, he died, Did anyone actually say those words or was it just assumed...

Jane Jarman: No, they said it, they said it. And I got that part. I mean, I saw all of the stages of it, I saw this body in the casket and all of the warmth and guidance from all of our family friends

and our priests that we were really close to, and they didn't really keep me out of conversations 'cause I kind of hung out with them. So yeah.

Staci Sokol: Of course, you were more... First of all, you are the youngest, and second of all, you know you're a girl, you're inquisitive, if you wanna know, who else are you gonna hang out? Waste, I was very... Yeah, and I would just sit in a room and just listen. 'cause back then, I was... No, I don't think you guys really believe it, but I am kind of an introvert, if I have to be an extrovert, I will do it and I will stand on my head and speak and do a presentation, but I really and truly learning through Teepa Snow, which was so amazing. Sidebar here, I am an introvert, I am very shy, and I was very shy, and I would... In my tendency when I was that young, when I was at that age group or that age, I sat in a room and I listened and I took it all and... Yeah. Didn't several of us. I did that. That's the root of all my therapy, right, you just sit there and take it. And then what are you supposed to do with it? You know, but when you were talking about...

Staci Sokol: You know, you would talk about it and then you would play... I think that's very natural. Right, like you're a kid, first of all, you are told that you weren't told, You're part of it, but you're not part of it, and then you're just saving...

Jane Jarman: What's really contractor friends right there. Who can imagine? What does that actually mean? It was a lot and I just didn't... I remember now that you're... Now that I'm kind of talking, 'cause I don't really sit and think about it as much, 'cause it's been so long, but I just remember not wanting to make a big deal out of it, and I don't want my friends to really go and to just to feel sorry for me, I didn't want that because I didn't feel sorry for myself. I didn't mean I was sad that I missed my dad and mom was... My mom did have a really hard time, she really agreed, and she kind of got into it, why don't I wanna do a deep depression, but my brother was there and he was supportive, and she had some family members that came out from Philadelphia and stay with us afterwards, which was good. But I just didn't really want the whole... I don't want a lot of attention paid to me. I didn't want that.

Staci Sokol: Well, and what kid does, right. Yeah, yeah, you just wanna just make it... I want normalcy, I wanna play with my friends, I wanna be, I wanna be outside. I was really outside. It was before any of any technology was in early 70, so my days were outside on my bike for hours, which I think is... Now, I think it's healthy. I think it's really a way for them to grieve instead of possibly outside was your scan and my friends, right. My little... Yeah, yeah. So now, fast forwarding knowing you now 40-something years later, outside is to your Staley put all kinds of pictures of you being outside and doing all kinds of things, and the outside is my escape too, and so that's why I pick up on it. Yeah, that could be a whole another session, but I'm just saying that's how we learn, so is there more about the story that you would like to add, we'd like our listeners to know or to be aware of.

Jane Jarman: I think the most important thing... And now that we're sitting here talking about it, is that it's okay for children and not to completely come and glue and be despondent, and I think it's normal to see a child not really grieve as much because this is how they're processing it, as opposed to kids everybody processes it differently, death differently, and I just remember just

not wanting to break down and cry and just completely lose it, and I just think it's important for... I think it's okay not to do that. I think it's okay, 'cause I process it later, I process it years later, and it came out a little spits and spurts, and it was fine, and my mom and I talked about it, 'cause we had a very close relationship from that from... I came out of that, we became... We were buddies, we were really just very, very close, and I learned a lot about her, she never remarried, she didn't wanna re-marry, my dad was her one and only love, and so it was interesting, I grew up really quickly, I became an adult really quickly, 'cause it was just my mom and on my brother, he moved on and got married very young and moved away, and it was just my mom and I and my grandmother. But it was an interesting relationship. But I learned a lot from it, I really did. And it was just, it was interesting. And it was my life.

Jeanne Bain: Jane, I'm just really interested in how such an early and dramatic experience of death has made an impact on the way you look at death now as an adult. That's A really good question. I see it not as a final piece 'cause I still feel them, I still feel my Dad and I feel my mom, and that's I think the greatest gift they both gave me, I still feel their guidance, and I didn't really know my dad as well as my mom did, 'cause my mom. I lost my mom just eight years ago, and I feel her guidance with me and I don't feel it as I miss her input, I miss her presence, and I miss her unsolicited advice that she always gave me, but I don't... When she finally died when she finally passed, I didn't feel agreed and I miss her, but I don't think it's... For me, it's not accepted death as death is, and for me, it's not final. I still feel their presence.

Jeanne Bain: That's beautiful, thank you so much.

Jane Jarman: Yeah, thank you.

Staci Sokol: Thank you, Jane. Before we close this segment, I would like to bring up something that you mentioned to challenge our audience on this episode, and it is to remind our audience that grief comes different at all different times to all different ages of people and who are reading judge how someone is to grieve.

Staci Sokol: It's so personal, right? It's about how you were introduced to it and what was going on and how it is accepted in your culture, practicing your culture, your family of origin. So I challenge the audience to stop and think when you're saying, Oh my god, Sally's not grieving, or to stop and think, maybe they are grieving, maybe that is their process of dealing with it. Yeah, yeah, and that...

Jane Jarman: You put it perfectly. I mean, the way my mom grieved is different than how I agreed, and she was upset because she wasn't seeing me grieve and I was doing it in my own way, and... So weird how you... This whole interview, you're bringing up memories that have not pushed away, but I've... It's just been so long. But yeah, he was really... He was very watered flags were going up with her because I wasn't grieving and I was just doing it in my own way, and I think it's completely normal because I've turned out fine, strong. And I have my weaknesses and I have my strengths, and everything is okay, but I know because I know that I

have both of them, just so alongside of me in my little guardian angels, I'm a big believer in that stuff, so...

Staci Sokol: Right. Also, you had your favorite math tutor.

Jane Jarman: Incredible... I know that way. I think that was huge. Yeah, it is, yeah. Just in her own way, she sought help for me, and in a way that was not over-overly like, This is your psychologist that you're gonna go and see and talk to, this is something you're just gonna go and help use your mouth tutor, let's go. And we had the best conversations. He was so nice, and it was really helpful. Helpful for me.

Jeanne Bain: Thank you so much, Jane, this has been so great. It's been, I know it's gonna be great for our listeners, but it's been really great for me to hear your story and to have you tell your story, it's been really in love. Well, thank you. It's nice for me to actually talk about it in depth. It's been a while, so I thank you for allowing me to do that, and I hope I can help anyone who's out there who's grieving in a different way, and it's okay, it's okay to grieve. In different ways. Everybody does it in different ways. Which is good. It's all good. Yeah, thank you. Got. Excellent, well, thank you again. Thank you so much for sharing your story, if you would like to share your story on our podcast, just like came in. We would love it. We're looking for a mix of everyday people telling their stories, as well as professional care partners, please pitch us a couple of sentences and send the pitch to death dot unfiltered at gmail dot com. Thank you for joining us for another episode of death unfiltered. If you like what you heard and want to hear more, subscribe to us on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.