

Top 5 Health Stories of 2011

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This year brought one of the largest changes of power in generations. Revolutions coined as the Arab Spring forced many Arab leaders to step down or be killed. U.S. military operations brought down the FBI's -- and perhaps the world's -- most wanted.

For many families who have endured generations of pain at the hands of these leaders, the end of the year can bring feelings of closure and hope for a new beginning.

This year's news of Osama bin Laden's death and burial at sea brought mixed feelings for families who lost loved ones on 9/11 -- relief that the world's most notorious terrorist has been brought to justice but also a reminder of the pain they felt nearly a decade ago.

While it may seem as if jubilation and grief are distinct sentiments, many psychologists and psychiatrists say these mixed emotions are painful indicators that define feelings of long-awaited closure.

"Closure does not necessarily mean no longer feeling grief, or no longer feeling angst or pain over a situation," Dr. Alan Hilfer, chief psychologist at Maimonides Medical Center in New York told ABC News at the time. "It means essentially having threads of resolve."

But many find peace of mind by allowing themselves to understand that they may never stop feeling a sense of loss, Hilfer said.

The intensity of bereavement wanes over time, said Dr. Howard Belkin, assistant professor of psychiatry at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich.

In May, ABCNews.com interviewed Abigail Carter, 45, whose husband, Arron, was killed in the World Trade Center on 9/11. She said she did not need news of Osama bin Laden's death to feel closure.

"For me to close a chapter, I don't need vengeance. For me, closure comes from within," said Carter, who wrote, "The Alchemy of Loss: A Young Widow's Transformation."

But for others around the world who have endured a loss, the very public death announcements that represent a shift of world's power may bring on different sentiments associated with grief and closure.

ABC News' Carrie Gann and Kim Carollo contributed to this report.