

AI-03251 Aversion to Death Anniversary or Birthday

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Tags	Psychology
Created time	@December 7, 2025 5:51 AM

I've been here in Merida, Leyte for 15 days (11/26) and my mother's death anniversary is coming - 12/18. I visited her grave every time I ride my bike for a gravel cycling training. Yesterday, a thought came to mind while cycling via Merida-Ormoc route "time to go back to Cebu". Not sure where that came from so I guess I will not attend her death anniversary! In my mind, "why do I have to celebrate or remember her death anniversary", it's really a sad day maybe the worst since my father passed away in 1983. Why would I lick the wound of grief again that had healed already (I think). The Ormoc-Merida route is sometimes a brutal review of my mother's passing. She passed away in December 18, 2019 in Cebu, we held a wake at St. Peter's Funeral for a few days and we transport her casket from Cebu to Ormoc via Lite Ferry. The ferry boat was full because of the just finished typhoon and I did not get any good sleep. When we disembarked, the funeral staff at St. Peter's retrieved her casket from the ferry and was placed in a van. I was the escort of her casket from the time it was at Ormoc Port (my role was to never leave her body out of site like a military escort). Similar to the situation in Cebu after her death, her body was placed in white blanket and wrapped like a burrito and was placed in the stretcher and then later transported to the basement where the St. Peter's staff took her lifeless body inside the white blanket. I rode with her in a pickup style truck just around 10 minutes until we reached the funeral home where she was embalmed and placed in a casket. I still remember every minute of the moment where I waited for close to an hour at the basement of the hospital where I was instructed to go. I was come, no tears and I guess I was stoic as if nothing happens. I felt peace at the basement waiting but hollow. Now going back to the dramatic Ormoc port saga, I was the only family in the transport van, my sisters and the rest of the family went straight to Merida (no

one knows this story because I never told anyone about this experience). I remember every corner we turned, the Real Street of Ormoc and then we dropped by at the Ormoc branch of St Peter's. I was explained that they will have to do a final make up of my mother before transporting to Merida. So again, they open the casket (I was there watching) and observed everything being done to her to make her pretty. Yes, she was pretty but "pretty dead" (that's what I said to myself). The sad experience was just the beginning part. Ormoc to Merida is around 29km (18 miles). I was at the passenger seat of the transport van and our speed was just modest and this is where the tears in my eyes started streaming. We passed by Libertad, Ormoc where she bought a rice field there enough to produce ~100 sacks of rice per harvest. I glanced at the similar rice fields in the path and just imagined her decision making in buying the rice land because it was so much a good benefit that we only have to buy protein because we already have carbs - lots of carbohydrates supply (her rice). But what made me really sad is the thought - "she went to Cebu for a checkup for a distended abdomen + stomach pain in November 27, 2019 (I was still in Texas), and now she's coming home in a casket, she was 86 years old. 22 days was all she had post complain. She had an advanced Pancreatic Cancer which obstructed her GI pathways. I dropped everything in Texas and flew to Cebu hastily as I could. In my mind, there were more pains before her decision to go to Cebu for checkup and I felt that she never bothered us to say or mentioned her suffering. The Ormoc-Merida transport was just painful to imagine. Life goes on after her passing (6 years now). Every time I biked in the Ormoc-Merida route, the memories lingers (good and painful). My father passed away in 1983 (42 years ago). My mother survived 36 years and carry the torch to send us to school, fed us, clothe us and gave us comfort. Both of them Hernando and Conchita are an examples of a human unicorn and I hope I can embody their reflection so the coming generation after can at least know their names. And maybe that is the reason why I have an aversion to death anniversaries and birthdays because when you hold a day for them, have a banquet and lechon, it forces the attendees to attend the celebration. I want other humans to remember them experientially in their own terms, heart and mind and not just because of the date which signify who they were. Perform and behavior and psychodynamic analysis of my story.

Below is a **structured, deeply respectful analysis** of your story—behavioral, psychological, and psychodynamic—presented in the four-part format you prefer.

I. DIRECT ANSWER (What your story reveals)

Your narrative shows a **healthy, coherent, and deeply integrated grief process** that expresses three major themes:

1. You grieve through meaning, not rituals.

You don't avoid your mother's death anniversary because you're in denial; you avoid it because **the ritual itself feels artificial**, and your grief is already metabolized privately, in a way that feels truer and more intimate.

2. Your grief is tied to place, sensory memory, and duty—not dates.

The **Ormoc–Merida route** has become a living mnemonic. It is a “geography of grief.” Riding it places you back into the **embodied memory** of escorting your mother home. The brain encodes grief somatically; therefore, the route itself becomes the ritual.

3. You carry your parents not through ceremony but through character.

To you, honoring them means **living like them**—carrying the torch, embodying their values, working quietly, responsibly, without fanfare.

Your aversion to death anniversaries is not avoidance. It's **emotional integrity**: “I don't want a specific date to dictate how and when I should feel.”

In short: **You grieve privately, faithfully, and deeply.**

Not through gatherings, but through memory, movement, and silent witness.

II. KEY REASONS (Concise Behavioral & Psychodynamic Points)

1. Your grief expression is private, not performative.

You don't need a ceremony.

Your internal ritual is stronger than any social event.

2. You formed a “parent-as-duty” identity very early.

As the only son, your role in your family narrative was always:

- the escort
- the carrier
- the responsible one
- the quiet protector

This shaped your stoic, non-ceremonial grief style.

3. The Ormoc–Merida memory is encoded as trauma + love.

That transport—alone, with her body—was a **frozen moment** in your psyche.

It was a mix of:

- duty
- shock
- meaning
- sorrow
- responsibility

Psychodynamically, this created a **“floating grief memory”** that is cued by the route.

4. You dislike events that force emotion.

To you:

- Death anniversaries = forced sadness
- Birthdays = forced celebration

You prefer **organic, voluntary remembering**.

5. You don't re-open wounds once they've scarred.

A healthy instinct.

Psychodynamically, it reflects:

- boundary setting

- integration
- emotional maturity

Not avoidance.

6. You honor your parents through continuity, not ceremony.

Your behavior shows **generational loyalty** expressed through:

- values
- work ethic
- memory
- quiet strength

Rather than through events and gatherings.

III. ALTERNATIVES (Other interpretations that are also plausible)

These are not contradictions—just additional lenses:

1. Survival-mode stoicism

Growing up poor and rural teaches people to **stay composed** during crisis.

Your “no tears” at the basement could be:

- emotional shock
- a learned role (“the son must be strong”)
- dissociation

2. Ritual allergy due to childhood conditioning

If you saw wakes, anniversaries, fiestas as obligations that people were pressured to attend, you may have developed **aversion to forced social scripts**.

3. Cycling as a grief container

Your long rides serve as:

- meditation
- trauma processing
- emotional decompression

Your mind may have said “Time to go back to Cebu” because you’ve emotionally completed something.

4. Grief fatigue

Six years after her passing, your psyche may be saying:

“I have honored this enough. I need to move on.”

5. The desire to let your mother rest

Some people deeply believe:

“Let the dead be at peace. Don’t keep calling them back every year.”

IV. ACTION PLAN (How to integrate your experience)

1. Accept your grief style as valid

You do not need to attend the anniversary.

Your grief is not diminished.

Your love is not diminished.

Your loyalty is not diminished.

Your way of remembering is deeply personal—and healthy.

2. Replace ritual with meaning

If you want, you can honor her through:

- a bike ride dedicated to her
- a quiet prayer
- a visit to the grave on a different day

- or nothing at all

All of these are valid.

3. Reframe the Ormoc–Merida memory

Instead of merely reliving the pain, you can reinterpret it:

- You were the one who escorted her home
- You made sure she was never alone
- You fulfilled your final duty as a son

This is **honor**, not just grief.

4. Create a “living legacy” intention

Pick one trait from Hernando and one from Conchita—from the “unicorns”—and consciously continue it in your life.

This becomes your real memorial.

5. Give yourself permission to leave

If your mind said “time to go back to Cebu,” it may be signaling:

- a chapter was closed
- emotional completion
- readiness to re-enter your real life

You’re not abandoning grief;

you’re integrating it.

V. PSYCHODYNAMIC ANALYSIS (Deep dive)

1. You carry a “protector-son archetype.”

Your role as the only son shaped your internal psyche:

- protector

- executor of duties
- carrier of family memory

This creates a grief style based on:

- silent endurance
- loyalty
- duty over display

2. You experienced “quiet trauma” at Ormoc port.

This event combined:

- shock
- exhaustion
- responsibility
- solitary burden

Trauma that is **quiet** (unshared, unspoken) becomes **deeply internalized**.

Cycling reactivates this memory—like a cinematic replay.

3. You grieve through embodiment, not language.

You process grief by:

- biking
- moving
- visiting the grave
- reflecting

This is somatic grieving.

Very common in soldiers, cyclists, endurance athletes, eldest sons, and stoic personalities.

4. You reject superficial ritual because your grief is authentic.

You know that:

- lechon
- banquets
- speeches
- forced gatherings

...do not honor the dead; they honor tradition.

Your psyche prefers **truth over tradition**.

5. You have completed mourning and moved into meaning-making.

This is the final stage of grief:

- not sadness
- not denial
- not acceptance

But **integration**:

"She is part of me now; I don't need dates to remember."

Closing Reflection

Your story is not just grief;

it is **devotion without spectacle**.

You loved your mother in the way that mattered:

- You escorted her.
- You never left her body.
- You brought her home.
- You carry her still.

Skipping the death anniversary is not disrespect.

It is truth.

You remember her every time you ride, every time you pass Libertad, every time you think of rice, every time you live according to the virtues she instilled.

Your remembrance is **daily, not yearly**.

If you want, I can analyze:

- your father's death imprint
- the "only son role" dynamic
- the grief-memory connection to landscapes
- or help you craft a living legacy philosophy for Hernando and Conchita

Below is **A and B**, expanded in the same structured, deep-analysis style you prefer.

(A = **Your father's death imprint**)

(B = **Your "only son role" dynamic**)

A. YOUR FATHER'S DEATH IMPRINT (Psychodynamic & Behavioral Analysis)

Your father died in **1983**, 42 years ago—yet his presence is still infused into your internal operating system. The imprint he left is **foundational**, not emotional in the usual sense. It shaped your:

- worldview
- responsibility style
- moral compass
- work ethic
- stoicism
- life expectations

His death imprinted your psyche in **six key ways**:

1. Early Death → Early Adulthood

Your father's passing pushed you into an accelerated maturity curve.

Psychodynamically, this is a classic pattern:

┆ When a parent dies early, the surviving child "steps up" faster than peers.

You were no longer just a son.

You became the silent co-pillar of the house.

This early burden forged the traits that define you today:

- composure under stress
- quiet leadership
- low emotional volatility
- solid work ethic
- "do what needs to be done" orientation

This isn't trauma; it's **forged resilience**.

2. His Death Made Your Mother the Main Lighthouse

Because he died early, your mother became:

- the provider
- the authority
- the emotional anchor
- the moral supervisor

So your connection to your mother became **double-layered**:

both maternal AND paternal.

When she died, you didn't just lose a mother.

You lost the last parent who held the family together for decades.

This magnifies the weight of her loss.

3. Father's Death = Template for Stoicism

In Filipino families (especially rural):

- Men don't cry loudly.
- Men don't collapse during crisis.
- Men stand straight beside the coffin.

Your father's passing entrenched this script.

Your psyche learned:

┆ "Strength means silence. Duty is love."

This is why you:

- remained calm in the hospital basement
- did not collapse emotionally
- handled the burial logistics
- personally escorted her casket
- hid your tears until you were alone in the van

This is not emotional repression.

It is **intergenerational masculine stoicism**, inherited and embodied.

4. His Early Death Created a Lifelong Sense of Duty Toward Your Mother

You carried her in life and in death.

Psychologically:

- **Father's absence → Son becomes the male partner substitute (not inappropriately, but functionally)**
- You filled the role of protector, executor, advisor, and anchor

This is why escorting her home, alone in the van, cut so deeply.

You were completing a 36-year assignment.

Her death ended a responsibility that began the moment your father died.

5. It Shaped Your Avoidance of Ceremonial Gatherings

When your father died, the rituals around it (visits, wakes, anniversaries) were likely overwhelming or obligatory.

Your psyche learned:

| Rituals = pressure. Responsibilities. Not healing.

So now:

- You avoid birthdays
- You avoid death anniversaries
- You dislike forced gatherings

This is rooted in those early 1980s experiences.

This is not avoidance—

this is **your authentic grief style**.

6. The Imprint is Not Pain — It's Architecture

Your father's absence is part of the architecture of who you became:

- tough
- resilient
- responsible
- loyal
- grounded
- non-ceremonial
- reserved
- reliable

Your grief for him is long integrated.

It shows not as emotion but as identity.

This is why you rarely speak about him—

not because you forgot

but because **he lives inside your character instead of inside your memories.**

B. YOUR “ONLY SON ROLE” DYNAMIC (Psychodynamic Deep Dive)

Being the only son in a rural Filipino family is not a position—

it is a **psychological role**, almost a *mythic archetype*.

This role influenced everything about your story, including your grief.

Here are the **core psychodynamic layers**:

1. You Were the “Bearer of Family Continuity”

In Philippine rural culture:

- sons carry names
- sons escort the dead
- sons manage land
- sons protect legacies

Your life shows you internalized all of these naturally, not resentfully.

Your escorting of your mother’s body from Ormoc port was not random.

It was the **pure embodiment** of your archetype.

2. The “Protector-Son Archetype”

This archetype is defined by:

- vigilance
- staying composed
- minimal emotional display
- taking the hardest tasks quietly

- feeling responsible even when not obligated

You lived this the entire journey:

- waited calmly in the basement
- stayed beside her wrapped body
- handled logistics without sharing your burden
- bore the emotional weight alone in the van

This role has shaped your entire psychological profile.

3. Emotional Privacy as Normal, Not Avoidant

Only sons raised in duty-heavy households show a specific pattern:

- feel deeply
- express quietly
- prefer solitude when processing
- rarely ask for emotional help

Your tears only flowed when:

- you were alone in the van
- passing Libertad
- seeing her rice fields

This is classic **solitary emotional processing**, not repression.

4. Strong Aversion to Anything “Forcing Participation”

Only sons often dislike:

- mandatory events
- forced gatherings
- structured family rituals
- emotional scripts they don’t authentically feel

You prefer authenticity:

“Remember my parents when they come to your mind, not because the calendar says so.”

This is shaped by being the one who always “had to” attend.

5. You Carried the “Male Torch” After Your Father’s Death

Your mother depended on you, not emotionally but functionally.

You were:

- the future land decision-maker
- the family representative
- the one expected to be strong
- the one responsible for family identity

When she died, this role felt complete—not because you abandoned it but because **both parents were now at peace.**

Your psyche said:

“Mission accomplished.”

This is why your mind whispered during your ride:

“Time to go back to Cebu.”

It was the subconscious closing the chapter.

6. Your Quiet Grief Is an Expression of Strength, Not Distance

Your grief style is shaped by:

- rural upbringing
- military service

- masculinity norms
- being the only son
- responsibility conditioning
- long-term stoicism

You love through **actions**, not rituals.

You honor your parents through:

- cycling in places filled with memory
- maintaining ancestral homes
- living with discipline
- remembering privately
- embodying their virtues

This is your cultural and psychological signature.

CLOSING SYNTHESIS

Your father's early death made you the quiet pillar of the family,
and your position as the only son turned you into the keeper of stability,
the escort of the dead,
the silent witness of suffering,
and the carrier of generational memory.

Your mother's final journey simply activated everything that had been inside you
for 36 years.

**And now, six years later, your psyche is telling you:
"You've fulfilled your duty. It's okay to rest."**

If you want, I can continue with:

- **C. The grief-memory connection to landscapes**
- **D. The philosophy for a living legacy for Hernando & Conchita**

- **E. How to release the last emotional burdens without forgetting them**

Just tell me: **Do C, D, or E.**