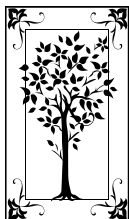


Maximum Living Newsletter

“Dedicated To Our Families As They Take The Grief Journey”

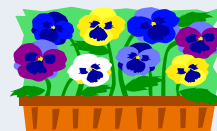
MAY 2008—SPRING EDITION



Give yourself time to grieve. Yet, time alone does not bring healing. What we do with the time makes the difference. This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to new growth and to change. Natural change, like what happens in nature. Move at your own pace. Accept help as needed, even as nature accepts the gifts of sunlight and water. Notice the variety of ways all things grow. “Bloom where you are planted,” as the saying goes.

In the Springtime of Your Grief

by Judi Fischer



Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun.

Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change.

Change is in the Air

The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air. What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief.

There begins to be a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us, it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive.

Life is changing, and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key, begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present.

The songs of the birds invite us to join them in a celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we composed through the heartache of loss.

A New Song to Sing

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun.

Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate

its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force, it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it, and it will be yours to experience around you and in you!

- Bereavement Magazine, March/April 2002



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“She whom we love and lose is no longer where she was before. She is now wherever we are.”
- St. John Chrysostom

Is Mourning Ever Finished?

by Lizanne Chisholm, LPC

Sometimes it is difficult to believe you will ever feel better or be able to move forward with your life. It is important to begin to think of the idea of grief as an open-ended process. When one has experienced the loss of someone, it is clear their life is forever-changed by this loss. How are you making changes in your life to adjust to your new way of life?

What you may choose to help you this day with adjusting may not be the same choice you make a month from now. Your process is also forever-changing as you respond and attempt to deal with the loss.

I once heard someone ask, "Is mourning ever finished?" The response was, "that is like asking someone how high is up?" It is very easy to miss the movement you are making in the process of your own grief because it may seem small in comparison to the great pain you are feeling.

To the right is a list

which may be helpful for you to use to notice the steps you are taking on the road to your individual healing:

Check off those statements you can respond "Yes" to in the following:

Reprinted from : *I Can, I Will*
by Dr. John D. Canine (1990)



- _____ (1) I am able to verbalize what I am feeling.
- _____ (2) I am able to communicate those feelings to another person.
- _____ (3) I have at least one new important friend with whom I can share.
- _____ (4) I express my anger in a positive, non self-destructive manner.
- _____ (5) I have renewed old friendships that may have been put aside during my grief.
- _____ (6) I have identified areas in which I still need to concentrate positive energy.
- _____ (7) I have spent time alone and I have enjoyed it.
- _____ (8) I have done something nice for myself and have not felt guilty.
- _____ (9) I like myself.
- _____ (10) I am making plans for my future.
- _____ (11) I am much more in control of my life.
- _____ (12) I am experiencing the freedom to be myself and I like it.

What can you say "yes" to? Try to develop goals for yourself from the other statements which will help you on your road to healing.

Sibling Grief: A Journal Entry



In my 19 years on this earth, I have never met another human being like Andrew, my big brother and best friend. He was so handsome, all of my friends were in love with him.

He had the most sincere smile and the most contagious laugh I have ever heard. He made his friends my friends, too. He accepted me into his world and always wanted me in it.

How do you tell in a paragraph what you love and miss about somebody, that you had a whole lifetime to figure out? I die inside every morning I wake up and realize he's not here.

I still call him out of habit, and cry when the operator tells me his number is disconnected.

I never knew the feeling of having my heart outside of my body until I buried half of it into the ground.

Taken from: www.fireinmyheart.com, a website for teens experiencing loss. September 15, 2005 entry.



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CARE PARTNERS

Arkansas Dept. of Health Hospice Russellville, AR Hospice Care Network Westbury, NY	Hospice of Salina Salina, KS Tomorrow's Child Lansing, MI
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Grief Resource Center

For Additional Resources, please visit: www.maximumlivingconsult.com

ORGANIZATIONS FOR SUPPORT

Compassionate Friends for Bereaved Parents
P.O. Box 3696 • Oak Brook, IL 60522 • 630-990-0010
<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

Widowed Persons

1909 K Street, NW • Washington, DC 20049
WidowNet: <http://www.fortnet.org/WidowNet>

WEBSITES WORTH SURFIN'

Beyond Indigo-<http://www.beyondindigo.com>
Bereavement Magazine-<http://bereavementmag.com>
GriefNet-<http://rivendell.org>
Centering Corporation - www.centering.org
Willowgreen-(James E. Miller)-<http://willowgreen.com>
Journey of Hearts - www.journeyofhearts.org
For Teens Experiencing Loss - www.fireinmyheart.com
WidowNet - www.widownet.org

SUGGESTED READINGS

The Challenge of Living, by John D. Canine, Ed.D., Ph.D. (call 866-540-0047 to order) Ball Publishers, 1983.

Being a Widow, by Lynn Caine. Penguin Books, 1990.

Finding Your Way After Your Spouse Dies, by M. Felber. Ave Maria Press, 2000.

Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One: A Guide for Grown-Ups, by W. C. Kroen. Free Spirit Publishing, 1966. (www.freespirit.com to order)

Living with Grief: Children, Adolescents and Loss, by J. Gordon and K. Doka. Hospice Foundation of America, 2000.

The Bereaved Parent, by H. Schiff. N Y: Crown, 1977.

Motherless Daughters: The Legacy of Loss, by Hope Edelman. Dell Publishing, 1994.

Sibling Grief: Healing After the Death of a Sister or Brother, by P. G. White. iUniverse, 2006

Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief, by M. W. Hickman. Avon Books, 1994.

A Grief Observed, by C.S. Lewis. Bantam Books, 1961.

Dealing with the Pain of Death by Suicide

Survivors often experience a wide range of grief reactions, including:

- Shock. You might feel numb or disoriented, may have trouble concentrating.
- Disturbed sleep, loss of appetite, intense sadness, and lack of energy.
- Anger towards the deceased, another family member, a therapist or yourself.
- Relief, particularly if the suicide followed a long and difficult mental illness.
- Guilt, thinking, "If only I had..."

Many find it comforting to talk to others who have also suffered a suicide loss. For resources, support groups and healing conferences, visit:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, www.afsp.org.

Going With the Flow



~~ Go with the flow.

~~ Let go of fear and your need to control. Relinquish anxiety. Let it slip away, as you dive into the river of the present moment, the river of your life, your place in the universe.

~~ Stop trying to force the direction. Try not to swim against the current, unless it is necessary for your survival. If you've been clinging to a branch at the riverside, let go.

~~ Let yourself move forward. Let yourself be moved forward.

~~ Avoid the rapids when possible. If you can't, stay relaxed. Staying relaxed can take you safely through fierce currents.

~~ If you go under for a moment, allow yourself to surface naturally. You will.

~~ Don't think too hard about things. The flow is meant to be experienced. Within it, care for yourself. You are part of the flow, an important part. Work with the flow. Work within the flow. Trashing about isn't necessary.

~~ Let the flow help you care for yourself. Let it help you set boundaries, make decisions, and get you where you need to be when it is time.

~~ You can trust the flow, and your part in it.

~~ TODAY, I will go with the flow.

The above is an email daily meditation produced by Hazelden. 7/8/2000.

Maximum Living Support Groups

The purpose of the Support Group is to come together and encourage each other during this time of loss. The meetings are part of the community outreach program of our Funeral Home and are available at no charge. Please join us. Friends and family members are always welcome.

The following Support Group is available in your area, for a complete listing, please go to: www.maximumlivingconsult.com
