



GRIEF SUPPORT AND CONNECTIONS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

The Real Meaning of Grief

By Kimberly A. Smith

Grief is a constant which is sometimes a whisper and at other times a marching band. It is quieter at work and louder when driving alone. It comes and goes and then welcomes itself back again. It shows up in movies, phrases people say, the sunrise and sunset, passing a golf course, seeing others in love, boarding a plane, enjoying a favorite beverage - basically almost every moment one can imagine. Grief will pop in and say, "Hey! Doesn't that remind you when he / she ..." or, "Hey! Didn't you love when he / she ..." It's like a little kid who constantly taps you on the shoulder wanting something - simply never ending.

Grief is also a passageway - a long tunnel that twists and turns when you don't expect it. You know that there is an eventual end but you have no clue where it is. You want out but you know it's not possible to escape. You can see cracks of sunlight and sometimes fresh water seeps in that you can drink, but it's fleeting. Sometimes you feel like you are going backwards or in circles because there is no map or GPS. Sometimes you sit and watch others move past you.



Sometimes you get the strength to lead the way. Most of the time you take one step and pray that it won't be much longer.

This is not new or normal. It's a complex twisted messy experience, and unfortunately grief likes being that way - it's never going to change. So let's think of grief as a journey through really tough terrain that hopefully gets a little smoother.

Grief is about feelings ... and coping with change

Our life changes whenever we experience a loss. Sometimes the changes are major. We may miss the daily presence of someone who has long shared our life. All our routines, our rhythms of life, may now be different.

Dr. William Worden of the Harvard Medical School who has conducted studies on bereavement writes a task of grief is "to adjust to a world in which our loved one is no longer present." What was normal before our loss will never be "normal" again. What we used to do together — whether eating, walking, or watching television — we now do alone. Responsibilities our loved one carried are now ours to fulfill. Activities that once held meaning may now seem insignificant.

While changes are inevitable, they are not uncontrollable. We still retain choice, even in change. The first step is to assess change. What are the ways that life has changed? Are any of these changes truly problematic? Should some be reversed? Do others need to be accepted?

For example, some changes may negatively affect our health. We may no longer eat properly or exercise. After all, it can seem too burdensome to cook for one or exercise without the encouragement of others. Knowing that eating right, getting plenty of rest and exercise are good for us may help us move through our grief in a healthy way. It may be important to explore creative alternatives to the healthy activities we enjoyed in the past.

The good news is that, while change is inevitable, how we respond is our choice. We



The Next Place

By Warren Hanson

The next place that I go will be as peaceful and familiar
As a sleepy, Summer Sunday and a sweet, untroubled mind.

And yet, it won't be like any place I've ever been ...

Or even ever dreamed of in the place I leave behind.

I'll glide beyond the rainbows. I'll drift above the sky.

I'll fly into the wonder, without ever wondering why.

I won't remember getting there. Somehow I'll just arrive.

But I'll know that I belong there and will feel much more alive.

The next place that I go will be so quiet and so still,

That the whispered song of sweet belonging will rise up to fill,
The listening sky with joyful silence, like a hush upon the breeze,

And I'll know that I know that I know, that I am finally free.

There will be no room for darkness in that place of living light,
Where an ever-dawning morning pushes back the dying night.

The very air will fill with brilliance as the brightly shining sun
And the moon and half a million stars will be married into one.

The next place that I go I will finally be perfect. I will be without a flaw.

I will never make one more mistake or break the smallest law.

And the me that was impatient or was angry, or unkind,

Will simply be a memory of the me I left behind.

I will travel empty-handed.

There is not a single thing I have collected that will grant me a fare

Except the love of those who loved me and the warmth of those who cared.

And all the happiness and all the memories and all the blessings that we shared.

Though I will know the joy of solitude ... I'll never be alone.

I'll be embraced by all the family and the friends I have ever known.

Although I might not see their faces all our hearts will beat as one,

And the circle of our spirits will shine brighter than the sun.

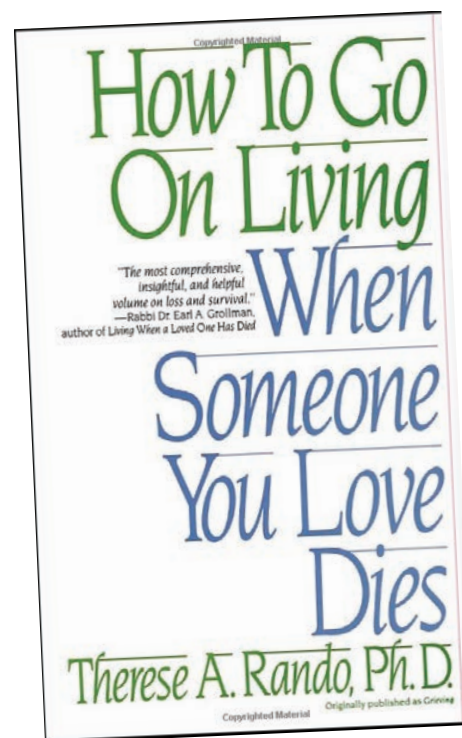
I will cherish all the friendships I was fortunate to find,

All the love and all the laughter in the place I leave behind.

All these good things go with me. They make my spirit glow.

And that light will shine forever in the next place that I go.

RECOMMENDED READING



Mourning the death of a loved one is a difficult process. But whether the death is sudden or anticipated, few of us are prepared for it or for the grief it brings. There is no right or wrong way to grieve; each person's response to loss is different.

In this compassionate guide, Therese A. Rando, Ph.D., bereavement specialist, leads you gently through the painful but necessary process of grieving and helps you find the best way for yourself.

Coastal Hospice & Palliative Care invites you and your family to honor the life of your loved one by attending a

Community Memorial Gathering

You're invited to either bring your own sea shell, or shells will be provided. Write your loved one's name on the shell and after a brief time of reflection, return the shell to the water. Note: In accordance with COVID-19 guidelines, you're asked to wear a mask and bring your own chair. Physical distancing of 6-feet will also be observed.

Sunday
Aug. 30, 2020 | 2:30 p.m.
Long Warf Park
Cambridge, MD

Sunday
Oct. 11, 2020 | 2:30 p.m.
Crisfield Dock
Crisfield, MD

Sunday
Nov. 1, 2020 | 2:30 p.m.
Ocean City Pier
Ocean City, MD

For more information call: 410-742-8732

Grief Q & A

Q. It's been nearly eight months since my husband of 36 years passed away. My daughter is telling me that I should be getting out more and "enjoying life," but I just don't feel that I'm ready yet. I feel such sadness. I feel tired much of the time, and all I want to do is stay home. Is my daughter right? Should I make myself get out and socialize even if I don't feel ready?

A. The grief process is highly personal, especially timing. The truth is we never "get over" the loss of a loved one, but, with time, we can heal from our loss and eventually even find that we can enjoy life again. Your daughter's concern that you reengage in life is most likely based on her own grieving process. She may have moved through her grief differently and may feel guilty that she's able to be happy while you're still trying to cope. Talking with your daughter about your feelings may be helpful. You might also find it helpful to talk with a professional grief counselor or join a grief support group to help you find the tools you need to cope.

Q. My mom lost her fight against breast cancer last month. It was a long struggle. In the end, I dropped out of college to help care for her. My problem is that I haven't felt sad in the way I think I should. I actually feel more relieved. It seems like I must be the worst daughter in the world to feel that when I should still be grieving her loss.

A. When it comes to grieving, there is no wrong or right way. Each of us is unique, and our path through grief is also. Even though it's been a short time since your mom's death, you were likely experiencing much of the grieving process battling the disease.

Relief is actually a very common response to a loved one's death, especially following an extended and perhaps painful illness. The fact that you put your own life on hold

to help care for your mother suggests that you also lost a part of your own life. Your current range of grief and emotions will likely be influenced by how you choose to move forward with your own life. A bereavement counselor or a grief support group may be able to help you talk through your emotions and offer insight to your loss.

Q. When my seven year-old's grandfather, whom he adored, died six months ago, he barely cried. We talked with him through the process about why Gramps had to leave us, and he even attended the services. At the time, he seemed to take it all in stride. But then last month we lost our beautiful golden retriever, and my son broke down. He was inconsolable for days, and now just seems sullen and angry. What should we do?

A. Your son should see a bereavement counselor experienced in working with children immediately. What you describe sounds like a case of grief transference. It's likely that the reaction your son is having to the loss of a pet, while real and significant, is probably also tied into the earlier loss of his grandfather. The fact that he is expressing his grief with anger suggests that he needs some assistance in processing his feelings in a way that is healthy and nurturing.



Grief is about feelings (Continued from Page 1)

may be able to decide whether to move or not. Or choose when or whether to return to work.

A guideline is helpful here. Grief is highly stressful; therefore, as much as possible, we should control the pace of change. We may find less stress if we delay those major changes in our life for a period of time. Some changes must be accepted. Some are concrete and irreversible. Death and loss will invariably bring changes in their wake, but the secret to managing change is an old one best expressed in the Serenity Prayer.

*“God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I
cannot change, the courage
to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know
the difference.”*



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TO OPT OUT: You are likely receiving this publication following the death of a family member, friend or loved one who received care from Coastal Hospice. Grief support is a vital part of the hospice philosophy of care. This publication serves to share information you can use during this time and highlight upcoming events. If you do not wish to continue receiving this publication or have a change of address, please contact Melissa Dasher at 410-742-8732, ext. 621 or mdasher@coastalhospice.org.

GRIEF SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

These groups provide a time of respite and a safe place to express feelings in the grieving process. We offer these activities at no cost to any adult who has experienced the death of a loved one, even if they were not a patient of Coastal Hospice.

**Due to Covid-19 restrictions
please call or e-mail for dates, times, and locations.**

Dorchester County SUPPORT GROUP

Information ~ Breanne Carbaugh 717-572-9709
BCarbaugh@coastalhospice.org

Worcester County SUPPORT GROUPS

Information ~ Nicole Long 443-614-6142
NLong@coastalhospice.org

LUNCH SOCIAL

RSVP ~ Molly LeFaive 443-523-4899

Somerset County SUPPORT GROUPS

Information ~ Nicole Long 443-614-6142
NLong@coastalhospice.org

Wicomico County SUPPORT GROUPS

Information ~ Nicole Long 443-614-6142
NLong@coastalhospice.org

YOUTH SUPPORT GROUP

Information ~ Melissa Dasher 410-742-8732 ext 621
MDasher@coastalhospice.org

LUNCH SOCIAL GROUP

Information ~ Jenny Hall 443-953-1008

NOTE: All lunch socials are "Dutch treat."