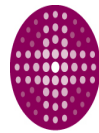


HOPE NOTES



Hospice of Charleston
a Gentiva® company

April 2010

When Death Comes Here

By: J. Chris Adams D. Min.

Death most often comes and we only have to observe it. It touches other people and we see it through the safe windows of our lives. Our neighbors, co-workers, friends, and even strangers are battered by the pain of loss and we feel for them, but it is at a distance.

Then death comes to our house, it is no longer in the streets to be observed, it has now entered our lives and we are forced to participate. It has invaded our homes, dreams, plans and future.

When death invades our territory it has the potential of isolating and cutting us off from the sources of our strength and stability. It changes our patterns, and re-routes our routines. Death confuses our normal and creates the human reaction of grief. Death has a way of focusing our humanity like nothing else.

Death brings grief, and grief always comes bearing gifts. Grief not only brings gifts, it is a gift that helps us express our humanity and our love.

Grief brings the gift of tears. Someone has well said that "the soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears." In ancient times the mourners would place a bottle containing their tears in the tombs of their loved one as an expression of their love. Tears are the safety valve of the heart.

You may forget those with whom you have laughed, but you never forget those with whom you have cried.

Grief also brings the gift of laughter. Laughter and grief can and do often go together. The ancient Jewish writer of the Proverbs said, "Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief."

The laughter of grief comes from the fond memories of the love and life you experienced and expressed. There is nothing that brings both laughter and tears like looking through those cherished photographs of happy days that have now become precious memories.

My prayer for you during these difficult days is that you will laugh again, but never forget that you have cried.

The tears are because of the love you have lost, and the laughter is because of the memories that remain.

While you are on this journey of grief remember to embrace both gifts, and through them you can express your love and your loss.

J. Chris Adams D. Min. Spiritual and Bereavement Services Program Manager, Gentiva Hospice Division

**HOPE IN HEALING
GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP
2ND THURSDAY EACH MONTH
10:30AM—11:30AM
PLEASE CONTACT FRANK BUTLER
843.529.3100**

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**6 - WEEK GRIEF GROUP
BEGINNING APRIL 12TH,
3:00PM—4:30PM**

**3870 LEEDS AVE. SUITE 101
N. CHARLESTON, SC 29405
(LIMITED NUMBER OF OPENINGS)**

**CONTACT: EMILY BUCHHEIT
843.529.3100
OR
EMILY.BUCHHEIT@GENTIVA.COM**

**Hospice of Charleston
Annual
Spring Memorial Service
March 28th, 2010
3:00pm—4:30pm**

**Riverfront Park,
1001 Everglades Ave.
N. Charleston
(at the covered pavilion)**

**Directions: Rivers Ave. to
McMillan Ave. to N. Hobson Ave. to
Everglades Ave.**

There will be staff on hand to direct you to the site once your at the park.

Sponsored by : Hospice of Charleston Foundation

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

Alabama

Huntsville- Dan Anderson
256.519.8808

Florence- Andy Hughes
Steve Reed 256.764.0873

Montgomery- John Sparks/
Lenny Bolton 334.271.1293

Opp- Roger Stone/ Lee Joyner/
Doug Knight 334.493.0725

Birmingham -Jim Elrod/ Wendell
Dodd 205.682-9441

Dothan- Eddie Biss/Charles Gold-
smith/ Paul Cowley /Bill Frank/
Tallmadge Butler 334.792.1100

Jasper- Bill Daniel
205.384.3882

Eufaula- Tim Stevenson
334.616.0061

Cullman- Fred Wilks
256.737.7234

Oxford- Winfred Logan
256.831.2964

Gadsden-Richard Bradford
256.442.3208

Mobile- Dave Tarvin

Candler Cain /Richard Handy
251.340.6387

Florida

Crestview- Jim Vail 850.689.0300

Fort Walton- Frank Dole
850.862.1069

Marianna- Gino Mayo
850.526.3577

Panama City- Mike Young Craig
Brannon /Michael Dease
850.769.0055

Pensacola- Bill Eddins/ Shane
Tucker/ Joseph McNulty
850.474.7288

Georgia

Marietta/Rome- Don Reed
Johnnie Porter / Doug Mills
770.951.6251

Stockbridge-
Oliver Cameron/770.389.5760

Bainbridge- Andy Glover
229.246.6330

Newnan- Asa Mangham
770.502.1104

Riverdale- Ken Rose
770.907.2410

Lawrenceville- Jamie Kauffman
770.822-6377

South Carolina

Greenville- Dave Garner
864.329.0588

Columbia- Edison Cheeks
803.213.9986

Charleston- Greg Mason
Alan Poe/Frank Butler
843.529.3100

Tennessee

Cookeville -Barry Boggs
931.528.5133

Mississippi

Tupelo - Ryan French / Marquette
Rodgers 662.844.9725

Jackson - Bill Chatham
601.362.7801

Tupelo— Earl McAnally
662.844.7372

Starkville- Charles Smith
662.615.1519

The Power of Hope

There is a rope of hope for all who are willing to reach out and take hold of it. There are times when circumstances makes you feel as if there is no hope and that the rope is out of reach. But always remember that hope shines brightest when the hour is darkest. Hope sings when all melodies are gone. Hope shields us from despair, it shines a light into a dark place, and it inspires us to look towards a better tomorrow. It is the one thing in your life that you cannot do without. Hope does not deny the pain of the present, but it also does not deny the potential of tomorrow. Hold on tightly to the rope of hope, and it will hold you in the most difficult day.

Talking it Out

Sharing how one feels is difficult for most of us, however it can be especially challenging for kids? A great tool is the "finishing the sentence" activity. As you engage the child simply state the first part of the sentence and then allow them to finish. This will open many opportunities for sharing and healing. You will find below some sentences found on the Dougy Center website, give them a try
Finish the following sentences.

The thing that makes me feel the saddest is.....

If I could talk to the person who died I would ask....

**Since the death my family doesn't....
My worst memory is....**

If I could change things I would....

One thing that I liked to do with the person who died was...

When the person died I....

Since the death my friends....

After the death, school....

When I am alone...

Common Symptoms During Grief

Not everyone experiences the same thing, and what each person feels and experiences will be as unique as the individual person.

aches and pains
anger (at others or at God)
anxiety
bargaining with God
comparing the loss to the losses of others
confusion
depression
disbelief
disinterest in life
distorted or lost time
disturbed sleep habits (insomnia, waking up erratically)
easily distracted
embarrassment about emotions and feelings
erratic appetite
exhaustion
fatigue
feelings of being out of control
feelings of being overwhelmed
feeling crazy
feeling disconnected from family and friends
feeling drugged
feelings of being stuck in a rut
feelings of "falling apart"
feelings of hopelessness
feelings that nothing matters or has meaning
guilt
hallucinations
inability or unwillingness to make decisions
irritability
panic, sometimes overwhelming

"Getting Back to Normal?"

By: J. Chris Adams DMin.

It seems that in our American culture that "getting back to normal" is the rushed goal of every unwelcome challenge. We like our comfort zone and anything that invades our zone is an enemy that must be eradicated. The idea of "experiencing the moment" is reserved only for the joyous moments not the chaotic moments. However, "getting over it" is not the reality of our life after the chaos introduced by the death of a loved one. It is more like "getting through it" because we really never "get over it." We can learn from it, and are changed by it, can grow because of it, but never "get over it."

The late British writer C.S. Lewis in his classic book, "A Grief Observed", pens his thoughts on this very subject. He writes, "Getting over it so soon? But the words are ambiguous. To say the patient is getting over it after an operation for appendicitis is one thing; after he's had his leg off it is quite another. After that operation either the wounded stump heals or the man dies. If it heals, the fierce, continuous pain will stop. Presently he'll get back his strength and be able to stomp about on his wooden leg. He has "got over it." But he will probably have recurrent pains in the stump all his life, and perhaps pretty bad ones; and he will always be a one legged man." (C.S. Lewis "A Grief Observed; Harper San Francisco © 1961, pg.65)

When it comes to grief "getting over it" is not the goal; getting through it—changed, wounded, yet wiser, more compassionate, yet on crutches but moving forward. As we stumble may it be forwards into this new season with the hope of a brighter yet broken future—that gives us hope

Hospice of Charleston
3870 Leeds Ave.
Suite 101
N. Charleston, SC 29405

The Value in Living

I just finished officiating a funeral service this morning for a man I had never met and a family I didn't know. I met with the wife a few days ago to find out some personal information about this man and his life. He was relatively young but very accomplished in life. When I say accomplished I'm not implying he had a large bank account, a prestigious job or an impressive home. I mean that he was an individual who touched the lives of many, and in a good way. He was funny, loving, caring, compassionate and more concerned with others than himself, a pretty nice epitaph for anyone to desire. I realized that he was a gift to many and I honestly felt a little let down that I never knew him. I now know what John Donne meant when he said, "Anyone's death diminishes me."

One thing I left out is that the man we honored this morning died of Cirrhosis...most likely alcohol related. Let me ask you this question, "Did your opinion of him just change?" We have a tendency to remove some of our sympathy for those who have made life choices that may have precipitated their death. I tried to say that nicely, but what I really mean is we often become "judgmental".

My brother loved cars and he loved to drive fast. At the age of 24 he died in a single car accident. For those who had the question pop in their mind I will tell you that "no" alcohol was not involved. He drove too fast...lost control...hit a tree. I love him. I miss him. And you were diminished in not having known him.

My father-in-law was a really cool guy. Raised in East Tennessee he had that slow drawl when he spoke and I loved listening to his stories. He died of emphysema after a life time of smoking. I love him. I miss him. And you were diminished in not having known him.

I guess I may wonder what if...what if he had quit drinking...what if he had slowed down...what if he had never lit that first cigarette. However I have come to realize that it is not self-improving life choices that determines if our time here was of value, it's our choices to improve the lives of others that will matter.

Greg V. Mason
Chaplain/Bereavement Coor.