



August 2009

Grief Relief

I am often asked the question -how is grief relieved? Because grief is rather complex and often times chaotic there is no simple answer to that question.

Grief is relieved through time, by focused understanding and the ongoing creative impulses of life. The presence of sorrow causes the days and weeks to drag along. These slow moving days are accompanied by emotional pain and feelings of defeat and discouragement. We wonder if life will ever "feel" normal again. Time alone does not heal all pain, but time does have a healing quality that can not be denied. Time allows the things that have been pushed out of perspective to begin to move back into their proper place.

Focused understanding allows us to grasp what has happened, which can make it easier to accept. The thing that is unendurable is when suffering and loss has no meaning. By understanding that death in general is part of the cycle of life makes it somewhat easier to accept. It takes courage to begin the emotional process of moving this knowledge of death in general to your loss in specific. However, when this

is done it slowly positions us to begin the process of renewing our perspective.

The ongoing creative impulses of life also help us to gain relief from our grief. The momentum of life has a way of pushing us to find solutions and to face our problems. There is strength that comes from simply doing the "next thing" what ever the next thing might be. Doing this next thing helps us to relieve the generalized feelings of our grief and causes us to focus on the future even if it is bleak at the moment.

We begin to slowly but surely move about our daily tasks, and the days become weeks and the weeks become months, and almost without being aware of what is transpiring, the deep wounds begin to slowly heal.

No, life will never be the same for you; but there is life, and it stands before you to be lived. It will never be the same, but with time, focused understanding and the creative impulses that life brings, it can be good and is worth living.

J. Chris Adams, Coordinator of Spiritual and Bereavement Services. Hospice Division of Gentiva

Native American Prayer

I give you this one thought to keep
I am with you still—I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not think of me as gone—
I am with you still—in each new dawn.

Adapted by person(s) unknown from the original poem Do not Stand at My Grave and Weep, generally attributed to Mary Frye, 1932

Renewed
Hope

"Hope In Healing"

Grief Support Group

Every 2nd Thursday
10:30am-11:30am

Hospice of Charleston
3870 Leeds Ave
Suite 101

Please call
Emily Buchheit
843-529-3100 or
emily.buchheit@gentiva.com
for information



BEREAVEMENT SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

Alabama Huntsville /Keith Lorick/Dan Anderson 256.519.8808	Mobile /Dave Tarvin/Candler Cain 251.340.6387	Lawrenceville /Bill Daniels 770.822-6377
Florence /Phillip Lamb 256.764.0873	Florida Crestview /Jim Vail 850.689.0300	South Carolina Greenville /Dave Garner 864.329.0588
Montgomery /John Sparks 334.271.1293	Fort Walton /Frank Dole 850.862.1069	Columbia /Edison Cheeks 803.213.9986
Opp /Roger Stone/Robert Beasley 334.493.0725	Marianna /Gino Mayo 850.526.3577	Charleston /Greg Mason/ Alan Poe/Emily Buchheit/ Frank Butler 843.529.3100
Birmingham /Jim Elrod 205.682-9441	Panama City /Mike Young/Craig Brannon 850.769.0055	Tennessee Cookeville /Barry Boggs 931.528.5133
Dothan /Eddie Biss/Charles Goldsmith/ Paul Cowley /Bill Frank/Tallmadge Butler 334.792.1100	Pensacola /Bill Eddins/Shane Tucker 850.474.7288	Mississippi Tupelo /Kevin Wallace 662.844.9725
Jasper /Jeanine Pope 205.384.3882	Georgia Marietta/Rome Don Reed/Johnnie Porter 770.951.6251	Columbus /662.327.9669
Eufaula /Tim Stevenson/Randy Worrell 334.616.0061	Stockbridge /Oliver Cameron 770.389.5760	Jackson /Terry Robinson 601.362.7801
Cullman /Fred Wilks 256.737.7234	Bainbridge /Andy Glover/Andy Hughes 229.246.6330	McComb /Daniel Perry 601.684.5841
Oxford /Winfred Logan 256.831.2964	Newnan /Rick Harden 770.502.1104	
Gadsden /Richard Bradford 256.442.3208	Riverdale /Ken Rose 770.907.2410	

Have you tried something new, just for you? Here are a couple of local attractions that may be of interest:

- **Cypress Gardens' Safari Day, August 15** 10am-4pm. Come to the wild side in the swamp! Explore a jungle day with reptiles, gators, wild birds and lots more! Music on stage with the Cross Tuned Band and Charleston Hot Shots. Contact 843-553-0515 www.cypressgardens.info for questions and admissions.
- **Race for The ARK, August 29** @ St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 206 Central Ave., Summerville 5K starts at 7:45am, 1-mile starts at 8:45am. Proceeds benefit The ARK's programs serving families with Alzheimer's. Contact 843-832-2357 www.angelfire.com/sc2/racefortheark for questions and registration.

Grief Is Not Just An Emotional Response — It Is Physical Also.

When we think about grief and loss we tend to think of its' effects from an emotional perspective only. It is important to understand that there are often physical reactions that are common during the grief process.

So, what should you do to help with physical problems related to grief?

Here are a few tips:

- First, ***if you have not had a check up with your doctor within the past 12 months, schedule a visit.*** Your physician can assess your symptoms and make sure there are no further problems.
- Do your best to get 6-8 hours of sleep per night. This will give you more energy for the day ahead. If you have trouble sleeping try some relaxation techniques such as peaceful music, deep breathing or a warm bath.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Proper nutrition will help tremendously in your recovery.
- Exercise! Check with your doctor about a proper exercise program and jump in. Don't wait for the motivation. If you go ahead and start, the motivation will usually follow.
- Plan time for relaxation and enjoyment. Take time for yourself and do something relaxing and fun.

Helping A Child Through Grief And Loss

There are many misconceptions concerning children and grief. Children cannot be expected to understand death in the same way as adults, nor can they be expected to grieve as adults. But children can and do grieve. A child's grief does not mimic the grief of an adult. Both adults and children are forced to deal with immediate separation from a loved one. The grieving process for an adult involves integrating the reality of the loss into every aspect of life. Children do not have the same concept of death and loss as adults and cannot be expected to grieve in the same way as adults. Children will usually have a lot of questions which vary depending on the age of a child. A five year old may ask, "What is dead?" or "Where do you go when your dead?" A seven year old may have many questions about the biological processes of death and be very concerned with issues of emotional security. An older child, say 10-12 years old, may question if they somehow caused the death.

Things Not to Say to a Child. It is very important to be aware of what is said to a child, but equally important to know some things to **not** say to a grieving child.

- "Grandmother passed Away." Children do not know what the term "passed away" means. Your child needs to hear that Grandmother died. Using the words *die*, *death*, and *dead* may seem harsh, but they are more helpful for literal-minded children. You may need to explain that death means that the body can no longer function. The person is no longer able to breathe, eat, or move.
- "God just needed another angel in Heaven." Be careful about telling children that God takes people. This may cause the child to blame God for the death. "Grandmother just went to sleep." One of two scenarios may occur in your child's thought process if death is communicated as sleep. He/she may think the person will eventually wake up, or the child may be fearful of falling asleep because they know the person who died never woke up. Children need honest, open communication about death. What may be comforting words to an adult may terrify a child.

Things To Say to a Child.

- "I love you." After a death children need to be reassured of your love. Say it often.
- "Tell me how you are feeling." If the child's response is "I don't know," then figure it out together.
- "How did Grandpa die?" A question like this helps your child to gather information and clarifies misconceptions.

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

Our Bereavement Staff are available to you, please call us at 843-529-3100 to discuss additional community resources and individual grief concerns.

Register Early

Shannon's Hope October 17 and 18, 2009



A community bereavement program for **children ages 6-15** who have experienced the loss of someone they love. Licensed counselors and hospice trained volunteers provide fun, organized activities in helping children “create stepping stones from their stumbling blocks.” A weekend at Camp St. Christopher on Seabrook Island to create friendships and support that allows children to identify and express feelings in a safe and caring environment.



Pre-registration and application are required.

Please call Paula Mellichamp 843-529-3100 for information.
Printable application available at www.hospiceofcharleston.org
(click on events, then Shannon's Hope)