

HOPE NOTES



Hospice of Charleston
a Gentiva® company

July 2010

Light in a Dark Place

By: J. Chris Adams D. Min.

Although grief is the natural and normal reaction to a loss of any kind; it does not mean it feels normal or natural. Especially when the loss is someone we deeply loved, it often is stark, painful, and at times emotionally paralyzing. Nevertheless these feelings are present because the love, which was the foundation of the relationship, was real and meaningful.

Do not be surprised if you feel grief from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot given that grief touches our lives physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. The intense hurt that you feel is a result of wounded love and the sudden change of that which is normal; consequently, you may experience anger, despair, bitterness, doubt, guilt, loneliness and at times even depression.

Remember that grief is a journey and there is no single path to follow. It is not a walk from point "A" to point "B"; it is more like a roller coaster ride that carries you around curves, up steep hills, down deep valleys, and on occasions you may find yourself upside down.

The experience of grief may cause you to look at your own

mortality, which is never a comfortable exercise. Grief affects different people in different ways. Grief may cause one person to become more sensitive and compassionate in their present relationships; conversely it may cause someone else to become hard and more distant. The same Sun that melts wax will also harden clay.

If you are struggling or feel "stuck" in your grief journey we have caring and compassionate staff members who are available to talk, listen, or simply to offer you their presence. You are not alone in this journey, your Bereavement Services Representative is only a phone call away.

Though the journey of grief is hard, it must be walked, but you do not have to walk it alone. You may not be able to get over your grief like well meaning people advise you to do, but you can get through it. Remember that the sun is still shining even though the dark clouds may hide it from time to time. Giving others permission to walk with you is one ray of light that you can allow to shine into your dark place.

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

HOPE IN HEALING Grief Support Group 2nd Thursday each month

10:30am—11:30am

3870 Leeds Ave.

Suite 101

N. Charleston, Sc 29405

Please contact Frank Butler
843.529.3100 or

GRIEF SUPPORT MEETINGS

Mt. Pleasant IPU Center

2nd & 4th Wed. each month

5:15 pm

676 Wando Park Blvd.

Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Contact: Alan Poe

SIX Week Grief Group

Begins July 12th

3:00pm —4:30pm

3870 Leeds Ave Suite 101

N. Charleston, SC 29405

Contact: Greg Mason

843.529.5100

greg.mason@gentiva.com

**LIMITED OPENINGS
AVAILABLE**

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

Alabama

Huntsville- Dan Anderson
256.519.8808

Florence- Andy Hughes
Steve Reed 256.764.0873

Montgomery- Winston Brooks/
Lucian Ward/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 Tallmudge 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/ Ernie Gray
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 Cameron770.389.5760

Bainbridge- Andy Glover
229.246.6330

Newnan- Asa Mangham/ Ken Rose
770.502.1104

Riverdale- LaRita Primrose
770.907.2410

Lawrenceville- Jamie Kauffman
770.822-6377

South Carolina

Greenville- Dave Garner
Rickey Millwood/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 662.844.9725

Jackson - Bill Chatham
601.362.7801

Boonville Roger Wood
662.844.7372

Starkville- Marquette Rodgers San-
dra Brock

KIDS CORNER

Don't miss an opportunity to talk with your child...

**Karen Peeples , MS IMH-5034
Bereavement Camp Program Manager Gentiva Hospice Division**

Do you think grief and loss are new concepts to your child? Well think again. It might surprise you but feelings of grief and loss are probably not as unfamiliar as you might think for your child. Consider one possible example...

Mom: "Billy, what's wrong?"

Billy: (exasperatedly) "Oh nothing..."

Mom: "You seem down about something, tell me about your day at school."

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Help For Hard Times

By: J. Chris Adams DMin.

What can we do to help ourselves and perhaps others during the dark nights of the soul? The loss of someone we love is one of the darkest nights our souls will endure. Below you will find some suggestions that have proved to be helpful in giving and receiving care during these dark hours of loss.

Do not try to turn someone's mountain into a molehill or their tragedy into a triviality. This is often done with good intentions, but trying to relieve someone of their reality is never helpful. Hard things are hard! They want and need to feel the cold hard pain of their loss.

Do not try too hard when consoling and advising. Most people simply want your presence; they need someone with big ears and a small mouth. Presence is a wonderful thing during the dark nights of loss, but allow them to determine how much and when your presence is needed.

Do not try to answer the why question. The why question is a bottomless pit into which many a soul has fallen never to climb out of again. The truth is you do not know why cancer struck at this time, or why their husband was taken in the prime of life, Why has no answer and to pretend that it does is never helpful.

Do not open your "canned" responses. Genuineness and common sense are great companions when delivering care. Help comes from the heart, put yourself in their shoes as much as possible and provide for them what you would want someone to provide for you.

If you are the one on the receiving end of bereavement care, remember that well meaning people sometimes do and say awkward things....be patient and learn from their mistakes. Turning on a small light during the dark night of the soul is a treasured gift whether you are giving or receiving its illumination.

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Billy: "Well, it's just that Jonathan and I were best friends last summer, and then he went to be with his grandmother in Ohio. We didn't talk for awhile and now that he is back at school, he won't even talk to me. He gave everyone in class an invitation to his birthday party but me. I thought we were friends..."

Mom: "Well, I guess he wasn't such a good friend after all, just forget about that."

What type of loss has Billy experienced? What do you think Billy is feeling as a result of his friend's behavior change toward him? Perhaps Billy feels angry toward Jonathan for leaving him during the summer. Billy may also be questioning himself about what he could have done differently to ensure that he and Jonathan remained friends. Additionally, Billy may feel excluded and unimportant.

Many of these feelings are common after experiencing a loss, both for children and adults. Billy needs to feel loved and supported by his family to help make sense of this situation with his friend. One helpful strategy for Billy's mom might be to continue talking about the day and listening to how Billy feels about the loss of friendship with Jonathan. This small gesture of listening and support can help your child through a difficult time and better equip them for future disappointments and hurdles.

Take a moment and rewrite this script to reflect a loving supportive response to Billy's problem.

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The Horizon of Hope

I believe each of us has that place where we go which creates for us an escape from the stress of our lives. If you have not found your place, I encourage you to do so. For you will find it a brief moment in time that helps to refresh you. Perhaps not physically, but spirituality. I do not believe that I am alone when I tell you there are moments when the tragedies of this life have more than once caused me to groan the words, 'I am just... so... tired.'" This is a spiritual weariness which needs renewed and refreshed just as our physical bodies. Some have found their place, it may be in a good book and a cup of tea. Perhaps it is in the cool soil of the vegetable garden or the quietness of quilting. Some may find it sitting at the side of a pond feeding the geese or in the lapping waters that tap the side of the boat. It will not be the same for each of us but we will know that place. It brings about solitude and reflection, examination and hope. It will not drain us but fill us and renew in us the strength and resolve to carry on. I have found my place. It is on sands of the beach with the sounds of the Atlantic Ocean rhythmically humming in my ears. It is the salty ocean breeze that ruffles my hair and the warm sand that massages my feet. Mostly, it is where that vast body of water seems to meet that great expanse of sky, that stirs my soul and renews hope in my spirit.

No beach experience ends without my having seen a ship, whether it be cargo or cruise, pushing towards that horizon. I will often think of that ship later and wonder where they are and what they have seen. I do not know their destination, but I know their hope...that their journey will be safe.

I will often think of loved ones who have died and I am comforted in the fact that they are merely on the other side of the horizon. They are on the same journey as I, we are merely at different ports of call.

One day I too will cross that horizon and join my loved ones at that final destination. Until then, I will remember them, honor them and miss them but, I will never forget them. I find peace and hope in the fact that on that day I say goodbye to those on this shore, and cross that mysterious horizon, there will be those to greet me on the next shore.

Greg V. Mason

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