

HOPE NOTES



Hospice of Charleston
a Gentiva® company

March 2010

Grief Recovery: An Inside Job

By: J. Chris Adams D. Min.

The challenging work of grief is mostly an inside job; the barrage of thoughts, feelings, and memories often create an emotional climate that is very unkind to oneself; consequently, making the process of grief even more complex.

The gift of being kind to yourself during this season of sorrow is very important. Having someone to empathically listen to you as you share your emotions is a crucial step toward making progress through the misty maze of healing and wholeness.

Being kind to yourself could mean that you disallow others to coerce you into their model of how you should grieve or what you should participate in along the way.

It may mean that you allow yourself some "time outs" to indulge in a mini retreat of emotional and or spiritual reflection.

This gift of self kindness could be a long talk with a good friend about better

days gone by and the immense joy that they brought.

It might be a day of fun and laughter that celebrates the life that was precious and the memories that will never be forgotten.

Kindness to yourself could include a promise that you will not seek to numb the pain of loss with excessive food, drink, sleep, or anything that is not helpful to your journey through the grieving process.

Remember that your life is special and your grief is real; therefore, do not be impatient with yourself when the process is slow.

The uniqueness of your grief can not be overstated and the need to be kind to yourself is a vital element in your journey toward your new normal.

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—11:30 am

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

Please contact Frank Butler at
843.529.3100 or
frank.butler@gentiva.com



Hospice of Charleston Annual

Spring Memorial Service

March 28, 2010

3:00pm—4:30pm

Riverfront Park
North Charleston
Covered Pavilion

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

Alabama

Huntsville- Dan Anderson
256.519.8808

Florence- Andy Hughes
Steve Reed 256.764.0873

Montgomery- John Sparks
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
Goldsmith/ 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
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 850.474.7288

Georgia

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

Stockbridge- Oliver Cam-
eron/770.389.5760

Bainbridge- Andy Glover
229.246.6330

Newnan- Asa Mangham
770.502.1104

Riverdale- Ken Rose
770.907.2410

Lawrenceville- Jamie Kauff-
man
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 / Mar-
quette Rodgers 662.844.9725

Jackson - Bill Chatham
601.362.7801

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- You stop to smell the flowers along the way and enjoy experiences in life that are meant to be enjoyed.
- You begin to realize that the roles your loved one filled in your life are now being filled by yourself and others. When a loved one dies he or she leaves many "holes" in your life. Now those holes are being filled with other people and activities, although some will remain empty. You are more at ease with these changes.
- You can take the time and energy spent thinking about your loss and put these energies elsewhere, perhaps by helping others in similar situations or making concrete plans with your own life.
- You acknowledge your new life and even discover personal growth from experiencing grief.

HOPE NOTES

You Know You Are Getting Better When...

Helen Fitzgerald, CDE
American Hospice Foundation

- You are in touch with the finality of death. You know in your heart that your loved one is gone and they will never return.
- You can review both pleasant and unpleasant memories. In early grief the memories are painful because they remind you of how much you have lost. Now it feels good to remember, and you look for people to share memories with.
- You can enjoy time alone and feel comfortable. You no longer need to have someone with you all the time or look for activities to keep you “busy”.
- You can drive somewhere by yourself without crying the whole time. Driving seems to be a place where many people cry, which can be dangerous for you and others.
- You are less sensitive to some of the comments people make. You realize that painful comments made by family or friends are made out of ignorance.
- You look forward to the holidays. Once dreaded occasions can now be anticipated with excitement, perhaps through returning to old traditions or creating new ones.
- You can reach out to help others in a similar situation. It is healing to use your experience to help others.
- You can listen to music again. The music you shared with the one you lost is no longer painful to hear. Now you may even find it comforting.
- You can sit through a church service without crying.
- You find yourself not thinking of your loved one all the time. When this first happens, you panic, thinking, “I am forgetting.” This is not true. You will never forget. You are giving yourself permission to go on with your life and your loved one would want you to do so.
- You can enjoy a good joke and have a good laugh without feeling guilty.
- Your eating, sleeping, and exercise patterns return to what they were beforehand.
- You no longer feel tired all the time.
- You have developed a routine or a new schedule in your daily life that does not include your loved one.
- You can concentrate on a book or a television program. You can even retain certain information you have just read or reviewed.
- You no longer have to make daily or weekly trips to the cemetery. You now feel comfortable going once a month or only on holidays or other special occasions.
- You can find something to be thankful for. You always knew there were good things going on in your life, but they didn’t matter much before.
- You can establish new and healthy relationships. New friends are now a part of your life and you enjoy participating in activities with them.
- You feel confident again. You are in touch with your new identity and have a stronger sense of what you are going to do with the rest of your life.
- You can organize and plan your future.

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Falling to Succeed

It was just one of those days when the sun was warm, the breeze cool. Birds were chirping and the sounds of children's laughter could be heard everywhere you went. Well, almost everywhere. I saw a small boy wearing a helmet sitting unsteadily on a bicycle being held by his dad. I watched as father ran beside son. I observed this rite of passage knowing what would come next. And it did, dad let go and watched as his son traveled 20 feet before fear overtook him and he fell. Again and again this saga played out until soon he was going farther between falls. Later that day I saw him riding by my home smiling and alone.



Similar is our grief journey. Many will run beside us and assure us that they are there should we need them. But, we know in our hearts that we must eventually have them let go and we journey on our own for awhile. It is a terrifying ordeal at times. Grief like learning to ride a bike generally requires a good deal of bumps and bruises along with many falls. But we shouldn't just sit there looking at our hurts. We need to make the effort to learn to walk through life without the presence of the one who was taken from us. We need a good support group who is there for us knowing we can always go to them should we need them, but we must allow them to let go at times. No matter how wobbly we may feel, we soon learn the art of balance in our lives and we are well on our way to a less fearful and more assuring future.

Greg Mason, Chaplain / Bereavement