

ISSUE 3  
PERSPECTIVES ON  
LOSS & GRIEF

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# TRANSITIONS

A HOSPICE BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER

**Dear Friends of Hospice:**

It has now been several months since the death of your loved one. At times, it may still seem that you have no control over what is happening to you. Friends and family may offer support and advice but don't know what you need. You may also find that friends and family no longer contact you as frequently. This month, we are offering some suggestions for things you can do to retain and maintain your physical, emotional and spiritual health. I hope you will take a deep breath, get comfortable and consider these ideas.

Sincerely,

**The Bereavement Team**

Tabitha Hospice, A Collaboration with Immanuel

**TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF** →

Hopefully, this list will offer something that will be helpful to you and will encourage you to consider ways to regain your well-being and invest in your future.

Treat yourself with the same care and affection that you would offer to a good friend in the same situation. Most of us are aware of "Love Your Neighbor"; we often forget the part that says, "As You Love Yourself."

**Be Patient with Yourself**

- › Go gently. Your body, mind and heart need energy to mend.
- › Don't compare yourself to other bereaved people. It may seem that you aren't adjusting as well as they, but in reality, you don't know what's behind their public façade.
- › Throw away notions of a fixed period of mourning—six months or a year and then you're "over it." This is fiction. Grief takes time, whatever time it takes.
- › Accept the idea that you can't detour around grief. The journey is difficult, but there are caring guides and rest areas.

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Words of *Wisdom*

**"Now I know why you always told me to be strong. You knew that one day I would need the strength to bear your loss."**

*Author Unknown*

**"Never. We never lose our loved ones. They accompany us; they don't disappear from our lives. We are merely in different rooms."**

*Paulo Coelho*

▶ **Death of a Child**

The death of a child, at any age, is considered the most profound loss a person ever has to endure. When a child dies, parents feel that a part of them and their future has died also. Children are not supposed to die before their parents—it's against the "rules of nature." Parents often deal with extreme guilt: "Shouldn't I have kept my child safe and healthy?" Parents feel a complete loss of control.

Grief over a child's death can affect a couple's relationship. Since both are grieving, one is often emotionally incapable of providing support to the other. Because men and women grieve differently, one parent often misunderstands the way the other is handling grief, and this can cause difficulties.

For any type of loss, find someone who understands and is willing to listen—someone who has had a similar loss. Joining a support group is also very beneficial.

**OTHER RESOURCES** →

For additional support, please contact our Hospice Bereavement Team at 402.819.4949.

For additional reading materials, please contact The Centering Corporation at 866.218.0101 or [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)



**TABITHA**  
Hospice

A COLLABORATION  
WITH  
 Immanuel

### Accept Your Feelings

- › Feel what you feel. You don't choose your emotions; they choose you.
- › It's okay to cry. Crying makes you feel better.
- › Make a list of the things that are the most troubling to you. Identify those things that you can do something about. What things can someone else help with?
- › Thinking you are going crazy is a normal reaction. Most grieving people experience this. You are not losing your mind, only reacting to the death.
- › Have a conversation with your loved one. (It's not crazy to do that.)
- › Save time to grieve and time to face the grief. Don't throw yourself into your work or other activities that leave you no time for grieving.

### Ask For and Accept Help

- › Talk to others about your loved one.
- › Don't be afraid to ask for help from those close to you when you need it. So much hurt and pain go unheeded during grief because we don't want to bother anyone else with our problems. Wouldn't you want someone close to you to ask for help if they need it? Our family and friends can't read our minds.
- › Accept help and support when offered. It's okay to need comforting.
- › Join a support group. (No one wants to go, but nearly all who do are glad they did.)
- › Invite a friend to eat with you.
- › Don't isolate yourself.
- › Seek the help of a counselor or clergy if grief is unresolved.

### Be Good to Yourself

- › Get enough rest. Go to bed earlier.
- › Exercise every day. (No excuses; anyone can at least stretch.)
- › Don't try to escape with alcohol. It does not end the pain; it only masks it.
- › Make lists. (Forgetfulness is normal but adds to your stress.)

- › Take time out (put it on your list) to enjoy the beauty of a day (watch the neighbor children play, listen to your favorite music, etc.)
- › Think of a response to those who offer unhelpful advice ("Thank you for your concern, but I need to work this out in my own way.")
- › If faith issues are troubling you, schedule a visit with your clergy, talk with a trusted friend or look for books that address the problem.
- › Start a journal. Record memories, feelings, worries, things you cannot say out loud. Hopefully, when you reread it later, you will see that you are getting better.
- › Be aware of your physical health. Schedule a complete check-up.
- › If Sundays, holidays, etc., are especially difficult times, schedule activities into those time periods.
- › Treat yourself well.
- › Find ways to commemorate or honor your loved one (e.g., a memorial gift to an organization that was important to him/her, plant a tree.)
- › Read recommended books on grief. It helps to understand what you are going through.
- › Don't feel guilty if you have a good time. Your loved one would want you to be happy.
- › Plan things to which you can look forward—a trip, visit, lunch with a friend.
- › Trust yourself. Do what is right for you.

### Remember: Grief Takes Time

- › Do not have unrealistic expectations for yourself. Grief takes time. It comes and goes.
- › Remember, you will get better. Hold onto hope. Some days you just seem to exist, but better days will be back. You will develop a renewed sense of purpose gradually.

## THE UNIQUENESS OF GRIEF

### ▶ Death of a Parent

When a parent dies, you experience the loss in a number of ways. It represents the longest relationship you have ever had. Parents are your earliest teachers, and their wisdom and support are important to you even as you move on to your own adulthood with a career and family of your own.

Well-meaning friends and family may not acknowledge your loss as they inquire about how the surviving parent is doing. The surviving parent may require attention and care that you don't have the energy to provide. Your own family may not understand why you aren't like you used to be. Providing support and trying to meet everyone's needs may mean that you don't have time to work through your grief. Being a responsible, caring adult child is important, but you need to acknowledge your feelings and your limits.

### ▶ Death of a Partner

Everywhere you look, you see couples, and you are now a single. You feel uncomfortable doing things with other couples. The house seems so empty because your partner was always there. The two of you had hopes and dreams for your future and now those have been shattered. You may feel that you are no longer a whole person because your loved one was like a part of you. Even your identity and self-esteem may have been closely linked to that of your partner.

People who are grieving the loss of a partner often comment that they had no idea the pain could be so great or that it could last so long. One reason for this is that you have lost not only the person you love, but also your best friend, your lover, your parenting partner, traveling companion, your best critic, the person who planned the social calendar, your life partner, dinner companion, the one who shared most of your memories, and the person you could talk to.



**When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,  
see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid,  
promised walks  
never taken.**

**Great souls die and  
our reality, bound to  
them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls,  
dependent upon their  
nurture,  
now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed  
and informed by their  
radiance,  
fall away.  
We are not so much maddened  
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance  
of dark, cold  
caves.**

**And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.**

*Maya Angelou  
When Great Trees Fall*