

Living Through Mourning

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VOLUME NINE

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1

Redefine Yourself

(The camera lens can now focus on the complete picture)

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By Paivi M. Outinen, RN, LCSW



2

Enhancing the Meaning of Mourning

2-3

Grief/Bereavement Resources

The life force is amazing! Now that we are in the last phase of the grieving process, we look back and are surprised that there really is life after loss. As we live our daily life we notice that we can smile more, even laugh. We do not always tear up at the memory of the deceased. We might focus more on the happy times together rather than the pain of the separation. We have joy that we thought would never be possible again. We are looking for new direction for ourselves. We are in the process of redefining who we are beyond our loss.

The emotional energy that was directed towards the deceased now is re-invested in new relationships, ideas or things. For some it is a new start in a career. For some it might be getting involved in a hobby, cause, or a spiritual group that one had hoped someday to have more time for. Yet another might find a new love relationship. The deceased is not forgotten, but rather the relationship with the deceased is transformed. This transformed relationship is based on one's history and accepting the absence of the physical body of the deceased.

Guilty feelings are often part of a person's struggle to move into phase IV and to re-invest in life with pleasure. The

survivor feels guilty for having pleasurable experiences since the deceased cannot partake in those moments. This is often called "survivor guilt." One also feels disloyal to the deceased person and his/her memory.

Women particularly are vulnerable to feeling disloyal to their deceased spouse if they were to start dating again. Adult children might add to these feelings of guilt

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by questioning the survivor's loyalty to the deceased parent. The adult children might also be fearful of the surviving parent being taken advantage of in the midst of a vulnerable period. Guilt is a normal part of

continued on page 2

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Redefine Yourself *cont'd*

all grief processes, and it can and needs to be worked through before phase IV is complete.

Again any timeline set for reaching the final resolution of grief is an artificial one. Many people expect that the grieving should be complete after one year. Some researchers accept that one could accomplish the entire process in less than a year but most agree that a one- to two-

year period is most likely a more realistic expectation (Worden, 1982).

Whatever the time line is in your case is fine. Each individual has had a unique relationship with the deceased loved one and therefore will also have a unique grieving process. The sadness and pain of the loss will linger for many years but it will change over time. Life will transform into something different after the loss experience but it can be good in its different form. You will be different

because of the grief experience. I hope that you also will find your life rich and meaningful at the end of your grief. 

REFERENCES:

Canine, John D., Ed.D., Ph.D. The Psychological Aspects of Death and Dying. Stamford, Connecticut: Appleton & Lange, A Simon & Schuster Company, 1996.

Worden, J. William. Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, A handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 1982.

Enhancing the Meaning of Mourning

Mourning may be the most intense and painful experience of your life. Many people find that learning about grief, bereavement and mourning adds meaning to your experience, so we have gathered literature and other grief support resources for you.

We have a more extensive list on our website, www.bradleyfuneralhomes.com,

as well as at each of our funeral homes and the Center for Life Transition office. We are also very interested in hearing about your grief support resources so we can pass them on to others.

In addition, we encourage those who have "made it" through the bereavement process to volunteer their time to help others. The Center for Life Transition offers

such an opportunity with many different facets of volunteer service available, from providing personal bereavement support to managing social media to helping with administrative tasks. Please call (973) 665-1782 to find out how you can volunteer.

Below you will find a resource list of services, books, websites and more to help in your search for meaning and support.

Local Self Help and Counseling Support Resources

Center for Life Transition, Chatham
(973) 665-1782

American Red Cross, Summit
(908) 273-2076

Good Grief Support
(908) 522-1999

Family Services of Morris County,
Morristown
(973) 538-5260

First Call for Help
(800) 435-7555

Gay Helpline of NJ
(973) 285-1595

Jewish Family Service of Metro West
(973) 765-9050

Mental Health Association of
Morris County
(973) 377-0950

SAGE (Eldercare resource), Summit
(908) 273 -5550

Self-Help Clearinghouse of NJ
(800) 452-9790

United Way of Morris County
(973) 993-1160

Women's Resource Center, Summit
(908) 273-7253

Acadia House Center for Hope Hospice
(908) 654-3711

Catholic Charities
(908) 497-3900

Family and Children's Services
(908) 352-7474

Family Resource Center of Trinitas
Hospital (908) 276-2244

Jewish Family Service Agency (central
NJ) (908) 352-8375

Sauer House Center for Hope Hospice
(908) 889-7780

Unite Family and Children's Society
(908) 755-4848

Youth and Family Counseling Service
(908) 233-2042

Literary Resources on Children & Death

Fitzgerald, Helen. The Grieving Child: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends. New York, Simon & Shuster. 2000

Fitzgerald, Helen. The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide. New York, Simon & Shuster. 1992

Kremetz, Jill. How it Feels When A Parent Dies. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.

Wolfelt, Alan D. Ph.D., Healing the Bereaved Child: Grief Gardening, Growth Through Grief & Other Touchstones for Caregivers. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 1996.

General Grief & Bereavement

Bridges, William. *Transitions*. New York: Wesley Publishing Co., 1980

Doka, Kenneth J. Ph.D., ed. *Living with Grief After Sudden Loss*. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis, 1996

Lewis, C.S. *On Grief*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998

Kushner, Harold S. *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. New York: Avon Books, 1981

Doka, Kenneth J. Ph.D., and Davidson, Joyce D., eds. *Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve*. Washington D.C., Hospice Foundation of America, 1998

Grollman, Earl A., ed. *Concerning Death: A Practical Guide for the Living*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1974

Worden, J. William. *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner*. 2nd ed. New York: Springer Pub. Co., 1991

Grief/Bereavement Support Websites

www.good-grief.org

www.cancercare.org

www.compassionatefriends.org

www.depression.about.com

www.widownet.org

www.griefnet.org

www.grieving.com

www.groww.org

www.growthhouse.org/death.html

http://hospice-care.com

www.hospicenet.org/html/bereavement.html

www.kidshealth.org

www.ncptsd.org
(post-traumatic stress disorder)

www.partnershipforcaring.org

www.pomc.com
(parents of murdered children)

www.suicidology.org

Specialized Support Programs

Survivors of Suicide

Helps families and friends of suicide victims cope with the sorrow and tragedy. Free monthly newsletter. Write to: 3251 N. 78th St., Milwaukee, WI. 53222

Ray of Hope, Inc.

National suicide survivors organization providing peer support. P.O. Box 2323, Iowa City, IA. 52244

American Suicide Foundation

Newsletter and volunteer work available. 1045 Park Ave., New York, NY. 10028. 1-888-333-AFSP

The New Jersey Hospice Organization

Provides care and support for the terminally ill and their families. (908) 233-0060

American Cancer Society

Offers the following services; bereavement support, counseling referrals, and bereavement literature. Call 1-800-ACS-2345

Parents Without Partners

7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1000 Washington, D.C. 20014

Continuing Education Classes

It is never too late to learn something new.

College of St. Elizabeth-Convent Station (973) 290-4600

Summit Art Center, Summit (908) 273-9121

Fairleigh Dickinson University-Madison (973) 443-8500

Drew University Madison (973) 408-3000

County College of Morris-Randolph (973) 328-5000

Union County Community College (908) 789-7600

Kean University (908) 737-5326

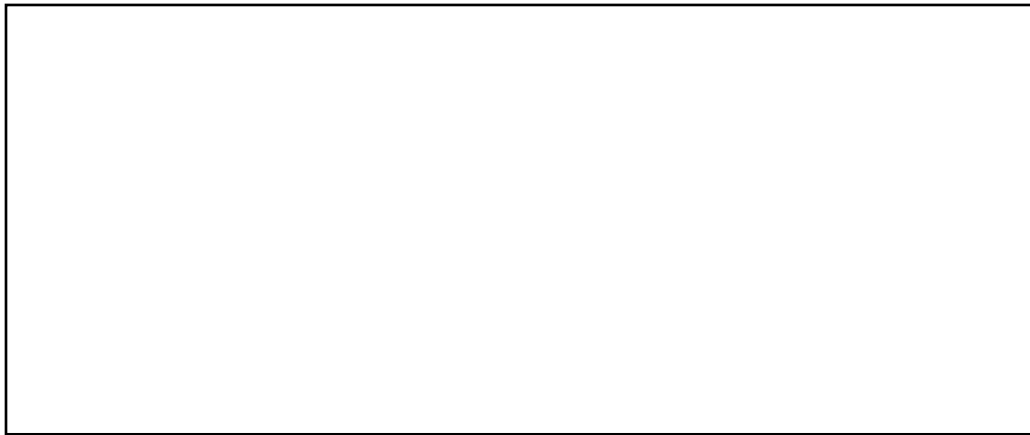
Dundean Studios, Chatham (art classes) (973) 635-0505

For a complete listing, please visit www.bradleyfuneralhomes.com.



"There are several reasons why people do not seek support, you may feel unsure about whether it will help you or you feel that you can "do this alone." Many people feel that they do not have time and that the problem will go away by itself. If you are reluctant to seek counseling for your grief please consider this: if you had an accident and broke your leg you would immediately go to the Emergency Room without hesitation, yet after the death of a loved one, your heart is broken and you expect to be able to "fix" this yourself."

Doreen Hall
Center for Life Transition



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Newsletter Feedback

"Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your kindness and help to us in saying goodbye my son. It means so much to know that we are not alone."

MC, Union NJ

Upcoming Issues

VOL. 10 Bereavement and Your
Physical Health

www.CenterforLifeTransition.com