

HOSPICE *of the* VALLEY  
*Bereavement Literature*

I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT YOU

Instead of letting go of our attachment as we grieve, we can make the mistake of grasping on to the deceased person even more strongly. Halfway through the second year after my husband's death, the cycles of intense pain and sadness were continuing, and I felt a fresh fear that my grief would never finish. Part of me wanted to ignore this intense pain returning month after month, to push it down and avoid it all together. Yet I suspected that repressing my own pain would not help in the long run either, so I decided to bring more awareness to my situation. I asked myself if I was doing anything that might be prolonging the mourning process.

Then I uncovered the secret thoughts I was generating each time I felt deep sadness and pain: I can't live without you. I hate being alone. I want you back. There was so much grasping in my mind, so many wishes that could never be satisfied! If I continued to think and feel this way, I realized, there would be no end to my grief and despair. It was clear that I needed to replace my grasping with a new way of thinking: I am letting you go and wishing you well. I am going to survive and be strong. I am going to make a new life for myself. When I felt the deep pain and sadness rising again, I began practicing letting go in this way. After a few months of taking this approach, my process of mourning finished.

– Christine Longaker, in *Facing Death and Finding Hope:  
A Guide To The Emotional and Spiritual Care Of The Dying*  
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