

IN TOUCH

HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2010

Social and Spiritual Reactions to Loss

SOCIAL REACTIONS

There are times when you would give anything to be with your loved one again, if only long enough to be relieved of your loneliness and reassured that your loved one is still a part of your life. At other times, you may feel a need for solitude, to withdraw temporarily from others and the pressures and decisions of daily life. This need to turn inward, to reflect on your loss, to get in touch with your innermost feelings, can be a helpful time for you to find your tears and figure out where you are going from here.

As a child, you may have learned that feelings should be buried and mourning should be done alone. Perhaps you never learned to accept or ask for help. As an adult, you may be too embarrassed or ashamed to let your emotions show in front of others, equating grief with self-indulgence or self-pity. You may feel isolated, different and apart from everyone else, convinced that no one understands. You may feel stunned at the normalcy of life around you as people go about their business, totally unaware that your world has stopped and your entire life has been turned upside down.

Some people you know may be done with your grieving long before you are, expecting you to be “over it by now” or worrying that you’re somehow “hanging on” to your grief. Uncomfortable with your strong feelings, they may change the subject or avoid any mention of your loved one’s name.

Suggestions for Coping with Loneliness & Isolation

- Think about who is supportive to you and the most accepting and caring with your grief. Look for those who will listen without judging you, or for those who have suffered a similar loss.

- Find time with others to talk, to touch, to receive support. Be honest about what you’re feeling. Allow yourself to express your sadness.
- Don’t expect others to guess what you need. When you want to be touched, held, hugged, listened to or pampered, say so.
- If all you want from others is help with simple errands, tasks and repairs, say so.
- Let others (especially children) know if and when you need to be alone, so they won’t feel rejected.
- Go somewhere and have a good, long cry—and do it as often as you wish. You have every right to miss the person who has died. Accept your feelings as normal.
- Identify your loneliest times, and think of ways to alter your routines and environment (for example, rearrange the furniture in a room; plan your weekends ahead of time; use your microwave for quick, easy meals).
- Realize that no one can totally understand the relationship you had with your loved one. Though well intentioned, things said to you may hurt.
- Ask people to remember, talk about and share stories about your loved one with you.

SPIRITUAL REACTIONS

Regardless of one’s identification or affiliation with an organized religion, spiritual doubts and questions may arise when a loved one dies. Suffering a major loss often leads us to confront and re-think our basic beliefs about God, religion, death and the afterlife. Some may turn to God as a source of strength and consolation at the time of a loved one’s death and find their faith has deepened. Others may question the religious teachings they’ve practiced all their

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

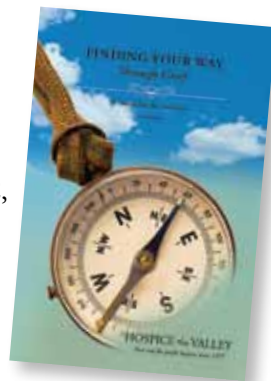
lives and find the very foundations of their beliefs shaken to the core. Even those who had no religious upbringing at all may feel abandoned by God or angry with God for “letting their loved one get sick and die.” Not all people respond to loss in the same way, and not everyone shares the same cultural, religious or spiritual beliefs about death and the afterlife.

Death forces us to confront the spiritual questions we may have been avoiding or haven't taken time to address, the questions that get at the very heart and meaning of life: Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?

Whether a strong religious faith will be a help or a hindrance in your recovery from grief depends on what you believe and how your beliefs are practiced. Like any other tool, religion can be used in healthy, appropriate ways, or it can be abused in unhealthy, inappropriate ways.

Religion can be a great antidote for the loneliness that accompanies every major loss, and it can be a source of strength and group support. What it cannot do is give us immunity from loss or give us back our lost loved ones—nor can it provide us with a shortcut through grief.

This is an excerpt from the book, *Finding Your Way through Grief: A Guide for the First Year*, Second Edition, by Marty Tousley, CNS-BC, FT ©2008. If you would like a copy of the entire book, please call the Bereavement Office: 602.530.6970.



Announcements

Space is limited for these special groups. Please register by calling 602.636.5390.

Mother's Day Remembrance

Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014
May 8, 1–3 p.m.

Father's Day Remembrance

Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014
June 19, 1–3 p.m.

Bereavement Services

Hospice of the Valley provides bereavement support for 13 months following the death of your loved one. Support groups throughout the Valley and grief counseling support are available. Information can be found at hov.org or by calling 602.530.6970.

Our online grief discussion groups are monitored by professional grief counselors and are privately administered to ensure the highest level of quality, safety and security for participants. Membership is free and simply requires that visitors register with a username and password of their own choosing. (On the hov.org home page, click on “We Offer Various Forms of Grief Support.” Scroll down until you see “On-Line Grief Healing Discussion Groups.” Once at the site, click on “Register” next to the “Welcome Guest” greeting at the top of the page, and follow the instructions there.)

Also on our Web site, you can view previous issues of Bereavement In Touch newsletters, as well as other information, including social groups, writings by the bereaved, available books and other resources.



Grief Support Groups (Adult Drop-In Groups, No Registration Needed)

APACHE JUNCTION

Horizon Bay
2080 S. Ironwood Dr.
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
9–10:30 a.m.

FOUNTAIN HILLS

Fountain Hills Senior Activity Center
13001 N. La Montana Dr.
Community Center
Meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday
10–11:30 a.m.

GILBERT

Hospice of the Valley
3489 S. Mercy Rd., Suite 101
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
6–7:30 p.m.

GOODYEAR

Hampton Inn & Suites
2000 N. Litchfield Rd.
(North of McDowell Rd., next to
Macaroni Grill)
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
6–7:30 p.m.

PHOENIX

Hospice of the Valley, Central Office
1510 E. Flower St.
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday
6:30–8 p.m.

The Stratford Assisted Living
1739 W. Myrtle Ave.
Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday
3–4:30 p.m.

MESA

LGBT Community*
Hospice of the Valley East Office
777 W. Southern Ave., Suite 301
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
6–7:30 p.m.

* Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Community

Hospice of the Valley East Office
777 W. Southern Ave., Suite 301
Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday
6–7:30 p.m.

Fellowship Square
6945 E. Main St., Building 4
Meets 1st and 3rd Monday
1–2:30 p.m.

NORTH PHOENIX

Paradise Valley Community Center
17402 N. 40th St.
Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday
6:30–8 p.m.

PEORIA – *New Location*

Hospice of the Valley, West Office
9435 W. Peoria Ave.
Meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday
2–3:30 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley, West Office
9435 W. Peoria Ave.
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday
6–7:30 p.m.

SCOTTSDALE

Scottsdale Senior Center
at Granite Reef
1700 N. Granite Reef Rd., Room 8
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
1:30–3 p.m.

Virginia G. Piper Center
10460 N. 92nd St.
Research Pavilion
1st Floor Group Room*
Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday
3–4:30 p.m.

* Note room change

SUN CITY

CIGNA Office Building
13041 N. Del Webb Blvd.
Classroom 2
Meets 1st and 3rd Monday
3–4:30 p.m.

SUN LAKES

Sun Lakes United Methodist Church
9248 E. Riggs Rd.
(North of Riggs Rd., 2 mi. East of I-10)
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday
1–2:30 p.m.

PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Hospice of the Valley
Admin. Office
1510 E. Flower St.
Meets 1st Saturday each month
9–11 a.m.

If the date of a meeting falls on a national holiday, please call to check whether the meeting will take place.

For bereavement support, please call 602.530.6970.



HOSPICE
of the VALLEY

1510 E. Flower St.

Phoenix, AZ

85014.5656

602.530.6900

Fax 530.6901

hov.org

info@hov.org

A not-for-profit organization

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO. 417



*It will never be the same.
I will never be the same.
You came.
We loved.
You left.
I will survive until I survive
And one day I will find
Myself alive again.*

*—From “How to Survive the Loss of Love”
Colgrove, Bloomfield, McWilliams*