



# IN TOUCH

HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2009

## 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

Continued on page 2

# Announcements

Continued from page 1

one's death and find their faith has deepened. Others may question the religious teachings they've practiced all their 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.



## Mother's Day Remembrance

Hospice of the Valley – **Scottsdale**

5111 N. Scottsdale Rd. #210, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

May 9, 1–3 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley – **East Valley**

777 W. Southern Ave., #301, Building C, Mesa, AZ 85210

May 9, 1–3 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley – **West Valley**

9720 W. Peoria Ave., #128, Peoria, AZ 85345

May 9, 1–3 p.m.

## Father's Day Remembrance

Hospice of the Valley – **Central Phoenix**

1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014

June 20, 1–3 p.m.

## New Chapters: After a Spouse or Partner has Died

Hospice of the Valley – **Central Phoenix**

1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014

June 6, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

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

# 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](http://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](http://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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday  
9–10:30 a.m.

\* formerly Merrill Gardens

## FOUNTAIN HILLS

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

## GILBERT

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

## GOODYEAR

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

## PHOENIX

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

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

## MESA

LGBT Community\*  
Hospice of the Valley East Office  
777 W. Southern Ave., Suite 301  
Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday  
6–7:30 p.m.

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

## NORTH PHOENIX

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

## PARADISE VALLEY

Valley Presbyterian Church  
6947 E. McDonald Dr.  
Circular Chapel (off McDonald)  
Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday  
6:30–8 p.m.

## PEORIA

Hospice of the Valley, West Office  
9720 W. Peoria Ave., Suite 128  
Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday  
2–3:30 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley, West Office  
9720 W. Peoria Ave., Suite 128  
Meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
6–7:30 p.m.

## SCOTTSDALE

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

Virginia G. Piper Center  
10460 N. 92<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Education Conference Room  
Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
3–4:30 p.m.

## SUN CITY

CIGNA Office Building  
13041 N. Del Webb Blvd.  
Classroom 2  
Meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
1–2:30 p.m.

## PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Hospice of the Valley  
Administrative Office  
1510 E. Flower St.  
Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday each month  
9–10:30 a.m.

**Please note:** If date of a group falls on a national holiday, please call to verify the group will be meeting.

**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

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*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 a Love"  
—Colgrove, Bloomfield, McWilliams