

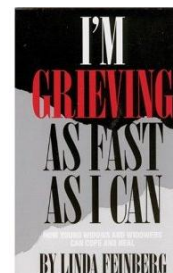
I'm Grieving As Fast As I Can - How Young Widows and Widowers Can Cope and Heal
By Linda Feinberg

Most books on grief generally place emphasis on two age groups - children and elderly adults. While such resources are legitimately needed and appreciated, it begs the question: *what about young people who experience loss and grief?* In her book, *I'm Grieving As Fast As I Can*, Linda Feinberg answers that question with a much needed book on the unique challenges young widows and widowers face during their grieving process.

From the very beginning, Feinberg notes a common thread of experience for anyone who has experienced a loss - "There are many ironies when somebody dies. The person you need most to help you through this experience is the person who died." (from the Introduction, ix) Drawing from her years of experience counseling young widows and widowers, Feinberg gives practical and empowering counsel on how to navigate through the process of grief and grow in ways that are healthy and productive.

I'm Grieving As Fast As I Can, as well as many other books, are available in Hospice of Hope's Bereavement Library located in both our Maysville and Mt. Orab offices. Anyone is welcome to check out a book during regular business hours. (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

I'm Grieving As Fast As I Can highlights the special circumstances of facing an unexpected and untimely death. The book is filled with real life stories of hundreds of young widows and widowers, who share their thoughts, feelings, and reflections about losing their loved one. Speaking from their own experiences, these widows and widowers provide sensitive guidance and support for others who have similar experiences. The book covers a variety of topics, such as highlighting the similarities and differences between men and women, the six kinds of guilt most commonly felt, returning to work, how to tell young children of a parent's death - even visiting the cemetery and socializing/dating. There is even a chapter that deals with the circumstances of a person's death, rightly emphasizing that *how* a person dies is important in the grief process.



I'm Grieving As Fast As I Can is an easy-to-read, practical, experience-based guide through the process of grief for young widowed people and is an excellent resource for this sometimes overlooked group.

Caring Matters

May ▲ 2011

Dispelling the Myths of Grief *By Peg Lynch, LSW, Community Services Facilitator*

Grief is a normal response to loss. To grieve our losses effectively, and to encourage others who are struggling, it is important to look at some typical myths about grief. Individuals who attend our grief support groups often talk about these myths and their negative affect on the grieving process.

Providing the facts and dispelling these myths will provide a better understanding of a typical grief response.

Myth Deny the pain of grief.
Fact To "stuff" or avoid the feelings of grief will likely cause a person problems eventually. For healing to occur, it is necessary to experience the pain and actively deal with it. Those grieving need encouragement from self and others to mourn.

Myth Tears expressing grief are a sign of weakness.
Fact Crying is a normal response to sadness. It is a natural way of releasing the stress and feelings of the sadness you are experiencing. Crying, however, is not the only response to sadness. Those who don't cry may feel the pain just as deeply, but have found other ways to show it.

Myth Grief is time limited.
Fact Grief has no specific timetable. The amount of time one grieves is unique to each individual. We do not get over grief, but we can learn to live with the loss and move forward without our loved ones.

Myth Moving on with your life means letting go or forgetting the person who died.
Fact Moving on is a sign of acceptance of our loss. That is not the same as forgetting. Maintaining connections to the deceased while creating a new life is indicative of healthy grieving.

If any of these responses to grief sound familiar, you may benefit from talking about these with others who have experienced a loss. Grief support groups are an excellent way to talk about these feelings. Knowing and understanding typical grief reactions assures you that you are not going "crazy", and listening to others with similar experiences can be very beneficial.



My Mother's Kitchen

By Stella Mazur Preda

walls whisper untold secrets
tired linoleum painfully scarred
creaking floor boards played
ominous tunes,
sinister and creepy
even as morning light tickled
window panes and frolicked with
shadows
best of all
that old kitchen floor tilted downhill
several inches
from one end
to the other

on hot summer days
hazy stagnant air
hung with the aroma of spices
and simmering sweet fruits
as mother boiled and bottled
homemade jams

Mother was at her best
in that crooked kitchen
where walls whispered
sunlight danced with shadows
and the old floor tilted
downhill

on cold winter nights
we roller-skated circles
up and down its slopes
worked up an appetite
for mother's old-fashioned
sugar cookies

Reading or writing poetry can be a creative tool to assist in the healing process of grief. If you have a poem that has been helpful to you, or written a poem as an expression of your grief journey, we would like to share it in Poetry Corner. Please submit by email to plynch@hohope.org or mail to Peg Lynch at Hospice of Hope Ohio Valley, 215 Hughes Blvd., Mt. Orab, OH 45154.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Hospice of Hope bereavement programs and support groups are free and open to the community.

Individual support is available. For more information, contact Peg Lynch at 800-928-4243.

6-week group for individuals who have lost a spouse

Beginning May 19, 2011
3:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Hospice of Hope Ohio Valley (Mt. Orab)

Beginning June 7, 2011
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Hospice of Hope (Maysville)

4-week group for individuals who have lost a loved one

Beginning August 4, 2011
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Hospice of Hope (Hillsboro)

Beginning August 9, 2011
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Hospice of Hope (Maysville)

Suicide Survivors ongoing group for individuals who have lost someone to suicide

Meets last Tuesday of every month

Hospice of Hope (Maysville)

A Balanced Diet: A Balanced You

By Melissa Roby, LSW, CHP-SW, Bereavement Care Liaison

Grief is our response to loss. Everyone experiences grief differently and our reaction depends on a range of individual factors. Unfortunately, many people fall into unhealthy patterns that keep them from progressing past their grief, which ultimately causes long-term health problems.

This is the time to take care of you and engage in a healthy lifestyle. We all know that eating a well-balanced diet, moderate exercise, and adequate rest is recommended for everyone. Individuals who are in the midst of the grieving process can benefit from incorporating even a few healthy tips into their daily routine.

The best action people can take for themselves while coping with grief is to find as many constructive, positive ways to deal with grief as possible. One way to manage grief positively is to maintain a healthy balanced diet. When coping with grief, individuals may find themselves craving chocolate, ice cream, and other less nutritious treats.



Research has shown that people coping with grief and depression often seek these foods to dampen the chronic stress the body experiences while grieving. The high-calorie, high-energy food tells the body it is fueled, and sends the signal that eases stress and relieves symptoms of depression. This is only a short-term solution. Seeking a "quick fix" in comfort foods rather than addressing the source of the grief can increase a person's risk of diabetes and heart disease. When the urge to soothe grief with food occurs, there are several alternatives such as exercise, yoga, meditation, writing in a journal or talking with a trusted friend about your feelings. These alternative activities have been shown to stimulate the same pleasure centers in the brain as comfort foods.

While there is no magic diet to cure grief, a diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy support mental well-being. Modifying and improving your diet is hard work. Balance your food choices over time. Not every food has to be perfect. If you do eat a food that is high in fat, sugar, or salt, select other foods that are low in these ingredients. If you miss any food group one day, make it up the next day. Your food choices over several days should fit together and develop into a healthy pattern. If you are hungry, eat - but make healthy choices and see the changes in your body, sense of well-being and grief symptoms.

Spirituality and Grief

By Donna Kasik, Chaplain

Spring is finally here, after a long, dark winter. Spring represents new life. The buds appear on the trees. The grass turns green. The flowers are in bloom. Everything in nature happens in its own appointed time and bursts with new life. As the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes says, "There is an appointed time for everything, and there is a time for every event under heaven." These times include a time to be born, and a time to die. We grieve death, even though we know it is a natural and inevitable part of all life. So while grass and flowers die each winter and come back to life in the Spring, perhaps we might contemplate our own mortal bodies, which die, but also come back to life in a more beautiful and perfect way. Ecclesiastes chapter three goes on to say that, "God has made everything appropriate for its time. He has also set eternity in their heart." While we mourn the loss of those we love, we also have hope in that rebirth that we see in nature each Spring, but not just in the grass and in the flowers, but in our parents, our grandparents, our spouses, our siblings, our children, our friends, and anyone else who has died. Life is eternal. We hold eternity in our hearts.

Many of us believe in life after death. Christians believe in Heaven and eternity with God in perfection. We live our lives in such a way as to reach that perfection, that eternal Spring and rebirth of our earthly bodies which inhabit our eternal souls. This Spring, what is one way we can live in that rhythm of eternal Spring and rebirth? Can we begin that journey here on earth? Perhaps we can live in that state of eternal Spring in our connection to one another through our memories and through loving each other and holding one another up like a new flower as we walk with others through our grief.

When we are connected to others, we naturally become better people. There is a parable about this connection, concerning Heaven and Hell that illustrates how we can help one another, and ourselves, through times of grief:

"Upon his death, a man was given a tour of both heaven and hell, so he could select his final destination. First, he was taken to hell. He saw a lot of people sitting at a long banquet table loaded with all kinds of delicious food. However, he noticed that all of the people seated were unhappy, and looked frustrated. They each had a fork strapped to the left arm and a knife strapped to the right arm. Each had a four-foot handle which made it impossible for them to eat. With all kinds of good food in front of them, they were unable to taste any of it. After this scene in hell, he was taken on a tour of heaven. He noticed that all the people in heaven were also seated at a long banquet table loaded with all kinds of delicious food. There was a difference here because he noticed that the people here were cheerful and enjoying themselves. They also had forks and knives with four-foot handles, but they were busy eating because they were feeding each other. Each person in heaven was feeding the one across the table from him and was being fed in return. The people in hell, on the other hand, were unable to eat because they were only feeding themselves."

Who are you feeding today? Who are you allowing to feed you? This Spring season, think about who you are feeding, and when you are feeling your own grief and need a helping hand, who are you allowing to feed you? While we long to see our loved ones in Heaven, until that time, try to live out Heaven here on earth.

Children's Grief

By Jessica Sanders, MSW, CSW, Bereavement Care Liaison

As we all experience grief in our own unique way, it is important to remember that each child will also have their own unique experience with grief. One child may feel things at a time when another does not. One child may remember, miss, and grieve the loss of his grandfather as he is stepping up to bat because his grandfather was always in the bleachers cheering him on. By simply being aware of your child's world and imagining things from their perspective, you may gain insight into how they're feeling and be better equipped to help them cope with the loss.

Encourage your child to share their grief with trusted family members and friends. Use the upcoming warm months to encourage your grieving child to express their grief in an open and safe environment. Outdoor activities, such as sports, gardening, and even yard work can provide an excellent physical outlet for the grieving child. Incorporating fun activities such as dancing, using sidewalk chalk to write a message to your loved one, flying a kite or releasing balloons in honor of your loved one, blowing bubbles, or making a friendship bracelet with yarn can all be creative ways to remember your loved one and help your child grieve.

As time passes, encourage your child to move forward.

The first year following a death is especially difficult.

It is a year of "firsts" - a first birthday, holiday, and first

day of school without their loved one. Keep as many

traditions as your family is comfortable with, but be

open to creating new ones. Keep in mind that as your

child grows, they may need to revisit their grief

experience and understand the death in more detail

as they mature. Take advantage of support groups

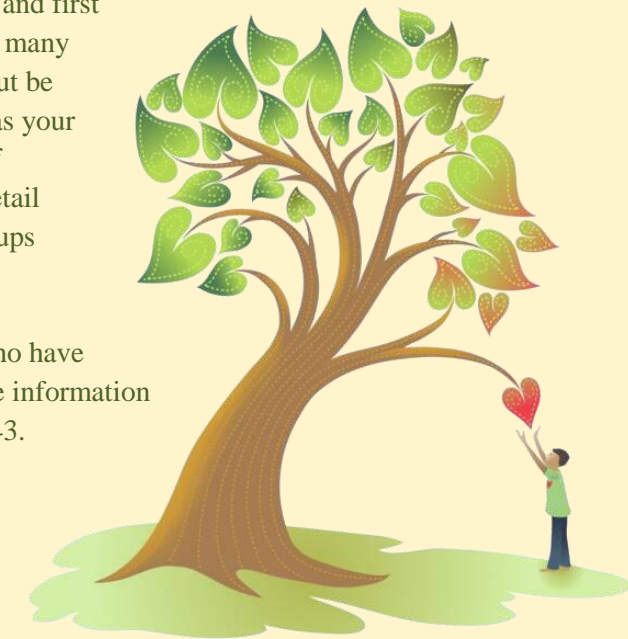
for children and families, as well as Hospice of

Hope's Mountain Pathway camp for children.

Children benefit from identifying with peers who have

also experienced a loss. If you would like more information

about our camp, call Peg Lynch at 800-928-4243.



Mountain Pathway

A Day Camp Experience for children 7-12 years old

August 8, 2011

Butler Springs Christian Camp & Retreat Center

For more information, call
Peg Lynch at 800-928-4243