

Celebrating 45 Years of HOPE

Our goal, in this 45th year, is to expand our support, services and outreach to the bereaved with emphasis on helping grieving youth, and to financially solidify HOPE for decades to come.

The purpose of this newsletter is to help those who have experienced the death of a loved one. Each month, we share information and ideas from bereaved people and professionals to help you through your grief journey. Please know you are not alone. HOPE is here to help you. To talk with a compassionate, caring professional, please call us today at 315-475-HOPE (4673).



This issue of the HOPELine Newsletter Is dedicated in Loving Memory of Westley Ayers Oct. 9, 1959 - Jan. 6, 2009 By Partner Walt S.

You will always be a part of my life because you will always live on in my heart. You were a very special part of my world in so many ways that I cannot even begin to tell you how much you meant to me. It is so hard to believe that it is fifteen years since you left this world, but not a day goes by that I don't think about you and miss you. You will never be forgotten.

“Pain becomes bearable when we are able to trust that it won't last forever, not when we pretend it doesn't exist”.

Share Your Story Underwriting ~ Opportunity

Do you have an article or story to share? We are always looking for articles that inspire *hope*, *help* and *comfort* to the bereaved.

Email us at: mail@hopeforbereaved.com

Each month, the HOPELine is sent to 1,200 families throughout Central New York and the United States. If you would like to underwrite the cost of the HOPELine for a specific month, please contact Pat Kriesel at HOPE at 315-475-HOPE (4673). It costs \$450 to underwrite the newsletter. Your donation will fund 100% of the expense of a newsletter for a month. You may include a special dedication to your loved one.

Thank you for supporting the HOPELine!

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How to Change Your Emotions Into Joy

By Nan Zastrow

When we are grieving, holidays can be a time of great anxiety, but it isn't just the holiday season that puts the griever at risk for emotional turmoil. Any social situation, event, or random interaction can quickly change a peaceful moment into one of great anxiety.

If you are aware of the triggers that cause the spontaneous eruption of emotions, you will be better prepared to meet and beat the unexpected. Not only can these tips help you prepare for holiday anxiety, they can easily apply to most of life's events.

1. Events can be emotional triggers

Most social interactions trigger "beware" emotions. Mentally, we begin to conjure up a multitude of concerns about what could go wrong and how uncomfortable it will be around other people who seem happy. Remember, events of all kinds, can only be avoided for a limited period of time. Eventually, we will need to face them, so it's probably better to do so from the beginning and avoid similar anxieties at the next event.

One way to face an occasion that you would prefer to ignore is to find a way to make it special or different. Doing so will alleviate some of the sad memories or discomfort that may surface because your loved one is not present.

After our son, Chad, died, we were invited to his best friends' wedding. We anticipated that it would be a very emotional time for us and thought we had self-talked ourselves into attending with a comfortable frame of mind. It wasn't until we greeted the bride and groom in the reception line, that we fell apart. Their joy in seeing us caught us unaware, and even best-laid plans faltered. Sometimes we can't anticipate the emotions that might overcome us until the exact moment that "grief burst" happens. If that becomes your experience, slip quietly away for a short period of respite. Regain your composure and find a way to "save the day." When the initial motion subsides, you will feel relieved and be able to find joy in the event.

2. Equip yourself for the unexpected.

Be prepared. These two small words carry a mighty lesson. In advance, talk about situations that might cause emotional distress. Such things may include: insensitive remarks and comments from well-meaning relatives or friends. Phrases such as, "He's in a better place," and questions that take you by surprise such as, "Are you done grieving yet?" haunt your sensibilities.

Shortly after Chad died, we decided to take a bus trip thinking we could mindlessly sit back and be entertained without having to think about much. What we didn't realize is that group vacations by bus encourage socialization with people you have never met before. We soon discovered that our social conversations with strangers focused around children, family and the weather. The same questions came up over and over again. We quickly prepared a set of short, simple responses to those inevitable questions. It helped us manage the conversations and still enjoy the trip.

3. Evaluate the appropriateness of family traditions

Families create traditions that evolve over many years and define special times in their lives. Whether it's a birthday, the Fourth of July or Christmas, it doesn't mean we can't change what we do based on the needs of family members and changing generations. Parents become elderly; children go to college or marry; families relocate. Life creates change. Sort out traditions and revitalize family events on a regular basis. Change or drop those that might be painful. Compromise, and create something new and exciting that speaks to the changing demographics of the family. Evaluating the need to continue to do something in a certain way can get everyone involved in creating new ideas and provide flexibility in adapting to life's natural change.

4. Eject, or dispel, the myths of grief.

Bereaved people receive all kinds of advice about what you should do and what you should not do after the death of a loved one. Most "advice" is based on the myths of grief or on hearsay. Never make decisions based on someone else's experience. This loss is **your** experience, and it's new to you. You have the right to form your own opinions.

5. Easy—in other words, simplify

Typically, holidays are a time of overdoing. We accelerate our activities and sabotage our energy in our efforts make the holidays perfect. Take a break. Let someone else coordinate the master plan; step back and take it easy for once. You can always bake cookies and send cards next year. Do only what is comfortable for you. You'll find the days can be just as enjoyable. If you feel more relaxed and aren't stressed by recreating the "perfect" holiday, everyone else will feel the same. Simplify. It could become a new and better way of doing things.

We changed the way we celebrate many of our special days and found that they have been just as enjoyable. We aren't tied to overdoing, over-spending, and over-emphasizing the importance of "things." As a family, we connect better with each other by sharing the tasks and finding time to enjoy each other's presence.

Continued on page 3

6. Escape to the sanctuary you call home.

If grief is new, or you are having a difficult time at a particular event, have an escape pre-planned. Face it, some days are just more emotional than others, and sometimes we just need to get away. In most cases, "home" is our sanctuary. While most of our family and friends are sensitive enough to respect our needs for "time alone" or privacy, we need to be prepared to execute our escape plan when necessary.

Talk to others about the possibility of "leaving early," if necessary. Escape by driving your own car; don't depend on someone else to be ready to leave when you are. As you become more comfortable around others, these escape clauses become less important.

Our family knew our escape clause well in advance. We once owned a hobby farm, and we had a dozen built-in excuses for going home!

7. Eat Crow---if you have to. Your perspectives may change.

In our "tradition" years, we all made statements about things we would never change or do, because it seemed more acceptable to family or friends. But grief has a way of altering our life perspectives. We accept the wisdom of other people's choices when they choose to change how something is done. Maybe you need to announce that this year, or for this event, you choose not to attend because "you made other plans." After all, Aunt Patty missed it last year! Eat crow and accept that things change. No one will even notice bits of feathers on your lips.

8. Eclectic—Mix it up...be unpredictable.

Maybe you are the one who has always been predictable. You've done it "this way" for years. Step out of the box and mix it up a bit. It's time to change predictable into spontaneous. Instead of a home-baked dinner, order pizza. Instead of china, serve dinner on paper plates. Exchange gifts on Easter or have a pool party at a water-slide resort instead of the beach. It's okay to keep some of your traditions, but keep your family and friends guessing by adding something new that gets everyone talking and more easily adaptable to change!

We've found enjoyable times around the campfire telling stories, or throwing brats and burgers on the grill on a moment's notice. It's fun to pick up a small gift for no occasion at all, just because it "suits" you. Theme parties or game nights are a great way to put business aside and just go for fun. These moments, even during grief, pave the road to healing.

9. Ego—let go of your ego (meaning "you" as the center of attention).

Everyone has some kind of hurt that needs special attention, and grief may have made you and your family the focus of all kinds of special attention for a while. At work, you've probably received extra consideration; family and friends have supported you by listening and helping you in whatever ways they could. You've appreciated it and taken it all in, but be careful to not let your ego (your "all about me" attitude) take over your life.

The road to healing grief is long, but you are the only one who can really make the kind of choices that will allow you to return to a "new normal" and move on. Living again is about releasing yourself from the hold that grief has on your entire being. It means getting in touch with who you are now and who you can become because of your loss. It can be a new beginning and a turning point.

Grieve for as long as you need to, but at some point find the courage to release yourself from all that holds you back. Grief is normal and natural. It's a part of life and like every other obstacle requires a plan to overcome it.

10. Exhale—every social event comes to an end.

We all know the feeling of "it's over" and the release of tension is welcomed. If you keep that thought in mind... that every social encounter will come to an end, you can endure the anxious moments along the way. It's time to EXHALE and be grateful for loving family and friends who were there for you and were able to enter into your world of grief.

If you have negative emotions, try to make peace with them by proper planning, compromise and an outlook that can get you through the difficult moments. Remember you "own" your feelings and have control over them. It's up to you to let go and experience the joy that can come with surrender. It's possible to honor memories and create new ones that can carry you through. You don't have to pretend to enjoy every moment, but if a pleasant moment or two slip in, find the joy!

" Let's enter joyfully into this time that blends the best of yesterday's memories with our brightest dreams for tomorrow."



January 2024

From the Director

Dear Friends,

The arrival of the new year symbolizes not only a new chapter for HOPE, but a potential for growth. Our staff and volunteers are embracing the chance to create transformative experiences for individuals navigating grief, offering them support and solace. In the upcoming year, we will expand our support into Dementia/Alzheimer's and violent crimes. HOPE will also be offering additional community resources, workshops, and panels. HOPE for Bereaved stands poised to build upon its legacy of compassion and create lasting positive change for those grieving. I'm so grateful to be on this journey with you!

With a thankful heart ~ Kelly Ocampo

Special Thanks to.....

John & Robin Katko and Dan & Danielle Cummings for serving as Community Co-Chairs for the Celebration.

Housel Dermatology, B&B Lumber, Bond, Schoeneck, & King with Brian & Ann Hayes, Excellus BCBS, Tom & Kathy Powers, Syracuse Blueprint, John & Rockette Brunetti, and Nascentia Healthcare for sponsoring the event.



Peg Card, Margie Nye, & Therese Schoeneck for serving as the Celebration event chairs.

The Celebration Committee for working long days and nights. The 45th Celebration of HOPE would not have been possible without you!

HOPE's staff & volunteers for helping throughout the process and keeping our clients front and center.

All who donated items for the online auction.

Congratulations to our honorees - the hard-working, dedicated, volunteers that keep HOPE running.



Thank you to Walt Stein, Kelly Ocampo, Jeff & Karen, Sandy Vitagliano, Deb Lane, Ruth Shirley, Kathy Spencer, Julie Corn, and Leslie Conway for being on the panels for our annual **"Coping With the Holidays"** programs. Thank you to St. Matthews Episcopal Church and All Saints Church for hosting HOPE, and Safe Harbor Wills & Trust for sponsoring one of the evenings.

Big thanks to Gracie and Linda for sharing a story of HOPE for our Year End Appeal. Thank you to all who have donated to this appeal but..... if you have not yet responded-there's still time!













Please keep Therese Schoeneck, Bob Kriesel, Bob Schuster, Christy Dannible, Kathy Spencer, Christine Hart, Lanie Moses, Kevan and all our medical, front line workers and their families in your prayers for good health .



Hope
For
Youth



Dear Friends,

Many people make New Year's resolutions . This is when a lot of us make promises to ourselves, such as exercising more , eating healthier , or setting goals.  We can also make resolutions while on our grief journey! ? Since a resolution is made to make our lives better, we can do the same thing to honor our loved one who died.  For example, we can resolve to do more things with friends and loved ones who are still living.  We might make a plan to do things to remember our loved one, such as drawing a picture,  or making a card. Think of a few resolutions you can do to help make you  better, and you will grow healthier  and closer to your loved one! LOVE, MARK ✱



Dear Friends,

Vol 2 #10 1/2024

We approach a new year as we journey through grief. The Roman god Janus was known as “The God of Doors”. He is depicted with two faces, one looking back, and one looking forward. January is named after this Roman god, and thus we eventually developed the tradition of making New Year’s resolutions. This is when we reflect upon our lives and make plans to improve ourselves in the coming year. This can also be an important part of our grief journey as we deal with the death of our loved one (past), and strive to make our lives better (future).

Following are some New Year’s resolutions we might consider in our sorrow:

- I resolve to allow myself to grieve.* I can experience good days as well as bad. Although difficult times are a necessary part of the healing process, I will allow the flood of pain and episodes of relief to happen.
- I resolve to share my grief with others.* It is OK to reach out to people (and organizations such as Hope) in order to find help to ease my pain. Allowing others to assist me in my journey is not a weakness, but a sign of strength.
- I resolve to be kind to myself as I find ways to cope.* I will comfort myself as I heal. I recall that sadness, anger, confusion, and many unpleasant feelings are a necessary part of grief. As I lean into my feelings as a vital part of overcoming my grief, I will continue to experience things that ease my pain.

There are many more resolutions we can develop to enhance our potential. These can promote virtues of forgiveness and thanks as we can grow closer to our deceased loved one, and in turn find more fulfillment in our lives!

Take Care, -Mark

Please forward your questions, comments, and ideas to mail@hopeforbereaved.com

New Year's Resolutions for the Bereaved

By Tanya Lord

- ◆ Not put a time limit on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my life time whether they are physically here or not.
- ◆ Tell their stories, the happy & the sad, they will live on thru me.
- ◆ Encourage others to share memories
- ◆ Teach others that they cannot “make” me cry, tears are only an external expression of how I am feeling all the time.
- ◆ Understand that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy & normal. “Doing well” means expressing my feelings.
- ◆ Understand that others will not understand my pain & it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen.
- ◆ Recognize that asking for help from those that love us is really a gift that we give them.
- ◆ Help others, reaching out to others in pain will help me heal.
- ◆ Do something nice for myself every day.
- ◆ Know that if today I can not do everything that needs to be done, tomorrow is another chance to get it done.
- ◆ Cry when I need to, laugh when I can and to not feel guilty about either one.
- ◆ Let go, bit by bit, of the guilt, regret & anger because I know holding on to these emotions can be so damaging.
- ◆ Take a risk & let others into your life & heart.
- ◆ Take care of my physical, emotional & spiritual health



SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

TIME 6:30 to 8:30 PM

1st & 3rd Tues. Jan. 2nd & 16th Death By Drug Overdose

1st Wed. Jan 3rd. HOPE for Widows/Widowers, Engaged & Significant Others

2nd Tues. Jan. 9th HOPE For Family & Friends

2nd & 4th Wed. Jan.. 10th & 24th Survivors of Suicide

3rd Weds. Jan. 17th. Bereaved Parents & Infant, Newborn, Miscarriage Death

Other Support Group Meeting Times

3rd Wed Jan. 17th. 10am to noon (seniors)

**DAYTIME GROUP FOR WIDOWS/
WIDOWERS**

Masks are optional

Meetings are held at HOPE's Center,
4500 Onondaga Blvd. Syracuse

All meetings held at HOPE's Center are in person & by ZOOM.

One-on-one counseling- Call HOPE (315) 475-4673 (HOPE) for an appointment. Can be done in person or by phone. No charge for counseling, but donations are welcome.

If you would like to help collate the HOPEline newsletter & spend time with friends it is held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, 9am to 11am

HOPE for bereaved

As you journey from grief to HOPE

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January 2024



There is Another Side of Grief

Where the tears still flow
Not as often
Where memories bring smiles
Not just sadness
Where blessings are recognized
Not just struggles
Where joy and peace are present
Not just sorrow
Where you are remembered
Not just mourned

