



FAITH & HOPE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

JOIN OUR CIRCLE OF CARE

*Epilogue*

Bereavement Newsletter

March/April 2019

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### Starting the Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of *Epilogue*, the bi-monthly bereavement newsletter from Faith and Hope Hospice & Palliative Care. In this publication we will provide information about grief and grief-related topics, as well as movie and book recommendations. We will also have special feature articles, like Recipes from the Heart which provides a story and a recipe that connects us to someone that we've lost. This newsletter will also provide a comprehensive list of upcoming events, like bereavement support groups and the annual memorial service. We look forward to providing you with this newsletter as we continue to expand the bereavement services that we offer to our clients and to our community at large.

### Book Recommendation

**It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand**, by Megan Devine

Devine is a licensed counselor with nearly 20 years of clinical experience. She shares candid personal experiences of loss and grief as well as professional expertise to redefine grief as a natural, normal response to loss instead of a disease to be cured, as it is often portrayed. She states that, "grief is simply love in its most wild and painful form." Instead of gimmicks and clichés, Devine offers understanding, compassion, and survival skills. This is an excellent resource for people grieving and the people who love them by offering concrete advice on how to comfort ourselves and others throughout the grief journey. Topics include personal stories, clinical research, and mindfulness exercises, among others. In this book, Devine achieves her goal to provide "grief support that doesn't suck."

Published 2017; ISBN: 978-1622039074

## Coming Soon

Faith and Hope Hospice is seeking to expand the grief support services we offer to include support groups and workshops, which will be led by a masters-level social worker, trained volunteers, and may occasionally host a guest speaker. We want to ensure that the services we provide match the needs of our clients. To do this we have made a survey to better understand the interests of our clients and community as well as determine the best times and locations to host these events.

We greatly appreciate your feedback and look forward to expanding the services available to you.

All groups and workshops will be offered as part of the bereavement services provided at no cost to the family and friends of our hospice patients. Other members of the community are welcome to participate as well, but may have a small charge to cover cost of materials. However, no one will be turned away for an inability to pay.

You can participate by completing the online survey that should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You can access the survey by scanning the QR Code below or visiting the website:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QXVBG5S>



## About Your Bereavement Services Coordinator

I recently joined the Faith and Hope Hospice team after moving to Southern CA from Denver, CO in December 2018. I have worked in hospice and palliative care since a college internship. I got lucky and found my calling early in life, and I've now been working in this field for more than 12 years. I can't imagine doing anything else.

I graduated from Baylor University with a master's degree in social work and hold a Post-MSW Palliative Care Certificate from California State University San Marcos as well as an advanced certification in hospice and palliative social work. I enjoy teaching and have led numerous trainings and presented at local and national conferences. I'm also a self-proclaimed coffee aficionado.

Beyond the professional experience, I was first introduced to hospice when my grandmother died from pancreatic cancer. I saw what a benefit hospice was for her and my family as a whole, especially the bereavement support that we received afterwards. In 2010, I was diagnosed with Stage IV Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. After several years of chemo, I was cancer free and have been in remission since then. That was admittedly a horrible period that I would never want to repeat, but I use my experience to inform my work today.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to join Faith and Hope Hospice in improving the bereavement support that we offer to our clients and community. We have several projects underway and will announce new services in coming issues of this newsletter.

*- Reid*

Reid Jacobs, ACHP-SW, MSW  
Bereavement Services Coordinator



## Grief Explored: What Stages of Grief?

The concept of grief having stages first became popular in American culture after Dr. Kübler-Ross published the book *On Death and Dying* in 1969. She outlined five stages of grief that people facing loss experience: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, & Acceptance. Her work was important and has had a profound influence on our understanding of death, dying, and grief. Unfortunately, her work has also been misunderstood and misapplied over the years. You see, her research was conducted with people who were dying and not the people grieving their death. Also, not everyone faces all of these stages, and we don't always progress cleanly from one stage to the next. We may bounce back and forth through several of them as our grief progresses. A person may also experience grief that doesn't fall into one of the five stages

For example, someone may experience a sense of joy when a loved one dies, especially if the death is seen as an end to the suffering caused by a catastrophic illness. Some people even report a complete lack of emotion, or what's sometimes called emotional numbness. This numbness is especially common in the days and weeks following a death.

Feeling joy or a lack of emotion doesn't mean that someone doesn't miss the person who died. Rather, their grief is showing up in a way that is beyond the scope of the five stages that we have become accustomed to.

There is no right way to grieve. There is no timeframe for grief. Each of us will have a different journey. Many people will experience some or all of the various stages of grief, but not everyone. And that's okay.

### Afterglow

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.

I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.

I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,

Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.

I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun;

Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

-Author Unknown

## Bereavement Services Available

In addition to the Bereavement Newsletter and our periodic mailings, Faith & Hope Hospice can also provide:

- Resources via email
- Phone-based support
- In-person counseling for individuals and families

Contact Reid at **818-559-1460** or email him at **[reid@faithandhopehospice.com](mailto:reid@faithandhopehospice.com)** to request these additional services.

Sleep disturbance, such as difficulty getting to sleep or waking multiple times during the night, are common components of grief. The majority of those grieving the death of someone important to them will experience sleep disturbance during some part of their grief journey. Unfortunately, the effects of lost sleep can be profound and can complicate the grieving process itself. Sleep disturbance affects people on many levels. For example, lost sleep can make it difficult to think clearly, make decisions, increase stress, and impair memory. It can also worsen existing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD, while also increasing the risk of new or worsened conditions like diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Researchers have found that ongoing insomnia can even weaken the immune system.

So, what to do about this component of grief? There are some basic tricks that can help anyone suffering from sleep disturbance. These are commonly referred to as *sleep hygiene*.

Sleep hygiene is a series of habits that facilitate restful sleep. These habits are good practice for everyone, grieving or not. There are, however, some unique issues that affect someone who is grieving.

For example, someone who's lost their spouse or sleeping partner may find sleeping in an empty bed difficult. It can become a constant reminder of the person who has died and the grief that this triggers. These people may find some benefit from using a body pillow or letting a pet sleep on the bed. (No, there is no replacing a loved one, especially with a pet or inanimate object, but it can

resemble the physical sensation that one has become accustomed to.) Sleeping on a spare bed or on the couch while the body adjusts are also good options to try.

Some people choose to use sleep aids such as prescription and over the counter medications, as well as herbs and supplements. Caution should be exercised when doing this. Some medications like Benadryl (diphenhydramine) can cause drowsiness that helps one get to sleep, but it can interfere with the sleep cycle. This results in less actual rest and decreases the restorative / rejuvenating aspects of sleep, leaving one feeling tired and not rested the following morning. Herbs like valerian root and chamomile are effective for many. The supplement 5-HTP is also used, though there is limited clinical evidence to support its effectiveness. Melatonin can be helpful for those who's sleep/wake cycle is off (sleeping in the day, awake at night).

Before starting any of these sleep aids, you should talk to your doctor, especially if you take medications or have existing medical conditions. Be sure to tell your doctor about your grief and how it may be impacting your sleep.

For more information about sleep hygiene, check out these websites:

- <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene>
- <https://www.tuck.com/sleep-hygiene/>
- <http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/getting/overcoming/tips>

*In the next issue of Epilogue, we will cover other ways to help with sleep, like mindfulness meditation and guided imagery, and more.*



## Movie Recommendation

**Collateral Beauty** (2016) PG-13, 1h 37min;  
*Drama, Romance*

Starring: Will Smith, Edward Norton, Kate Winslet, Helen Mirren, Naomie Harris, Keira Knightley

Successful New York advertising executive, Howard Inlet, retreats from life after the tragic death of his young daughter. His concerned friends fear for Howard's mental health as well as their company's future, as his behavior has

cost them numerous high-profile clients leaving them on the verge of bankruptcy. They desperately try to reconnect with Howard.

He seeks answers from the universe by writing letters to Love, Time and Death. But it's not until his notes bring unexpected personal responses that he begins to understand how these constants interlock in a life fully lived, and how even the deepest loss can reveal moments of meaning and beauty.

### Music Therapy Bereavement Group

Join us at our Pasadena office for a music therapy group, led by our board-certified music therapist, Rene Torres. Music therapy can help express mourning, address the emotions of grief, and help overall coping.

This three week group will meet at 2:00pm on Saturdays April 6, 13, and 20.

Please RSVP at 818-559-1460 by March 29 as seating is limited.

### Sleep Hygiene Basics

**Sleep in a cool room:** Keep the room at a cool, comfortable temperature, around 60° - 65°; Too hot or too cold can make it difficult to sleep.

**Dark/Dim room:** sleeping in a dark room helps with the circadian rhythm. Be aware that some clocks, phone chargers, and other electronics may produce enough light to interfere with sleep.

**Food:** Avoid heavy, rich, spicy and acidic foods in the evenings. These can cause stomach upset that can affect sleep.

**Regular sleep schedule:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday, including weekends. This helps train your body to sleep at certain times and avoids rebound effects on the weekends.

**Use the bed only for sleep and sex:** Avoid using electronic devices or watching tv in bed. If you work from home, don't work in the bedroom. Keeping these boundaries trains your brain to think of the bedroom as a place of rest.

**Alcohol & Stimulants:** Avoid coffee, caffeinated beverages, alcohol, and tobacco in the afternoon and evenings. These can make it difficult to sleep and affect the quality of sleep you do get.

## Recipes from the Heart

*Recipes hold a special place in the heart. They can be family heirlooms, passed down for generations or something whipped-up on a whim that remind us of someone we love. A recipe can recall memories of special occasions or comfort food for rotten days. In this article, we share recipes and stories of foods that hold special significance for us. If you would like to share your own recipe and story, call the office at 818-559-1460 or email it to [reid@faithandhopehospice.com](mailto:reid@faithandhopehospice.com)*

My best friend Karrie lost her mom to cancer in 2005. Her mom, or Bird as she was normally called, was known for her homemade yeast rolls. They were something special that she made during the winter holidays. But she never taught anyone else how to make them. A few years ago, Karrie and I were sorting through Bird's recipe box and unexpectedly found the recipe for the rolls. Karrie and I had never baked anything with yeast, but knew we had to give it a try. We weren't sure how they would turn out because some of Bird's measurements were... less than precise. Still, Karrie would know if the rolls were right with one bite. We immediately went to the grocery store to get the necessary ingredients and hurried home to make a batch.

We should have known something was wrong when the yeast made just

four or five bubbles in the proofing stage.

After combining all the ingredients and allowing the dough to rise for an hour, our hearts sank at the sight of a sad lump of dough that had not doubled in size. If anything, it shrank. We didn't know what went wrong. Still, we baked the rolls anyway. To no one's surprise the rolls were inedible bricks. We double-checked the recipe, but found we'd followed it exactly. Feeling deflated, Karrie called her aunt for some baking advice. She quickly identified the problem. You see, the recipe said to dissolve the yeast in warm water. We mixed the yeast into the water and then popped it into the microwave to warm it. As it turns out, yeast doesn't like being microwaved.

So, we made a second batch and it came out great. Now these rolls remind us of Bird and the fun we had trying to replicate her recipe. We also have the proper measurements in the final recipe.

### Bird's Rolls

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup scalded milk**
- 2 teaspoon salt**
- 3/4 cup honey**
- 4 packages of yeast dissolved in 1/2 warm water**
- 1 cup cold milk**
- 4 eggs**
- 8 cups flour (4 white, 4 wheat)**

- In a large mixing bowl, combine scalded milk, salt, honey, and yeast/water mixture. Allow time for yeast to proof.
- Mix in the cold milk, eggs, and flour. Mix well until dough ball forms. Turn out dough onto flat surface and knead, adding flour as needed. Cover dough in mixing bowl and let rise until double. Punch down the dough, shape into rolls, and let rise again.
- Bake at 350° for 20 minutes.

## Journaling

Grief can bring up a world of emotion that can be difficult to express. You may find yourself withdrawing or trying to put on a happy face for those around you. Sometimes we don't have anyone to talk to or who we feel comfortable sharing the intimate feelings that often come along with grief. Keeping these feelings bottled-up inside can become an unhealthy coping mechanism though. To paraphrase Shakespeare, grief that does not speak builds up to break the heart. Journaling helps release these emotions so that they don't build up and over time. Journaling can also help us better understand our experiences and make sense of what we go through after losing someone important to us. You can also look back over the journals to see how you develop and grow over time. There may be times that you feel stuck in your grief, but reading over old journal entries may allow you to see how your thoughts and emotions have changed over time.

Here are a few journaling tips to get you started.

- 1. Keep it brief.** Write for only 10-15 minutes, or something that is more comfortable for you so that it doesn't feel like an overwhelming chore.
- 2. Don't worry about spelling or grammar.** Your middle school English teacher won't be checking this. It's just for

you. And I'll tell the grammar police to give you a pass if they happen to show up.

### **3. Write what is on your mind or use journaling prompts to get started.**

You can find journaling books full of prompts or you can do a quick internet search of "grief journaling prompts." Here are a few to get you started:

The greatest lesson you taught me was...

I think of you when...

You made me laugh when you...

How loving you has changed me...

**4. Try using pen and paper.** There is something about writing out your journal by hand that helps process more. You'll also be less likely to get bogged down by autocorrect or email alerts. You can even get a special notebook and pen just for journaling. That being said, don't feel like you must use pen and paper. If writing on a computer or mobile device works better for you, use that instead.

**5. Keep your journal with you so that you can write if inspiration or emotion hits you while you're away from home.** Consider using an app like Journey or Day One if you're concerned about misplacing your journal or worried about someone else reading your private thoughts.

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.

-Washington Irving

(Attributed)

*The Bereavement Newsletter is free resource made available for 12 months to the family and friends our hospice patients, and to the community at large.*

*If you would prefer to no longer receive this newsletter or if you would like to receive it beyond 12 months, please contact us at 818-559-1460 to update your preferences.*



FAITH & HOPE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

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Faith and Hope Hospice & Palliative Care is a family-owned company based in Pasadena, CA. We are a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and accredited by The Joint Commission.

Faith & Hope was established in 2007 primarily due to a personal experience its' founders have had.

Meeting our patient's psycho-social needs is our priority. We provide comfort care in the home environment using a holistic approach to individuals facing terminal illness and their families.



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