

The LIGHTHOUSE



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Reflections

As I write, I am outside soaking in the sunshine and absorbing the beauty of spring in full bloom. My favorite oasis is the hammock hung between two trees in the hedgerow. As I slowly swing, I look up and see tiny golden maple leaves edged with winged red seedlings, dancing against an azure sky. Beyond are silvered ash tree branches bending in the wind. The Bradford pear, given in David's memory, is flowering, higher than the house. All around me is a glimpse of heaven. Seven years ago on May 22nd. Davey left his frail body and entered into eternal life. I wept as I drove to Rick's house to break the news. I remember standing by the creek with my grandson Jake; then 8 years old. I told him how on the trip over I saw Dave in my mind clearly. Blue eyes looked right at me; a wide smile lit up Dave's face. A Mom, I've got my new body!" Health and joy radiated from my son. "This is who I am!" he said.

Jake listened intently. "He's in heaven, Gram." Tears came. I'm sure gonna miss him. But tonight I'll sing for Uncle Dave."

When the third grade chorus lifted sweet voices to sing "Like An Eagle," the words brought comfort.

"And now is the time, now and farewell. As we part, you taught me well. You gave me strength, you showed the way..."

Like an eagle, I will race above the stars,
I will fly to places yet unseen,
Go beyond my wildest dream,
Know that you are watching over me."

Yes, there are bittersweet anniversaries that bring sharp pangs of missing our beloved children: In this edition of "The Lighthouse" you'll find stories, poems, and articles that will guide you along the journey of grief. Yours may be a recent loss; there's information on how to communicate with our unaffected children. May you find comfort in knowing we are on this journey together.

Peace and Joy, Connie Jackson

Sharon Kortas found that expressing her grief in poetry helped release anxiety. Here she explains this in a foreword to a booklet

This booklet of poetry is compiled with families, friends and all those associated with Batten Disease in mind. It is a record in poetry, of the journey we faced with our child, from the onset of the disease, to diagnosis, and deterioration to the end of her life.

My story is not a typical one, in that my child had not one, but two genetic/chromosomal afflictions.

Michelle was born on 29th March 1991, with Down Syndrome and a major AV Canal heart defect which was successfully operated on when she was 2 years old. After heart surgery, her health improved dramatically; she learned to walk, sign, and even say a few words. She could climb, turn pages of books, and play with her sister. She loved music, Barney, the keyboard and duplo blocks. At the age of 3, she developed epilepsy and gradually her development deteriorated.

Michelle was diagnosed in May 1996 as having Late Infantile Batten Disease. At the same time we were told our 11-month-old baby, could also have the disease. Six months later, Michelle's life ended.

WORD

A very special friend I have, his given
name is 'Word',
I put him into poems, stories:
have you ever heard
Of Word? He is my teacher, and
my therapist as well,
But that's not all he does for me-
there is much more to tell!
When he is in a poem, then he's truly powerful
And when he's in a story,
he is simply masterful-
Of the is in a song, and is sweet music

to my ears;
Whenever he is anywhere,
he takes away my fears,
He helps me see what's going on,
he helps me find a way;
He guides me through the worst of things,
in any given day.
One day please come to meet him,
I will share my friend with you;
He's very therapeutic, when my life
has gone askew.
So openly I thank him, as he's prompting
me to speak,
And helping me express things when
I'm feeling very weak.
Then strength comes from inside me,
that I didn't know was there,
So thank you Word, for being 'round, we make a
lovely pair.

RELEASE

This little helpless child
Lying in my arms
Jerking uncontrollably
But still with all her charms
She cannot eat, and barely drink
Her throat choked up with phlegm
I dribble breast milk in her mouth
I wish she'd nurse again
Her little mouth, it opens up
Her tongue it reaches out
A little drop just disappears
It makes me want to shout:
"Why does my child suffer so?
What has she done for this?
I can't believe she warrants this"...
I give her cheek a kiss
"I love you Shelley-Bell" I say
"Please go from me right now-
Don't stay here suffering this pain
Let go of us somehow
To hear this rattling breathing
And see your body jerk
Is more than I can bear right now
It really causes hurt
If only your could fly away
Tonight, and be at peace
I'm ready now to let you go
And from my care, release."

By Sharen Koras, In Memory of Michelle

TO MICHELLE

Go to the angels, our little one
Before our eyes see the morning sun
It's hard to see you suffer so
It's also hard to let you go
Our dear Michelle, please be at peace
And from your anguish, find release.

"Through the Eyes of a Life"

By Kris Coon

My blood in your veins;
My milk on your lips;
Your fate is sealed.

As vision dims;
and body fades;
Your soul revealed.

A giant's strength
in a butterfly's touch;
Speaking little while saying much.

Your purpose fulfilled;
Your light released;
Yet forever within me;

My Child.

In loving memory of Leah Kathryn McFarlane,
(11/08/87-12/26/02)

Please See Me Through My Tears

Kelly Osmont

Your asked, "How are you doing?"
As I told you, tears came to my eyes... and you
looked away and quickly began to talk again.
All the attention you had given me drained away.
"How am I doing?"... I do better when people listen.
though I may shed a tear or two.
This pain is indescribable. I you've never known it.
you cannot fully understand.
Yet, I need you.
When you look away,
When I'm ignored,
I am again alone with it.
Your attention means more than you can ever know.
Really, tears are not a *bad* sign, your know!
They're nature's way of helping me to heal...
They relieve some of the stress of sadness.
I know you fear that asking how I'm doing brings me sadness

...but you're wrong.
 The memory of my loved one's death will always be with me.
 Only a thought away.
 My tears make my pain more visible to your, but you did not
 give me the pain... it was already there.
 When I cry, could it be that you feel helpless,
 not knowing what to do?
 You are not helpless,
 And you don't need to do a thing but be there
 When I feel your permission to allow my tears to flow,
 You've helped me.
 Your need not speak, Your silence as I cry is all I need.
 Be patient... do not fear.
 Listening with your heart to "how I am doing"
 relieves the pain,
 for when the tears can freely come and go. I feel lighter.
 Talking to you releases what I've been wanting to say aloud,
 clearing space
 for a touch of joy in my life.
 I'll cry for a minute of two...
 and then, I'll wipe my eyes,
 and sometimes you'll even find I'm laughing later.
 When I hold back the tears, my throat grows tight,
 my chest aches, my stomach knots...
 because I'm trying to protect you from my tears.
 Then, we both hurt... me, because my pain is held inside,
 a shield against our closeness...
 and you, because suddenly we're distant.
 So, please, take my hand and see me through my tears
 then we can be close again.

Some Grief Relief Goals:

A Key Statement:

Goals:

1. **Believe and accept that the person is really gone.**
2. **Be willing to experience the pain.**
3. **Adjust to the environment in which we once lived with the person who is now gone.**
4. **Withdraw the emotional energy we have invested in the relationship and re-invest that emotional energy in other relationships.**

Goal Number One

We must believe and accept that the person is really gone! Some may *believe* their loved-one is gone but still not *accept* the fact. Until you believe that the person is really gone and accept that the relationship is really over, you will not be able to go any further in your grief relief.

Denial, in the early stages of grieving, is normal and healthy. To deny that the person has died in these early stages of becomes sort of a self-defense mechanism. It only becomes detrimental when we deny for a long period of time, and this is usually the result of a poor support group.

Goal Number Two

We must be willing to experience the pain. Most people have the mistaken idea that allowing themselves to experience the pain will cause the pain to get worse. *This is NOT true!* As you allow the pain to happen, the pain begins to mellow. In an effort to avoid this pain, some people will run away.

1. WE may try to occupy our time by keeping busy, busy, busy. Well-meaning friends and relatives will "help" in this effort by getting us involved in doing "things." This only lengthens the healing time.
2. We sometimes try to escape our pain by fantasizing. To "see" the face of our loved one in a crowd or to "hear" their voice as someone else speaks is a fairly common occurrence among the grieving.
3. Some of us will try to run away from our pain by assuming dangerous and risky tasks. One friend, following a divorce, took up mountain climbing and sky diving... a rather extreme means of avoiding emotional pain. She has emotionally matured and physically survived to remarry and leave the risk activities to a younger generation.

Goal Number Three

We need to adjust to the environment in which we once lived with the person who is now gone. This could well be the most difficult of these goals to accomplish. How can someone who has been married to the same person for over a quarter century suddenly adjust to their being gone? How can a parent suddenly adjust to going to that child's bedroom and be overwhelmed with the realization that they will never be coming back again? How can we suddenly adjust to any great loss? Well, it cannot be done suddenly...but, it **can** be done.

Goal Number Four

We must withdraw the emotional energy we have invested in the relationship and re-invest it in other relationships. For most, this is a long-range goal. The withdrawal of emotional energy is the simple part; but, reinvesting it? Well, not for a while, thank you. However, this re-investment of emotional energy does not necessarily have to be in **new** relationships but, rather, in strengthening old ones: Children, grandchildren, parents, and close friends. Some of these may be grieving also, and need your help. Get more involved in your local church...but don't do it to busy yourself so you won't think about your loss. Rather do it for the purpose of being with people whom you love and who love you.

A Key Statement:

If you really believe and admit that your loss happened, you will be willing to go through the pain of recovery. As you go through this pain and it mellows, you be able to go back into the environment in which you once lived with that person and become more comfortable. Once you are adjusted to the environment, then you can say "good-bye" to the relationship and you can withdraw the emotional energy.

You Can Go On

You can shed tears that they're gone,
OR, you can smile because they've lived.

You can close your eyes and pray they'll come back,
OR, you can open your eyes and see all they've left you.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see them,
OR, your heart can be full of the love they've shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
OR, you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember them and only that they're gone,
OR, you can cherish their memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind,
Be empty and turn your back,
OR, you can do what they would want;
Smile, Open your eyes, Love and go on.

Author Unknown

The Grief Process and Mourning

The way to grieve over the loss of something is important to us in our life has an effect on health and well-being in the future. All of us grieve at some time or other in our life and mourning is a normal process. We tend to follow a pattern as we work through the loss of something or someone important to us. While none of us go through this process in exactly the same way, it is possible to find a pattern through which most of us pass. What to expect to experience when you are grieved and mourning:

1. Shock- Many are so stunned that they go about in a daze. There is no expression of emotion in relation to the tragedy which has come upon them. A state of temporary anesthesia.
2. Emotional Release- To hold back tears and have a stoical outlook can cause inner destruction. To use your beliefs as a shield to protect you from expressing your genuine feelings of sadness and anger can be devastating. This is a time when one becomes aware of the significance of the loss.
3. Loneliness & Depression- Feeling of isolation, as if God no longer is in control, as if God/others do not care. One may find it hard to concentrate. Feels as if no one has ever grieved like this before.
4. Panic- All sorts of unpleasant thoughts come to us. We think we're "going crazy". Inability to concentrate is natural. May be feeling panicky because of fear.

5. Physical Distress- Difficulty sleeping, appetite changes, loss of weight, or some functional illness, such as headaches or feelings of oppression in the chest are common.
6. Sense of Guilt – We begin to think of the many things we wish we had or could do differently. It's as if we feel we need to punish ourselves with total unhappiness.
7. Hostility and Resentment- Related to guilt are feelings of hostility, which can increase the guilt. It may be directed toward a loved one, a physician, or even God.
8. Inability to Resume Usual Activities- Although we may be well along in our "grief work" we find it difficult to back to the normal activities of our life. We can't get back to "business as usual" again.
9. Realization That Withdrawal From Life is Unrealistic- For us as we go through the normal grief reaction, the day arrives when we find that a few rays of sunshine are becoming clearer through the darkened sky. Hope gradually come through. There is "light at the end of the tunnel."
10. Readjustment to Reality- Able to live in the world again not afraid of the world. We are never our old selves again; having grieved, we become a different person-stronger, deeper and more able to help others.

Bib: Westberg, Granger. Good Grief- Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962

Springtime Reflections

I love Springtime. Excitement is everywhere. It gives me such a sense of renewal.

Sometimes I think I would have made a good pioneer woman. I love planting and watching things grow. I've wondered if it's a female thing that is in some way related to my sense of nurturing. There is something peaceful in working with the soil, feeling it's warmth and texture under my hands. I know that gardening is my therapy.

I believe that each of us has a need for therapy. Something that helps give us purpose and takes us to our sense of peace and contentment. Though I think everyone needs this, I especially believe that it's true for people working in a caregiver field as well as for those of us who are caregivers.

As we go through our days, it is important to discover the elements of life that have special meaning. Things that bring us joy, peace and fulfillment. When I talk to people who are caring, or have cared, for someone who is dying, I realize how hard this can be. Not only finding the time, but having the energy to discover or develop the unique "therapies" that became a part of each of us. Though this can be difficult, I urge you to try. It may be something that is as easy as deciding to read fifteen minutes a day, to write a journal, to start a new hobby, or renew an old one.

It isn't so much having a therapy, it is acknowledging that we all have a need to complete something that contributes to our sense of worth and well-being. As we go through life, facing its many ups and downs, challenges and opportunities, it is healthy to have something that brings us back to ourselves, and provides us with a sense of enjoyment. As I work in my garden, I will be thinking of all of you, and hoping that each of you finds your own unique therapy.

Dottie Chilton

Mourning loved ones leaves us at a loss

By Cathy Lynn Grossman - USA TODAY

Lovely people die.

Jerks, too, and fools. And most often, ordinary, complicated humans, their charms and flaws inseparable as swirls in marble cake.

Yet age-old religious and cultural traditions of dealing with death no longer work for many survivors they may be far from the comforts of their childhood church-or any faith at all. Unwelcome family secrets, rivalries and disappointments may emerge from the fissures of the past. Anger and pain jab sharp elbows into tender hearts.

"There's a brief consolation blitz when everyone rushes in with food and phone calls and flowers," says Sarah York, a Unitarian Universalist minister based in Asheville, N.C.

"Then you're expected to calm down and get back to business. You're considered doing well if you don't express your emotions. In this culture, you have about three days to get over a death."

In her new book, *Remembering Well: Rituals for Celebrating Life and Mourning Death* (Jossey-Bass, \$20), she says "Families are feeling pretty abandoned these days."

Still, they have the eternal need to "give sorrow words," as Shakespeare wrote in *Macbeth*.

York calls that "our spiritual work-to mark our losses and celebrate our love."

Her book offers ways to adapt traditional rituals to contemporary lives and gives guidance to those who find religion "empty, awkward or irrelevant."

"People who don't necessarily have a belief in the salvation or the afterlife very often do want an expression of hope or promise," she says.

"I see a lot of families do their own thing. Some come up with very meaningful efforts. It's certainly better than doing nothing and leaving Mom's ashes on the mantel next to Fido's."

Seek consensus

"But very few people can accomplish this well without some guidance." York says. "It doesn't have to come from clergy necessarily, or funeral home professional. It can come from friends or therapists, too."

Remembering Well suggests that the first step is to respect and honor the values and wishes of the dead "every way you can, while still remembering you must also find ways to express and heal your own grieving heart."

Say your late husband wanted no religious services. Try to discern what he hated about the services, then avoid that aspect. No clergy? Ask friends or family to lead a few favorite Psalms.

Next, try to respect the needs of all the survivors. It's no easy task in a world of fractured, blended and hybrid families, York acknowledges.

Say the majority of the family is Catholic, and you are Jewish. It may be a Catholic ceremony and burial, but you can bring in prayers and elements of your tradition. "You can be sensitive and open enough to involve other in these."

Consider asking a neutral party beyond the immediate circle to help you reach consensus.

Both in communal services and private grieving, give form to your feelings. Light candles, bring flowers. Send up balloons. Write letters or poems.

Beautify the space and set aside that time as sacred. This celebrates and releases the spirit you came to honor.

"By enduring, we make a statement that even the most poignant loss can be made meaningful. Refusing to succumb to despair is the greatest act of faith," Rabbi David Wolpe says in *Making Loss Matter*. "Faith is not denying the death was tragic; it is insisting it can carry lessons, that it can bring meaning into the lives of those who remember."

4 Sources for solace, guidance

Other books helpful for mourners:

1. **Caring for the Dead: Your Final Act of Love** (Upper Access, \$29.95). Lisa Carlson, executive director or Funeral and Memorial Societies of America, offers a pragmatic guide to funeral, burial, and cremation laws and practices across the nation. It's a handbook for survivors making funeral arrangements with or without funeral directors or clergy, Sarah York quotes frequently from Carlson's common-sense advice. *Consumers Digest* calls it "of interest to every living soul."
2. **Making Loss Matter** (Riverhead Books, \$13.95); Rabbi David Wolpe's compelling book, based in ancient Jewish teachings, deals not only with death, but with many of the painful losses in life, our miscarried dreams.
3. **A Labor of Love: How to write a Eulogy** (GMS Publishing, \$9.95). Garry Schaeffer, a self help author, guides people with no time or experience in a how to for writing highly personal expressions of love, respect and memory.
4. **Remembrances and Celebrations: A Book of Eulogies, Elegies, Letters and Epitaphs** (Pantheon Books, \$25). This collection, edited by Jill Werman Harris, offers the thoughts of great writers and thinkers. There's solace in the reading and the private, universal thoughts provide a source for quotations.

Author's bereavement tests balance

Sarah York's mother was witty, compassionate and generous. And more.

She read the Bible but denied God. She drank. She smoked until emphysema killed her.

Before she died, she told her minister daughter that she wanted no religious services. Then she left her valuables to the cleaning woman.

York details in *Remembering Well* how she crafted a fitting farewell.

First, she wept. Then she wrote and rewrote many times-a letter to her mother to read at a simple small memorial service.

The ceremony was filled with music, planting flowers and storytelling, York tells how she created a "soul sketch" of this richly complicated spirit, one that acknowledged her self-abuse without dwelling on it.

Later, "I hurt. But I felt good, because I had not let anyone protect me or my family from our grief. I had asked each of my mother's closest friends to do something-to lead the service, play the piano, share a poem-knowing that they needed to participate in ways that helped them express their love and loss."

Children Need Ceremonies

They need the chance to say good-bye in their own way. A trip to the funeral home to view the body is a good time for this. The child should not be forced into doing this, but if they want to go then I think we should take them. Many people feel this might somehow scar the children, but if we explain ahead of time what they are going to see, most children find this to be a meaningful time of saying good-bye.

There are many other ceremonies that will have meaning for them. They can build their own memory box. They can go to the cemetery for a visit. They can write notes on balloons. They can plant flowers or a tree. Many communities now have annual memorial services with candles for each person. Children take these very seriously and they have meaning for the child. They need times for memories and commemoration.

They need their feelings and thoughts validated. That is back to the idea of significance which we have probably already over covered. That is just another way of saying they need our ears. When you boil it all down, we talk grief to death. When we talk we work through the feelings and find insight and strength to learn new ways of coping.

Most of all they need hugs. Lots and lots of hugs. Never too many hugs. I think people of all ages who are in grief need what I call the three H's. They need us to **Hang Around, Hug them, and Hush.**

One last word must be said. We have talked about grief and how children walk through it. We have talked about what to do and what not to do until I am sure you feel overwhelmed. Relax. No one does all of it. No one does it all of the time. No one does it very well. But children are quite resilient. If they know you love them you can make a whole lot of mistakes and it won't matter very much at all. "Hug'em" and rest easy.

*We want to take our children
into our arms
and hug the pain away,
kiss them until they never hurt again.
But,
grief is a process.
And we must walk with them with
painful patience,
until they are better.*

Getting Through the Annual Reminders of Your Loss

By Carol Luebering

Memory writes on every page of the calendar-here a birthday, there a holiday, further on a wedding date. In the wake of death, those precious days bear a bittersweet tinge, a pang that the celebrations they mark will never be repeated with someone you have loved.

Most of those dates are warmed by tender recollections; some are written darker than the rest. Whether this is your first turn around the calendar-or one of many-since your loss, these dates loom dark on the horizon. Tears that you thought were behind you swell again, and with them comes terrible loneliness.

Working your way through

These days will not be wished away, even if you pull the covers over your head and wait for the sun to set. And perhaps nothing you can do will make them easy. But you can meet these milestones head-on and make them into a bridge stretching toward a brighter tomorrow.

Begin by planning a departure from your usual activities. Take the dreaded day off work, if you can. No use pretending that this day is like any other; it isn't. Don't let anyone-yourself included-accuse you of "wallowing in grief." Taking time to lean into your sorrow is facing reality.

Reach out

Choose your company for the day. Don't wait for someone to remember. Your grief easily slips out of mind-even within the closest circle of family and friends. Start dropping reminders when the day's approach first begins to haunt you. Don't assume that the best company is those with whom you have always spent that day. You might be more comfortable with someone who has been in your shoes.

Don't hesitate to present your need and ask for companionship. Claim the offers of "anything I can do: which were so generously made when your loss occurred. Be specific: Say that you want someone to drive you to the cemetery, that you want company for shopping or lunch, that you want a shoulder you can cry on, or even that you want someone to help you think of some way to mark the day.

Don't forget to tap the support of your faith-community. In the Jewish tradition, bereaved families light a 24-hour candle on the anniversary of a death and recite prayers of remembrance at the synagogue service. Roman Catholics mark special days with a Mass. Both practices reflect a centuries-old wisdom, rallying the support of the believing community.

Whatever your faith-tradition, ask for prayers. One family asked an understanding minister to lead them in a prayer of healing for both living and dead a year after a member committed suicide. (The next year they planned a lakeside weekend together-and surprised themselves by having a good time.)

Others simply ask to be remembered in the Sunday worship service. To pray for someone is to stand with that person in God's presence, and is therefore a powerful way of being with another-even with someone who has passed through death's door.

Look Back

Claim your memories, those bits of history which have made you who you are. Someone once observed that "memory is the power to gather roses in winter." Clip your bouquet. Get out the scrapbook and the love letters; line up the gifts and souvenirs you cherish. Call to mind all the joys and struggles which shaped this interrupted relationship.

"The holiest of all holidays are those kept by ourselves in silence and apart; The secret anniversaries of the heart."

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Holidays"

Write a new obituary, one which contains all the personal details you wouldn't have entrusted to the newspaper even had there been room. Include a physical description: the color of eyes and hair, the way their nose crinkled when she laughed, the shape of his hands. Add the qualities which were important to you, the way your relationship began and developed.

Admit your regrets. If you are haunted by a bit of unfinished business-an unresolved quarrel cut short by death, words of love and appreciation left unspoken-say what you need to say in some formal way by writing a letter or by expressing your feelings to a valued friend.

Mourn the dead dreams: the hope of seeing a child grown, celebrating a milestone anniversary, enjoying a peaceful retirement together.

Claim your grief. Give yourself permission to cry as much as you need to. Relive once more the illness or accident which precipitated your loss. ("Listen to the story once more" may well be what you need to ask of your chosen companions.) Recapture the feelings which swept over you at the time of death.

Recall, too, the signs of care which surrounded you in those difficult first days. Reread the cards and notes, the visitors book. Feel again the warm hugs, the gentle pressure of others' hands in yours, the sight of friends gathered to grieve and to pray with you.

Survey your journey through the calendar so far, with all its ups and downs. Take stock of how far you have come, of the unexpected strengths you have found within yourself.

Harriet Sarnoff Schiff, author of *The Bereaved Parent*, assures her readers over and over again that they have already done the most difficult thing imaginable: survived their child's funeral. Congratulate yourself for coming as far as you have, for getting out of bed on the days when that seemed impossible for learning to manage the everyday stuff of life without someone who once was part of life's daily structure.

Look Forward

Close at least one small door on the past. Make a conscious act of forgiveness to someone: the love who abandoned you, the killer, the doctor who didn't diagnose soon enough, yourself. Clean a closet, even if all you can do is rearrange it.

Create a new holiday ritual. Go out for Thanksgiving dinner instead of fixing the turkey yourself. Replace the big tree with a small one trimmed with bows instead of getting out the ornaments. Mark a birthday by giving just one thing which belonged to the person you mourn to someone who will cherish it.

Celebrate today's joys. Count the blessings you have, especially the people who grace your life with love. Ask yourself which of those relationships need attention, to whom you need to express your affection while there is still time. Mark your calendar to make a friendly phone call or extend an invitation.

Plan just one thing for the future. Think big, if you can: a change of job, a special vacation trip, redecorating the house.

Or think small. Promise yourself lunch with a friend next week; get a book you have wanted to read from the library; rearrange the living room furniture. Dream of being whole and happy. Imagine yourself facing life with confidence.



Make small beginnings toward reshaping your life without the one you loved. Your efforts are seeds of hope that you can cultivate into a fruitful new existence.

Take Heart However unimaginable such wholeness may seem, it is the end toward which grief's journey leads. Time, they say, heals all wounds. There is some truth in that; leave a broken bone alone and it will mend. But only a fool hopes that time alone will make an unset bone straight and strong.

In the same way, time alone heals grief without bringing wholeness. The turns through the calendar mark the passage of time: on year, two years, 10. But time works its magic only when it is used well. Writing of her own sorrow at the kidnapping and murder of her firstborn in the introduction to *Hour of Gold, Hour of Lead*, Anne Morrow Lingbergh speaks of the need to make room for pain: "The inexorably difficult thing in life, and particularly in suffering, is to face the truth. On the days special in your memory, face the truth of your sorrow and the truth of the healing which has already begun. And believe the promise Jesus of Nazareth spoke: "Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh."

Carol Luebering is an editor for St. Anthony Messenger Press and a free-lance writer. She is the author of 10 books, including *To Comfort Those Who Mourn*.

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"In three words, I can sum up everything I've learned about life. It goes on. Despite our fears and worries life continues"
-Robert Frost

Walking with One Who Is Searching

Compassionate God,
There are many people in my world
who are searching for something or someone they treasure.
There are parents filled with heartache for their lost child.
There are distressed persons searching for their very self.
There are countless grieving one who are looking
for a piece of their life that once gave them happiness.

I am walking with a friend, who is involved in a great search.
I want to understand and be with the distress of searching,
the anxiety of losing, the fear of not finding.
May I be a source of comfort, hope and courage
While she/he searches for what needs to be found.
May I be patient with the length of time it takes
and not hurry or push the process.
Bless all who are searching for lost treasure,
Especially my friend.
May they turn to you often
And draw comfort from your guiding presence.

In closing: In only a month I'll be seeing some of you at BDSRA's Annual Conference in Detroit. We'll have Saturday afternoon to share our stories and work on grief issues. I'm looking forward to our together.

Don't forget ! Your memories of your child/ren help make The Lighthouse special. Or you may come across an article on grieving that we can include. Please send to:
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607-776-6261

P.S. – Thank you, Kim Chance, for all the work on this issue of The Lighthouse.