



PATHS ON THE JOURNEY

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS HOSPICE AND GRIEF CENTER

FEBRUARY 2012 ISSUE



IN THIS ISSUE

I SENT YOU A KISS TODAY	2
GRIEVING OVER A LOST FUTURE	3
SUPPORT GROUPS	4
MOVIE AND DISCUSSION NIGHTS	4

I SENT YOU A KISS TODAY

By Darcie D. Sims

I sent you a kiss today. Did you get it? I sent it by air mail. I kissed my fingers and then opened them to the breeze and watched it go.

I thought of you today. Did you know that? Could you feel my arms around you? My thoughts caressing your shoulders, my mind trying to reach yours.

I spoke to you today. Did you hear me? I talked about how the clouds moved across the sky, sending shadows whisking over the lawn that I had just raked. I told you how pretty it looked as the leaves swirled gently in the breeze. Do you remember the times when we would lay together in the grass and just watch the clouds make shapes in the sky? I told you about my remembering that today, too.

I talked to you about how the wind chime has the loveliest tones. I wonder if you can hear them? I told you about my day, the mundane little things that kept me busy. I ironed and dusted and vacuumed and moved some things around—just regular things—nothing special, except I thought of you as I did them.

I told you about my Big Project and how far it seems to the end. I keep thinking of new ways to get it finished and that just makes the whole thing take longer... but of course, you know that about me, don't you?

I saw an old lady and an even older man holding hands as they crossed the street and the look they shared reminded me of us. That secret sharing of something just between them. I missed you today. Do you miss me, too?

I planned the menu for the family dinner today and I asked you what you wanted.

Do you still like mashed potatoes and butter, green bean casserole and cranberry relish? I baked two pies and saved some dough for you, so you could pat it out and fill it with strawberry jam and then bake it, making a little "patty pan pie" just for you. Do you still do that, sometimes?

I wore your sweater today. I hope you don't mind. It turned cool, and the breeze turned into a wind and I had to take the wind chime in. The last bits of summer are gone now, packed away until the next time around.

I found your blanket today, tucked way down in the cedar chest. I was looking for the afghan to put over the back of the rocking chair and there it was...waiting for me. So I hugged it and wrapped myself in it like you used to do. It was only for a moment, but I thought I heard you in the next room so I went to look. It was only the timer on the dryer downstairs. But, for a moment, I thought it was you.

I saw you today...in a hundred places in the house, the yard, across the street, waiting in line at the bank and walking just ahead of me at the grocery store. Why didn't you turn around? Didn't you know I was there?

I dreamed of you today and for just a little while, we were one again. Hand in hand, arm in arm, head to head, heart to heart, lives wrapped around and through each other, like two peas in a pod, two people in love. I haven't stopped loving you—have you stopped loving me? I hope not.

I'll be okay. I am okay. It's just that sometimes, I want you here, right here with me, not just in my thoughts, my dreams, my prayers, my me.

I want you here.... And

Now that I am gone,
remember me with smiles
and laughter.

And if you need to cry,
cry with your brother or sister
who walks in grief beside you.

And when you need me,
put your arms around anyone
and give to them what
you need to give to me.

There are so many who
need so much.

I want to leave you something
something much better than
words or sounds.

Look for me in the
people I've known
or helped in some special way.

Let me live in your heart
as well as in your mind.

You can love me most
by letting your love reach out to
our loved ones,
by embracing them and
living in their love.

Love does not die, people do.

So, when all that's left
of me is love,
give me away as best you can.

- Author unknown

then, you are. I only have to touch my heart to feel yours beating. I only have to whisper your name to hear mine spoken. I only have to count my blessings, count the moments we had, to know I am rich beyond any man's measure. We were and still are and that's all I need. It wasn't enough and it will never be enough, but it was something and for that, I am forever thankful...today, tomorrow and always.

I sent you a kiss today...and you sent one back. Thanks... for the little while.

*Reprinted with permission from Centering Corporation, Grief Digest Magazine, August 2011

Youth support groups provide comfort

One of the most helpful and healing things we can do for a child is to listen to their experience without judgment or trying to fix it.

Grief support groups for children and teens provide participants with a safe place to share their stories and be with others who have also experienced a loss due to the death of someone close to them. By sharing stories with their peers and trained volunteers, children and teens learn that they are not alone in their experience and that the feelings related to grief are normal.

Remembering the person who died is also part of the healing process. Support groups offer children and teens an opportunity to express their memories as well as feelings through activities such as writing, arts and crafts, and games.

Support groups help children and teens understand that grief is like a journey. And, even though it never ends, things do get better with time.

Trek and Expedition Groups begin on February 27th and run through April 2nd. Both groups meet on Mondays from 6-7 pm.

For more information or to register for a group, please call Sylvia at 815.398.0500 or email ssanderson@northern-illinoisospice.org.



Sylvia Sanderson,
Bereavement
Coordinator

Grieving Over a Lost Future

By Paul Bennett

When we think about grief, we usually think about grieving for the past — for a person who's no longer with us. That kind of longing for the past has a backward-looking feel to it.

Another kind of grief is, oddly, forward-looking. It's grief for the future that I won't have. This grieving for the lost future can be especially uprooting.

When Bonnie died, after the first few weeks that were full of memorial services and occasions that friends made for being with me, I went into a period of grief when I didn't know what to do or didn't know why I was doing it.

When I looked ahead to my future, it was either a blank, or a prospect of routine without meaning. I was grieving for my missing future, as well as for the joy of being with Bonnie, which was in the past. Just as Bonnie's absence left a hole in my life, so did the absence of the future I had imagined for myself, with her. The future that Bonnie and I planned had given meaning to what we did in the present; now the future was gone,



Bonnie was gone, and I was uprooted.

I was grieving, as many people do, for a future I never had.

Some people have such a powerful grief for the future that was "taken away" that they feel they've been cheated out of something they would have had, if the person they love had not died. They

feel their future has been stolen; they look ahead and can see only that the future they've got is not the one they "should have had."

Of course, that future was never real — no future is. Saying that the future "should be" a certain way is a doorway to resentment and suffering.

If you get wrapped up in the idea that you were "cheated"

of your future, you're stuck. Looking back, you see only what you lost; looking forward, you see only what was stolen from you. Is it possible to create a future you'll love from that stuck place?

I'm not sure what you can do if you're stuck in that place. Maybe the answer is simply to say this to yourself as often as needed:

Oh, I was mistaken. That was never going to happen.

Or maybe, we can feel gratitude for the way in which we did have that future.

Bonnie and I had, in fact, imagined many futures in the twenty-three years we were in love — that's what human beings do. Each of those futures shaped the present, even though none of them were real. (Every future is imagined, even if I later encounter a present moment that resembles what I had imagined before.) So I don't see that our imagined futures were stolen from us — in the moments when we imagined them, we had them as fully as you can ever have a future.

*Article can be found on-line at <http://lovinggrief.com>



The Legend of the Tear Jar

By Pleasant White, Ph.D

In the dry climate of ancient Greece, water was prized above all. Giving up water from one's own body, when crying tears for the dead, was considered a sacrifice. They caught their precious tears in tiny pitchers or "tear jars" like the one shown here (lifesize). The tears became holy water and could be used to sprinkle on doorways to keep out evil, or to cool the brow of a sick child.

The tear jars were kept unpainted until the owner had experienced the death of a parent, sibling, child, or spouse. Af-

ter that, the grieving person decorated the tear jar with intricate designs, and examples of these can still be seen throughout modern Greece.

This ancient custom symbolizes the transformation that takes place in people who have grieved deeply. They are not threatened by the grief of people in pain. They have been in the depths of pain themselves, and returned. Like the tear jar, they can now be with others who grieve and catch their tears.

*Article can be found at www.webhealing.com



NORTHERN ILLINOIS
**Hospice and
Grief Center**

4215 Newburg Road
Rockford, Illinois 61108
www.northernillinoishospice.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT.ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROCKFORD, IL
PERMIT NO. 524

Live every moment

PATHS ON THE JOURNEY

MOVIE AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

Northern Illinois Hospice and Grief Center offers monthly movie and discussion groups from 3 to 6 pm at 4215 Newburg Road. Participants may bring a sack meal. For more information, call 815.398.0500.

Monday, February 13, 2012 "One Day"

After a romantic tryst on college graduation night, Emma and Dexter pursue separate dreams. This romantic drama based on a novel of the same name checks in with them each year on the same date, tracking their personal and professional progress.

.....

For information on any items in this newsletter or to register for upcoming events, please call Northern Illinois Hospice and Grief Center Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., at 815.398.0500.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Morning Support Group Tuesdays, 10 to 11:30 am

An ongoing grief support group for adults dealing with the death of a loved one. This group will meet in our office at 4215 Newburg Road.

Thursday Evening Support Group Thursdays, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

A six-week grief support group for adults who are dealing with the death of a loved one is scheduled to meet at 4215 Newburg Road.

Afternoon Support Group Fridays, 1:30 to 3:00 pm

An on-going grief support group for adults dealing with the death of a loved one. This support group is held at Peterson Meadows, 6401 Newburg Road, Rockford. **There will be no meeting on February 24, 2012.**

Expedition Group for Teens Mondays, 6-7 pm

The adolescent years are a time when most teens believe that no one can understand what they have been through. They sometimes feel isolated and alone. Expedition Grief Group provides a safe place for teens to share their stories and make friends with others who have had similar losses. The six-week group will be held February 27th through April 2nd.

Trek Group for Children Mondays, 6-7 pm

Trek Grief Group is for children in first through eighth grades who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Trek provides trained volunteers to support children, facilitate therapeutic games, and safety and confidentiality for expressing their feelings while grieving. The six-week group will be held February 27th through April 2nd.