



Grief and Loss Newsletter



Fall Edition

Giving Thanks

November 26, 1863, was our country's first Thanksgiving Day. President Abraham Lincoln had a vision for our country when he issued his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation in October of 1863. The Civil War had been in existence for eighteen months. Over 250,000 men had already died. Families were torn apart by the conflict. Lincoln himself was grieving the deaths and sadness of both sides.

Prior to the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had already experienced great personal tragedy. As a child he experienced the death of a younger brother and the death of his mother. Later as a young man he experienced the death of Anne Rutledge, who some believe was his first love. Then as a father, two of his sons died at the ages of four and eleven. The eleven-year-old son died only about two years before Lincoln issued his Thanksgiving Day Proclamation.

In his Proclamation Lincoln said, "The year that is drawing to its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly

enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God..."

How was he able to find so much gratitude? Certainly a strong faith in God and a belief that "most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be," sustained him. He also had a great sense of humor which he used to help cope with his sadness. Lincoln was able to persevere in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

Perseverance may be one of the most important things you can try to achieve this holiday season.

If you have any questions or concerns about what you are experiencing, please contact your grief counselor or other medical professional.

Harry Hynes Hospice is available to help with grief and loss counseling. You may sign up at hynesModuleial.org under the Grief and Loss category or call (316) 265-9441.



“Journey one day at a time. Don’t try to solve all the problems of your life at once. Each day’s survival is a triumph.” - *Earl A. Grollman; Living When A Loved One Has Died*

Gifts with Purpose

Have you thought about the radical notion that grief is a gift? Certainly there are many gifts you would rather receive than to experience the death of a very special loved one. The challenge for each of us is to take the pain and turn it into something positive. To remain in anger as we grieve, may keep us in a negative feeling that prevents us from loving and living. Letting go of anger is a healthy step toward opening up ourselves to growth, love and life.

Judy Tatelbaum in her book *The Courage to Grieve* uses the analogy of comparing grief to manure. Both are useless unless you know how to use them. Manure is messy and smells awful. People try to stay away from it. Yet it is very useful in gardens and on crops where it becomes fertilizer. Grief can certainly feel like manure but it too can be transformed. Grief can become the motivator for personal change and actualization.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross eloquently states:
“All the hardships that you face in life, all the tests and tribulations, all the nightmares, and all

the losses, most people still view as curses, as punishments by God, as something negative. If you would only know that nothing that comes to you is negative. I mean nothing. All the trials and tribulations, and the biggest losses that you ever experience, things that make you say, ‘If I had known about this, I would never have been able to make it through,’ are gifts to you. It’s like somebody had to - what do you call that when you make the hot iron into a tool? - you have to temper the iron. It is an opportunity that you are given to grow. That is the sole purpose of existence on this planet Earth. You will not grow if you sit in a beautiful flower garden, and somebody brings you gorgeous food on a silver platter. But you will grow if you are sick, if you are in pain, if you experience losses, and if you do not put your head in the sand, but take the pain and learn to accept it, not as a curse or a punishment, but as a gift to you with a very, very specific purpose.”

May you open up to yourself to find the meaning in your gift.



STUG Reactions

Have you ever felt you were doing okay in dealing with your grief and then suddenly felt you were hit by a ton of bricks? Maybe it's hearing a certain song on the radio or knowing you would have celebrated your wedding anniversary this month. Therese A. Rando, clinical psychologist and author, says you were experiencing a STUG reaction. STUG stands for "subsequent temporary upsurges of grief." People who are dealing with the death of a loved one experience STUG reactions after the period of acute grief has passed.

Rando identifies three primary kinds of occurrences that cause STUG reactions. The first kind is a cyclic precipitant. Cyclic means any kind of precipitant occurring on a regular basis whether it is each year, each month, or even every day. Obvious examples would be a yearly anniversary of a death or a wedding anniversary. Another example might be a ritual the two of you had each morning before going about your daily routine. Often the anticipation of an event may be more stressful than the actual event. An anniversary one year may be more difficult than another year because of other issues happening in your life at that time.

STUG reactions can also be precipitated by one-time occurrences. Rando calls them linear because they involve the passage of time.

Something in your current life triggers a STUG reaction because you realize in a new way how much you miss your loved one. Perhaps a new baby has been born or a grandchild graduates from college and you wish your deceased loved one could share this experience. You may not have been directly impacted by the death of Princess Diana but it may have triggered grief in you for your own family members who have died.

The third kind of STUG reaction is precipitated by specific stimuli. These stimuli can occur anytime. You may be driving and hear a song on the radio reminding you of your loved one. Or you may be watching a movie in which the story deals with loss or families getting together and you experience a STUG reaction.

There may be times when you welcome having a STUG reaction because it is a reminder you haven't forgotten your loved one or there may be times when you dread it and even try to avoid having one. Perhaps you thought you were doing better and now wonder if you are regressing because of these STUG reactions.

Having STUG reactions is to be expected. You will have many ups and downs. Sometimes you may have questioned your own ability to survive. To paraphrase the words of Earl A. Grollman, "If there is darkness (when you experience a STUG reaction) there is still enough light to go forward."

Grief Support

Harry Hynes Hospice offers grief support for families and caregivers of those we have served, and to the community at large. Our goal is to help family members and caregivers find hope and healing. We recognize that everyone grieves differently. Our wide range of grief services allow you to choose those that are comfortable for you.

Services we currently have available include:

Rising Sun

A quarterly grief and loss newsletter with articles about common experiences and helpful ways to cope. A calendar listing special events and bereavement groups is included. Newsletters can be mailed electronically, by postal service, or viewed on our website at hynestememorial.org.

Grief Support Groups

Support groups where you can find help and healing after losing a loved one.

Individual and Family Counseling

Counseling focuses on adjusting to the death of a loved one. Counseling is available for persons of all ages and can be in person or over the phone.

Grief Companion

A trained volunteer who provides phone support.

Grief Support is available to anyone regardless of if Harry Hynes Hospice served their loved one. Memorials, contributions, and grants help fund the Grief Services we offer.

For more information contact the Harry Hynes Hospice Bereavement Department at (316) 265-9441 or (800) 767-4965 or visit hynestememorial.org/grief-and-loss-support/.

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