

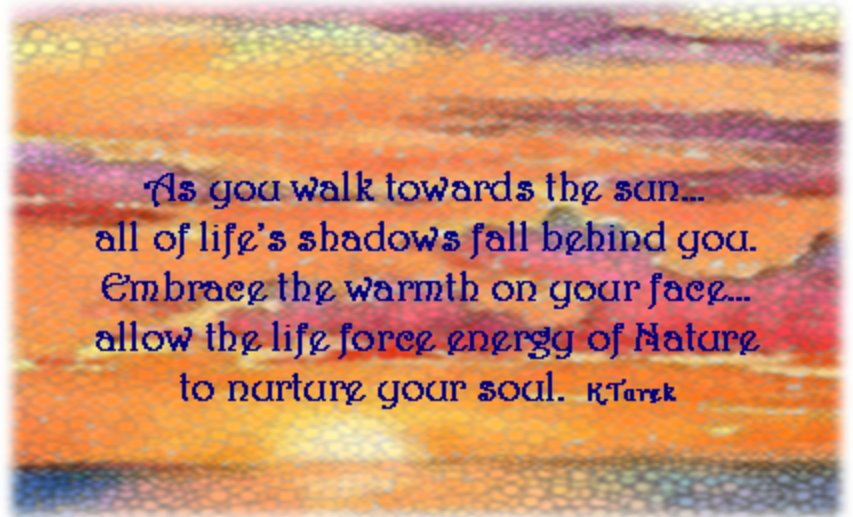
Summer has arrived!

It is time for warm breezes, buzzing bees, lady bugs, dancing butterflies, enchanted dragonflies which, by the way some folks like to imagine as celestial emissaries between heaven and earth, and the vibrant flowers and foliage of this beautiful season. With Mother Nature's beauty bursting in all her glory comes a magical glow that blankets much of summer's palpable enchantment with reassurance that as one life cycle ends another begins.

The balmy weather brings a sense of promise and hope for many as we soak up the long days of sunlight that can warm and nourish our souls. It's time to enjoy local produce, try some new healthy recipes, make sun tea and fill the days re-connecting to the earth.

There is so much beauty in the world that often goes unnoticed particularly, after the loss of a loved one. I encourage you to search out new ways to support your heart through the grieving process. Unlock your imagination, find a new hobby like hiking, reading inspiring books or take a virtual painting class! After all, so much of summer's magic is inspired by the creative process.

Although we are unable to meet in groups currently due to the continued COVID 19 social distancing precautions, there is support available for you as you continue your bereavement path via Zoom, FaceTime and individual telephone support. Please consider joining us for one or all the new ways that we are virtually connecting. Information on how to connect is on page three of this Newsletter. Blessings and Peace, Dr. Karen



*As you walk towards the sun...
all of life's shadows fall behind you.
Embrace the warmth on your face...
allow the life force energy of Nature
to nurture your soul. K. Tarrk*

Be Gentle with Yourself! Karen Turek, D.D., Ph.D.



As you move through the grieving process there will inevitably come a time when you may question yourself and wonder if “am I ever going to be *normal* again?” Well, the good news is that you will eventually find a new “normal” the bad news is that you and your life will not be the same as it was before your loved one died. How could it be? Still many times it’s very difficult not to compare the before and after and wish that we could have had a different experience. A past that didn’t include losing our loved one. The following are some pearls of wisdom that I have gleaned from the bereaved as they have walked on their path of healing:

1. Overthinking what you should or shouldn’t have done is a sure-fire way to sabotage your healing process after the death of a loved one. Second guessing the past is not only unproductive, it is painful and out of your control.
2. You don’t need to have all the answers to all of life’s riddles. Life is the great mystery. Ask for and accept help. Talk to others. Take it in with grace and Grace will lead you in the right direction.
3. As hard as it is...you can’t control everything. You cannot change the past or predict the future. Sometimes you may need to trust that the current of life will take you where you need to be. Sometimes you have to accept things as they are even though you hate doing so, face your loss. It is important to lean into your pain.
4. Be still and let God love you. Go out into nature and absorb the sound of the wind through the trees, the light and the shadows, the peace, and just appreciate the stillness. Make time for stillness regularly it is good for the soul.
5. The grieving process is a very personal journey. Be patient with yourself. Don’t compare yourself to others and don’t allow others to tell you where you should be. It takes as long as it takes, period.
6. The art of forgiveness is healing in nature. It is one of our greatest healing tools and opens your heart to receive joy. Forgive the people in your life who harmed you and forgive yourself for your own mistakes and you will liberate yourself from pain, anger, resentment and negativity. Anger, grudges and resentment hurt no one more than the person holding them.
7. No band-aids allowed! Allow yourself to feel what you are feeling. Sometimes you’ll get down, really down and you won’t want to leave the couch or get out of bed. It’s okay. Let yourself sulk, get it out of your system. Tomorrow is another day. Know that you will survive.
8. Learn to breathe again. When we are stressed we tend to hold our breath. Breathing deeply not only provides much needed oxygen to your brain and essential organs it also helps eliminate toxins. It also has a calming effect and can help when anxiety surfaces.
9. Find ways to be of service. To people, to animals, to the environment, ways that inspire you, that speak to you and fill your heart. It feels good to give and many times we receive much more than we give when we reach out to others. Taking care of something alive such as a pet or plant will help to re-establish a sense of purpose and meaning in your life.
10. Stick to a routine which includes good personal self-care. Rest, nutrition and exercise are critical elements for healing after loss.
11. Big decisions can wait. Don’t rush into any major changes immediately after the loss of a loved one. Sometimes judgement can be a little sketchy.
12. Connect with others. Engage in simple conversations with a friend or join an A Plus Hospice virtual bereavement group. They can be healing encounters and provide encouragement during this difficult time.



Bereavement Support

A Plus Hospice Care is here to support you through the loss of your loved one. Our Bereavement Program offers a variety of options tailored to give you the opportunity to choose the level and amount of bereavement care that is best for you during this time of social distancing.

We provide individual counseling sessions for family members whose loved ones have been on our service via telephone or FaceTime as well as Bereavement Group and Book Study via Zoom.

To best stay connected at this time we are offering:

Bereavement Group via “Zoom”:

On the **First Tuesday** of the month we will provide an open forum support group to share our feelings as we move through the grieving process. **2:30-3:30 pm.**

July 7th August 4th September 1st

Book Study Group via “Zoom”:

On the **Second and Fourth Wednesdays** of the month, we will be engaging in a book study!

Our **July** book is:

“The Four Agreements” by Don Miguel Ruiz

July 8 at 1:00-2:00 pm and July 22nd at 1:00-2:00 pm

Our **August** book is:

“The Places That Scare You” by Pema Chodron

August 12th at 1:00-2:00 pm and August 26th at 1:00-2:00 pm

Our **September** book is:

“For Everything a Season” by Joan Chittister

September 9th at 1:00-2:00 pm and September 23rd at 1:00-2:00 pm

If you are interested in participating please contact Dr. Karen at karen@aplushospicecare.com or (775) 351-7346 for details and instructions. If you are not familiar with the Zoom venue please don't shy away. It is not difficult and I am delighted to walk you through the instructions.

"Is there a Heaven?" Dr. Karen



This is a sweet little story that I have shared many times, but it is worthy of a repeat. There have been many versions as well, each story teller making it their own, and this is mine. In my experience it inspires hope to the grieving heart and is a good analogy for explaining death to a child.

The Dragonfly Story



Down below the surface of a quiet pond lived a little colony of water nymphs known as naiads. They were a happy colony, living in the calm, warm water deep beneath the water's surface and away from the rays of the sun.

For many months they were very busy, scurrying over the soft mud on the bottom of the pond feasting on delicious algae and the occasional snail or water spider. It was a good life. But, every once in a while one of the colony members would ascend the long climb up a water lily reed never to return. There was great sadness and all of the colony members were a bit puzzled as to why their friend had left, never to return. They were fairly certain that something terrible had befallen them.

One day a leader in the colony, gathered them all together. "I have an idea," he said. "The next one of us who climbs up the water lily reed must promise to come back and tell us where he or she went and why." They all promised and went about their happy lives confident that their plan would give them the explanation they desired.

Then, just a few days later, the very same naiad who had formulated the plan found himself being mysteriously drawn to the water's surface! He climbed higher and higher and before he knew what was happening, he had broken through the surface of the water he was exhausted and fell deep asleep onto the broad, green lily pad above. As he slept, his body transformed turning into a graceful gossamer winged dragonfly.

When he awoke and looked into the water his reflection startled him at first. He was not the same... his new wings were stunning and lifted him effortlessly up into the sky! He was lighter than air! Swooping and dipping in great curves, he flew as though he had always had wings. He scarcely remembered his promise to return to the colony and share his experience.

But eventually, his new wings became a little tired and he came to rest on the very lily pad directly above where his friends still went about their lives. He tried to dive down to tell them that he was still there but that he had somehow changed. He tried and tried but to no avail. "I can't return!" he said in dismay. "At least I tried, but I can't keep my promise. Even if I could go back, not one of the water nymphs would know me in my new form. I guess I'll just have to wait until they become dragonflies too. Then they'll understand what happened to me, where I went, and this wonderful new life I've been given." And the dragonfly winged off happily into its wonderful new world of sun and air.

So, I'll ask again... "Is there a Heaven?"

