



As we enter the holiday season many of us begin to feel some level of anxiety even if we have not experienced the loss of a loved one. This time of year, has been traditionally described as joyous and magical. However, if you have lost a loved one that is most likely not how you are feeling at all. The holidays can stir up difficult and painful memories and in many circumstances feelings of deep sadness due to our loss. These feelings are to be expected and are a normal part of the grieving process. I have come to learn, however, that every adverse situation, especially the loss of a loved one, can provide an opportunity for growth and uplifting the spirit. We can push away and try to apply the proverbial "I'm fine" band aid and pretend that we are not hurting or even worse, put up walls for self-protection and isolation, but the truth is that by allowing ourselves the opportunity to reach out to others in need, we help in our own healing process. In giving we do receive. Giving comes in many forms and the reward for giving of your time, talent or treasure can act as a powerful growth spirit in the healing process. Even the smallest act of generosity has an amazing ripple effect. Remember the "pay it forward" principle? It really does feel good to do something nice especially when it is unexpected.

I always know that someone is on a good path of healing when they are able to reach out to others who are in need or hurting. This is the sometimes-unrealized benefit in participating in activities like volunteering or bereavement support groups. So many times, hearts have been mended by the words of others who have walked in similar shoes. We learn from each other that we are not alone. The encouragement that we receive and share helps to keep our minds positive, our hearts open and affirm that although our lives will not be the same, that there is hope for the future. With the holiday season rapidly approaching, I hope that you will join us by participating in our support groups. There truly is a special quality of healing that comes from being with others who are willing to listen and understand the pain of losing someone dear.

In this Newsletter you will find information about our Bereavement Support Groups, and "Surviving the Holidays" a four-week series specifically designed to offer support for the holiday season. We hope that you will join us and that you have a peaceful Holiday Season.

Peace to you. Dr. Karen





Suggested Dos and Don'ts- When Someone You Know Has Lost a Loved One

with Dr. Karen Turek, D.D., Ph.D.

Sometimes the most well-meaning friends and family can have difficulty knowing what to say or do when a loved one dies. The following are some tips that you may wish to share with them so that they can help and support you during this difficult time.

DO: Be specific when offering help. Some helpful tips are:

- Allow the person to express his or her feelings. Try to listen without offering advice or interrupting. If the person is open to it, a listening ear, a hug and a soft shoulder to cry on are great gifts from the heart. Remember, sometimes silence is what the grieving person wants and needs. Don't be uncomfortable in the silence.
- Be patient with the grieving person's myriad of moods. The bereaved often alternate between anger, sadness, numbness and acceptance and sometimes they will display all at once.
- Call from time to time to check in.
- Offer to run errands or get groceries.
- Drop off food, don't wait to be asked.
- Cut the grass, pull the weeds, shovel snow.
- Go for walks or enjoy a physical activity.
- Do an activity with them that they enjoy - maybe a game or going to the movies.
- Remember, grieving is a personal journey. There is no time limit on grieving. Be patient!

Appropriate things to say may include:

- I am sorry. My heart hurts for you., Tell me how I can support you.
- _____ was a good person and friend of mine. I will miss him or her.
- Please tell me what you are feeling, I have never been through something like this and can only imagine.
- It's ok if you do not feel like talking right now. Just know that I am here to listen whenever you are ready.
- If you are close enough—I love you, would you like a hug?
- Talk openly and directly about the person who died. Don't be afraid to say the deceased's name. and share stories.

DON'T:

- Try to avoid the bereaved person. It only makes them feel more isolated and alone.

Inappropriate things to say include:

- "I know how you feel." Truthfully, you don't know how they feel, no one does, whether you have been through a loss before or not!
- "You should." or "Time heals all wounds." Offering advice or quick solutions just ends up frustrating and upsetting the grieving person.
- "At least he's no longer in pain." Or "She's in a better place now." Or "It was God's timing or God's will."

Supporting a friend or family member through the grieving process is one of the kindest gifts we can share. It will never be forgotten and likely will help build a bond that will last a lifetime.



Bereavement Support Groups

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. We provide individual counseling sessions for family members whose loved ones have been on our service as well as bereavement support groups. There is no charge for our bereavement services.

Bereavement Support 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 from **1-2 pm.**

October 5th

November 2nd

December 7

In Person Bereavement Support Group: On **Third Tuesday** of the month we will provide an in-person open forum support group at our Reno Office located at 227 Vine St., Reno from **1-2 pm.**

October 19th

November 23

December 21st

Missing You at Christmas Author Unknown

Every day without you, since you had to go is like summer without sunshine and winter without snow. I wish that I could talk to you. There's so much I would say. Life has changed so very much since you went away.

I miss the bond between us, and I miss your kind support.
You're in my mind and in my heart and every Christmas thought.

I'll always feel you close to me and though you're far from sight. I'll search for you among the stars that shine on Christmas night.



Surviving the Holidays a Four Week Series on Zoom

Week One-Monday, November 22nd 1pm

How to create a Memory/Gratitude Box for reflection during the holiday season.

Week Two-Monday, November 29th 1pm

Uncharted Waters... We will be addressing what you can expect during the holidays following the loss of a loved one.

Week Three-Monday, December 6th 1pm

Creating a Survival Tool Box. We all need tools, right? In week three we will be highlighting self-care complete with relaxation techniques and suggested reading material.

Week Four-Monday, December 13th 1pm

Finding Grace in the little things! In week four of our “Surviving the Holidays” series we will focus on the good that is present in our lives.

We hope that you will join us for this informative bereavement support series. Educational material and worksheets will be provide.



Healing the Grieving Heart

Many times we have not only been our loved ones' caregivers but have truly sacrificed our own lives as we have dedicated all of our time and effort into the care of our loved ones through the duration of their illnesses. The gift of care that you gave is something that you did without hesitation and in many situations without consideration of your own physical and emotional well-being. After putting yourself aside in service of your loved one it is time to take care of "you."

An essential element for healing is the idea that you must lean into the pain. What does it mean to lean in to pain? Leaning into the pain means that there are no shortcuts to heal the grieving heart. It is a process that requires your participation. Healthy emotional healing is very much like that of a physical wound. It needs to heal from the inside out. Covering the wound on the surface and not dealing with the root leaves the potential for layers of infection to fester which can later erupt into a full blown dis-ease.

Before you can begin caring for yourself it is helpful to know where you're hurt. Similarly, to the way a doctor evaluates his patient's signs and symptoms to diagnose disease, you must focus your attention inward. Examining and measuring the emotions connected to life experience is a way to diagnose the cause of your own suffering. Through this introspection, insight and understanding of the self is discovered, truths begin to surface.

This process is necessary to develop an understanding of what may be causing the pain. "**The Four Elements of Spirituality**" is a discovery tool used to gauge your personal journey on the path of healing. These four elements have been identified as important to one's overall feeling of health and well-being. On a scale of 1 (being the lowest) to 5 (being the highest) where do you feel that your strengths and weaknesses are at this point in time:

The Four Dimensions of Spirituality are: Meaning, Forgiveness, Relatedness, and Hope

Meaning refers to your reason for getting out of bed every morning.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Please elaborate on your personal rating

Forgiveness deals with those experiences, feelings, grudges, etc. that you need to let go of.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Please elaborate on your personal rating

Relatedness is defined by the sense of connection you have with the people and things that matter most to you.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Please elaborate on your personal rating

Hope describes how you trust what the future holds.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Please elaborate on your personal rating

Identifying your strengths and weaknesses is one of the first steps in the journey towards healing your grieving heart. We will be addressing "**The Four Elements of Spirituality**" as well as sharing other important healing tools in our "Surviving the Holidays" series. We hope that you will join us.