



Summer: July-August-September



Summer is a gentle time of the year with longer days, warmer nights and Mother Nature filling our senses with her beauty. It is a good time to carve out opportunities for spending time outdoors as we emerge from the cool, wet days of winter and spring. It is also a good time for being gentle with ourselves while navigating through the grieving process.

After a loved one dies, it is especially important to be gentle with ourselves. Our health can suffer as a result of grief from stress, loss of sleep, and poor nutrition. The following are a few tips that you can incorporate into your daily life as reminders to be gentle on yourself.

Tips for Gentle Living

Reduce/Eliminate Over-Thinking-We don't need to have the answers to all of life's riddles. Life is truly a great mystery. Overthinking is closely related to anxiety.

Accept What Is-Sometimes we have to accept things as they are. Letting go of control is a challenge to say the least but when we do there is most always a sense of peace that comes along with the release.

Be Still- Absorb the sound of the wind through the trees, the light and the shadows, the peace, and simply appreciate the stillness. It's meditative and calming. Make time for stillness regularly.

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others- Everyone has their own journey as they navigate through grief. Your grief is exactly that, **yours**.

Forgive Yourself. Forgive Others- Forgiveness is one of our most powerful allies. Forgive the people in your life who harmed you and forgive yourself for your own mistakes. It will liberate you from pain, anger, resentment and negativity. Anger, grudges and resentment hurt no one more than the person holding them.

Allow Yourself to Feel Whatever You're Feeling- Sometimes you'll get down, really down. Sometimes you'll get hurt. It's okay. Don't fight it, lean into the pain.

Be of Service and Connect with Others- Try to find ways to be of service. There are a lot of opportunities for helping people, animals and the environment. Find ways that inspire you, that speak to you and fill your heart. Remember, giving is receiving!

Breathe Deeply- Take deep luscious breaths from way down in your diaphragm. Breathing deeply provides more oxygen to your brain and helps eliminate toxins. It has a calming effect and can help when anxiety surfaces.

Nutrition and Grief- Grief expends an enormous amount of energy. You may not be able to face a big meal, but you can probably nibble on something. Eat frequent small nourishing snacks to keep you going. Don't forget to drink plenty of water. Dehydration can cause a multitude of health issues. If you find yourself eating too much, try eating smaller amounts more often, and choose foods that are healthy. Stock up on nourishing snack foods. Fruits, cheeses, veggies, and yogurt are all very good choices.

In this Newsletter you will find information about our Bereavement Support Groups, monthly Workshops and informative articles to support you on your path of healing. May you find peace and comfort at this difficult time. Dr. Karen

A Plus Hospice Care (775) 329-0900





RITUALS OF REMEMBRANCE

Susan Palwick, Spiritual Care Counselor, A Plus Hospice Care

Personal rituals can help us as we grieve. Ritual is a container for emotion, a boat in which we can navigate the currents of loss. It provides a safe space for our deepest feelings.

Every morning for two weeks after my father died, I lit a candle, played his favorite piece of music -- Ralph Vaughn Williams' Lark Ascending -- and wrote a letter to him in my journal until the music ended. There was a lot I needed to say. I was angry at myself for not being there when he died, and angry at him for dying when I was out of the room. I was exhausted from five months of caregiving. I was heartbroken that things he'd wanted to do, like one last trip out to Pyramid Lake, hadn't been possible.

Writing the letters helped me forgive myself, and him, for all these hurts. The feel of the pen in my hands grounded me. The candle flame showed me light in the darkness. The music reassured me that beauty continues and comforts.

What ritual might you create to help you move through your grief?

What sensory reminders of your loved one would it include? The feel of a cherished blanket, the smell of a favorite flower, the sight of a treasured photograph: all of these connect us to those we have lost.

What would you do during the ritual? Writing or recording a message, or making a piece of artwork, engage both body and mind, satisfying the need to create in the face of loss.

How would you mark the end of the ritual? Such a limit assures us that grief need not be overwhelming, that we can mourn deeply while still attending to our daily tasks.

Whatever ritual you create, may it bring you connection, comfort, and healing.



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 you wish to receive. We provide individual counseling sessions for family members whose loved ones have been on our service via in person visits, telephone or FaceTime as well as in person Bereavement Groups and monthly Zoom Bereavement Groups.

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.**

July 5h

August 2nd

September 6th

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.**

July 19th

August 16th

September 20th

Contact Dr. Karen to be added to the Zoom email invite list for Groups

at karen@aplushospicecare.com



Getting back to the Basics...

Human touch! Karen Turek, D.D., Ph.D.

Some may disagree but, I believe that after this long period of COVID isolation, especially after the loss of your loved one, it is time to get back to the basics of being human!

Human touch is a healing modality, a sacred unspoken language, that is second to none in its positive benefits. It signals reassurance, comfort, safety, trust, compassion, empathy, and of course caring and love. There is no other form of communicating more unfailing and effective. It speaks volumes when words cannot be delivered. It connects us in our humanness making us feel cared for both physically and emotionally. Simply, the warmth of human touch can go a long way in making us feel better. And, yes, hugs or a pat on the back are wonderful ways to interact.

When people are deprived of appropriate human touch, whether it be a newborn or an elderly person, the effects can be long term and serious. Studies have provided a long list of conditions that may develop ranging from slow cognition to anxiety and depression. Human contact stimulates various chemical reactions. One of the most wonderful is the feel-good chemical, oxytocin.

More great news, most of us are pre-programed to understand the sacred language of touch. It doesn't require any special skills or education, simply a sincere true-hearted desire to care and be cared for. So, I encourage you to give out those magical hugs and handshakes! Let's heal our hearts and those we care for one touch at a time!

Letting go of Negative Thoughts-Dr. Karen

*Whatever a person frequently thinks and reflects on,
that will become the inclination of their mind. Buddha*

I believe Buddha was right, whatever we regularly think, and believe, often becomes our reality. How many times a day do your thoughts repeat themselves? Wouldn't it be great if the looping was of a positive nature? Unfortunately, mostly that is not the case, and we generally tend to focus on negative reruns. So, how to we correct incessant negative loops? Well...paying attention to your repeated inner language is a good first step and then comes the tricky part...redirecting your thoughts into a positive direction. Sometimes it is easier to have a simple replacement thought ready, or to ask yourself, "is this really true?" It may not feel like you are making progress at first, but a new pattern will develop with practice. Planting loving thoughts will eventually take root creating a more positive platform for growth and healing your heart from the inside out.

About Tears...

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power.
They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues.
They are messengers of overwhelming grief...and unspeakable love." - Washington Irving



The Flip Side of Grief...

A big part of recovering after loss involves alchemy: understanding grief as the flip side of love. After all, we only grieve those things that we loved deeply, whether it be a beloved family member, a relationship, a significant time in our lives, or even a family pet. So to feel deep grief, then, is to also have experienced deep love.

When we are grieving, it can be hard to put into words the wide array of emotions that we feel: regret, outrage, sadness, guilt, and helplessness among them. In times like this it's often helpful to turn to the wise words of others who have also experienced grief - both as a means of support and a reminder that things will get easier over time.

In the words of Helen Keller... What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes part of us.

Forgiveness is Freedom

Karen Turek, D.D., Ph.D.

Forgiveness does not mean condoning hurtful behavior, but it does involve the tricky act of letting go of the past. Resentment literally means to *re-feel* or feel again... and again. It saps our energy and allows us to be controlled by another whether they are alive or have made their transition into their next expression of life. Our unwillingness, or inability, to forgive someone that we feel has wronged us attaches us more to the pain of not having closure in a bruised or fractured relationship.

Forgiveness work is not a weak or passive act, it is a conscious step toward freedom. There is an old saying, "We do not forgive others because they deserve it, we forgive because we deserve it." As we all know, the act of forgiveness cannot be forced but once achieved, forgiveness offers the freedom to release and heal the burdened heart. Forgiveness will not change the past, but it will assuredly change the present, and possibly the future, forever.

With that in mind, I am often asked if there is anything we can do to make peace with less-than-perfect relationships even after a loved one dies? I believe that "yes" there are in fact a number of ways to release yourself from the grip of unforgiveness. One very solid tool is scribing letters, *that you do not send*, to people who have hurt you—alive or passed on. It can be liberating to organize your thoughts and express your feelings on paper. Knowing the letter is not actually going to be sent, we give ourselves complete freedom to express raw emotions and let go of self-destructive energy.

Unforgiveness, is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. It is self-defeating, especially if the person has already died. We are not held by the precedence of the past, only to the actions that we give power. Going over and over a particular incident, or incidents, for the sake of justifying that it hurt you only serves to get you stuck in the past and gives power to your pain. Unfortunately, the wound/unforgiveness often times becomes the defining characteristic of your less than perfect relationship. Remember even difficult relationships most likely have a few good parts. Focusing on the good helps in the forgiveness process.

So, the next time an old wound surfaces or a new one appears, I encourage you to consider the many advantages of forgiveness and the freedom that you deserve. Peace and Freedom! Dr. Karen

