



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

June 2017

"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face"

Mike Tyson

St. Luke's Hospice

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If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact Dawn at 484-526-2499.

There are a few things in life that are certain, and one is that things can, and do, change in an instant. When we are faced with circumstances that have completely upended our plans, expectations and hopes, it is hard to know how we may really react. When we are handed the proverbial punch in the face, it is hard to predict how we will behave.

Certainly in the cases of a sudden or traumatic death, the way we behave and act will have a sense of reactivity to it. However, the same can be said for how we react when the death we experienced was after a long illness – there is always an element of surprise when we experience death and are faced with the finality of our loved one's life. We can be told our loved one has months, days, maybe just hours left to live, yet in that final moment, we can experience a sense of surprise and shock that it has actually happened. When we are preparing for death, we often participate in what psychologists Timothy Wilson and Daniel Gilbert call affective forecasting, which basically means predicting how we will feel in the future. **Good news:** we are pretty good at predicting the *types* of emotions we'll experience. **Bad news:** we tend to overestimate how long these emotions will last and how intense they will be.

So, when we get that punch in the face, what do we do? We have been knocked off our rocker and are left experiencing feelings that are new, alien, and confusing. I think it's important to apply Wilson and Gilbert's work to our own grieving; remember that we are often pretty good at identifying the many and varied emotions we *may* experience, but also realize that we may be off in our estimation of exactly how these emotions will influence our behavior. When we are grieving, we aren't at our strongest. We aren't always thinking straight. We can feel alone and defeated. These are all things that impact how we behave while we are grieving.

Perhaps the greatest gift you can give yourself as you grieve is to allow yourself to feel whatever emotion is present to you at that moment. Our feelings can be intense and strong, and come and go in an instant; allow yourself to be with your feelings and acknowledge that they are present and existing within you. Have patience that it may take you longer than expected, or wanted. Give yourself grace if you start to experience feelings that you didn't expect. You already know you are going to react...give yourself permission to do it in whatever way it may reveal itself. After all, you were just punched in the face and you weren't prepared – the best any of us can do is make a new plan when that happens.

-Mindy

"She stood in the storm, and when the wind did not blow her way, she adjusted her sails"

Elizabeth Edwards

6 Week Grief and Loss Group

Our 6 week Grief and Loss Support Group will start again in August 2017. This group is for adults grieving the loss of someone significant in their lives and provides an opportunity to come together with others who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The group guides participants in understanding the uniqueness of their grief. Please note that this is not a therapeutic group; this group provides support, resources and education on the healing process. Information on dates and how to register will be announced in upcoming newsletters.



Open /Drop-in Support Groups

Our Drop-In groups are designed to offer continued support to bereaved individuals who have already attended grief and loss programs through St. Luke's Hospice. Drop-In groups afford participants the chance to continue with supportive services. This group is facilitated, but directed by group members in terms of content and discussion. We currently offer the following Drop-In Support Groups:

Easton: First Monday of every month from 4:00 -5:00 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Anderson Campus, Medical Office Building (MOB), 1872 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, PA 18045 in Conference Room A.

Quakertown: Second Monday of every month from 6:30-7:30 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, PA 18951 in Taylor B Conference room.

Bethlehem: Fourth Monday of every month from 6:00 - 7:00 pm at St. Luke's Pricilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 in Room 112.

Newly Bereaved Workshop

This one-time workshop is for those who have a lost a loved one within the past 1-3 months and will provide education on the first few weeks and months of grief following a death. We will cover understanding common grief reactions, coping strategies, self-care throughout the grief process and beyond, and the uniqueness of your grief experience. These workshops will be offered on a bi-monthly basis. We will meet on **Wednesday, July 19, 2017 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm.** We will meet at the Pricilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). **Registration is required:** please call Mindy at (484)526-2314 or email Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org. The next workshop will be scheduled in September.

Lehighton News :

Lehighton Open Group: We meet for our Drop In/Open Group on the **Third Monday of every month from 3:00 - 4:00 pm** at Dinkey Memorial Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehighton, PA 18212. All members of the community who are in need of bereavement support are invited to attend.



"It seldom happens that a man changes his life through his habitual reasoning. No matter how fully he may sense the new plans and aims revealed to him by reason, he continues to plod along in old paths until his life becomes frustrating and unbearable - he finally makes the change only when his usual life can no longer be tolerated."

Leo Tolstoy

Resources

New Reading:



Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy

By Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant



Jacob's Valentine

By JoAnne DeKeuster

From Facebook's COO and Wharton's top-rated professor, *Option B* is a powerful, inspiring, and practical book about building resilience and moving forward after life's setbacks. *Option B* combines Sheryl's personal insights with Adam's eye-opening research on finding strength in the face of adversity. Beginning with the gut-wrenching moment when she finds her husband, Dave Goldberg, collapsed on a gym floor, Sheryl opens up her heart—and her journal—to describe the acute grief and isolation she felt in the wake of his death. But *Option B* goes beyond Sheryl's loss to explore how a broad range of people have overcome hardships including illness, job loss, assault, natural disasters, and the violence of war. Their stories reveal the capacity of the human spirit to persevere . . . and to rediscover joy.

www.amazon.com

This children's book beautifully illustrates the importance of keeping connected to those we have lost, sometimes a difficult task for children to fully understand. "Jacob's Valentine" is a beautiful, uplifting story of how one little boy finds closure after the death of his mother. Death and grief are difficult for children to accept and understand. This story was written to help children cope with the loss of any loved one. The book is intended to be read to the child by an adult. It is written for children of all ages.

www.enchantedcirclepottery.com



We hope you will be able to join us for our first annual Balloon Release, which is scheduled for June 25, 2017 at Dinkey Memorial Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehighton, PA 18212. If you need more information or would like to register, please call Infolink at 484-526-7900

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

This is a listing of free bereavement resources in the area. If you have a need for something and don't see it on this list, please call the Bereavement Office at (484) 526-2499 for referrals to other services.

Cancer Support Community of Lehigh Valley is a local non-profit organization providing emotional and social support to family members and caregivers. They offer support groups, educational workshops and mind/body classes in their Allentown, PA office. Programs are free, but registration is required. Call 610-861-7555 or email info@cancersupportglv.org to register or for more information.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support groups for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling. www.thecompassionatefriends.org

TCF of Lehigh Valley meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2nd floor, 421 Chew Street in Allentown. The group meets the 2nd Monday each month at 7pm. For more information, call 610-837-7924.

TCF of Quakertown meets at St. Luke's Hospital, ground floor, 1021 Park Ave in Quakertown in Taylor Conference Rooms A&B. This group is held the 2nd Tuesday each month from 7:30 – 9pm. For more information, call 215-536-0173.

TCF of Easton meets the 2nd Thursday each month from 7-9pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd. in Easton. For more information call 610-866-5468.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress, and Life Transitions offered by Wendy Littner Thomson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. First session offered for free to caregivers whose loved one recently received hospice services from St Luke's Hospice. For location, times, or more information, please call 610-730-1992 www.givinggriefavoice.com

Free Spirits is a group of more than 2 dozen older widows who go out to lunch once a month to keep active and offer support to each other and to newer widows. Most are members of Church of the Manger UCC, Bethlehem. Call 610-866-8223 for more information.

Soaring Spirits Regional Group Lehigh Valley social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, contact Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057 or soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com.

HALOS - CLC is for parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the loss of a child or sibling to suicide. The group meets every 4th Thursday from 6:30-8:30 pm at Hughes Library in Stroudsburg, PA. Register with Alice Keyes at (570) 236-1168

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Center offers an Open Group on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Registration is required, contact Ariel at (610) 347-9988 or ariel@bradburysullivancenter.org. The Center is located at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, PA 18101. There is no charge for the group.

GriefShare Groups are a faith-based approach to grief and loss. GriefShare groups are provided at several locations in the Lehigh Valley. To find a location near you, please visit www.griefshare.org.

St. Francis Retreat House holds monthly grief support groups on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 9:30-11:00 am. Located at 3918 Chipman Avenue, Easton PA. Please call 610-515-9028 for more information.

GRASP - For families who have experienced a death due to substance use. Group meets every 3rd Monday of the month from 7-8:30 pm at 1st Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Room 118. Please register with Nancy Howe (484) 788-9440

Stepping Stones for Adolescents is a group for teens ages 11-16 that meets at Lehigh Valley Hospice for teen peer support. Call (610)969-0330 for more information.

VNA/Hospice of Monroe County offers a support group the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month at noon. Call 570-421-5390 for more information.

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 for more information.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups, including a widow/widower group, a young survivors group, and an adult loss group. Visit www.dhospice.com or call 215-345-2838.