



E-Mail Newsletter

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Taking care of you

From *Surviving to Transcending Your Grief* by Martha M. Tousley, CNS-BC, FT

Recognizing Your Own Progress

How do you know you're making progress in your mourning?

Remember that change isn't always obvious and dramatic; it is a process that takes place over time. The grief experience is different for everyone; it doesn't happen all at once or at the same rate of speed. And unless you're aware of the clues to recovery and their significance, your progress through grief may be so subtle and so gradual that you will not notice it at all.

If you can recognize certain changes in attitudes, feelings and behaviors in yourself, you can measure your own progress through grief. Become aware of your own healing. Notice when you are able to:

Drive somewhere by yourself without crying the entire time.
Get through a day without feeling tired all the time.
Concentrate on a book, movie, or television program.
Not think of your loved one for a period of time, however brief.
Get through a few hours or days nearly free of pain.
Return to a daily routine.
Eat, sleep and exercise normally again.
Participate in a religious service without crying.
Accept invitations from friends and family.
Listen to music you both loved without crying.
Be more aware of the pain and suffering of others around you.
Be more patient with yourself and with others.
Notice others in like circumstances, and recognize and accept that loss is a common life experience.
Reach out to another in a similar situation.
Realize that the sometimes-thoughtless comments of others stem from ignorance, not malice.
Find something to be thankful for.
Be patient with yourself through grief attacks.
Feel confident again.
Accept things as they are without trying to recapture the way they used to be.
Think less about the past.
Look forward to the day ahead of you.
Reach out to the future less fearfully.
Stop and notice life's little pleasures, the splendor of creation and the beauty in nature.
Catch yourself smiling and laughing again.
Feel comfortable spending time alone.
Remember your loved one less idealistically— as less perfect, with more human than saintly qualities.
Review both pleasant and unpleasant memories without being overcome by them.
Reinvest the time and energy once spent on your loved one.
Remodel your space: rearrange furniture; change colors and textures of walls.
Re-make your image: change your hairstyle, make-up, or clothing.
Explore new foods, new places, and new things.
Feel more in control of your emotions and less overwhelmed by them.
Feel freer to choose when and how to grieve.
Talk about your loss more easily.
Feel less preoccupied with yourself and your loss.
Feel a renewed interest in giving love and receiving it.

"Friends

Helping

Friends."

Everyday is

A gift, that's

why we

call

today,

"the

present"

Look back and see your own progress.
Notice that time doesn't drag as much; the weekends aren't as long.
Notice that the good days outnumber the bad; the mood swings aren't as wide; the time between upsets is greater.
Plan the future more effectively.
Think more clearly and feel more in control of certain aspects of your life.
Make decisions and take responsibility for the consequences.
Feel open to new and healthy relationships while maintaining old ones.
Discover abilities in yourself you haven't developed before or didn't even know you had.
Fill some of the roles once filled by your loved one, or find others who can fill them.
Recognize that loss has played an important part in your life, and that growth can be a positive outcome.
Identify how this experience has changed you for the better: what you've learned, what you've become, and how you've grown.
Share the lessons you have learned through loss with others.

Some of the things on the list above you probably haven't even realized you may have started to do. Even one thing stated above that you have accomplished is progress. We all grieve differently, but at some point we do grow within ourselves and see the progress we have made. Some say we heal, but never get over it, this is true for most people, we may never get over it, but we can grow from the experience and learn how to live a new life which can be good again if you do the work. Sitting around and feeling like you are the only one in the world who has lost a loved one will not help you to accept the situation. We can all think of someone we know who is dealing with something terrible. We were all lucky to have been loved by the person who died, some people may never have had the love we had, so you see life isn't always fair but we have to work with what we have and make the best of what we do have.

Until next month

Good grief

AnneGD@groww.org

From our Webmaster Rachel

Every so often it is nice to revisit what GROWW has to offer. Here are some helpful hints.

Our **message boards** are password protected for your protection. There is a link on the main page where you are able to access the form to request permission to post. If you are unable to use the form please send an email to password@groww.org with the following information. All the information must be provided for access to be allowed. This information will only be accessible to the Webmaster and staff. Please allow a couple of days for approval.

Please type in the subject - Password no form

First name and first 2 letters of your last name

Screen name

Name you wish to use when posting

Password (you pick so you are able to remember it)

Valid email address (free email accounts are only accepted with special permission)

We offer many **chat rooms** where you will find friends helping friends. We offer compassion, support and hope as you slowly start to heal. Not everything you hear will work for you. Take what works for you and throw the rest away. Your grief, your relationship, and your loss are unique to you. Come with an open mind and I am sure you will hear something positive that you are able to take and apply to your own grief.

If you are having trouble accessing the chat rooms make sure your java is updated. If you experience a blue screen that is a clear sign that your java is not updated, go to <http://java.sun.com/getjava/download.html> to download the current version of java.

Do you have a firewall? Have you recently installed a new program, has your system added any automatic updates, or made changes to your settings?

When selecting your **nickname**, keep in mind we have hundreds of members. If you use your name i.e.: Mary, please add, numbers or letters on the end. The letters of the State you live in i.e.: NY, or maybe the initial of your last name. It will make it easier for us to remember you.

We use many **shortcuts**. If you do not understand something, please ask. We will be happy to explain them to you. We were all new once. Some of the more common ones are (((((()))))) ← hugs, ty - thank you, yw - you're welcome, brb - be right back, bay - back at you, jbic/jbily - just because I care/just because I love you, tc - take care, lol – laughing out loud, wb – welcome back, gmta – great minds think alike.

Changing the **font size** in the chat room may make it much easier to follow. Click on the button which says FLOAT... it will open a new window... now MAXIMIZE that window by clicking on the square in the upper right hand corner... the square is between the "-" and the "x"... it will make the room larger... then in the type box, type exactly *chat fontsize 14 (or any other size you select 16, 18, etc.) Please note there is no space between * and chat.

Email to heaven is closed until further notice due to the very nasty and inappropriate spam. We have tried password protecting the page, blocking the spammers IP's and still they have managed to post. We will continue to work on the problem and let you know when/if we are successful. We apologize for the inconvenience.

We hope you find this information helpful. If you have questions or have ideas that you would like us to address please email staff@groww.org. If you are having problems accessing the site please

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provide as much information as possible. We will do our best to help.

Remember to be gentle with you as you walk this road.

Introducing Angels of Addiction -

Many of us who go only to the main GROWW rooms (GR/GFW/HA) know that there are many branch rooms, but may know little about them. Beginning with this issue of the Newsletter, we will highlight one of the branch rooms per issue.

The following was written by AAHostDianeF, one of the truly awesome hosts of Angels of Addiction:

In our meetings of parents who have lost a child through substance abuse, we can all share our feelings... our happy times and our sad times. And most importantly, we each understand the unique circumstances surrounding a death associated with substance abuse. Here, in Angels of Addiction or Fallen Angels, we are able to share without fear of stigma. We do not judge our children by the manner of their passing. This is why we are a password-protected room.

Grief has no schedule. You do not "get over it," but rather proceed along grief's path... a long and arduous journey greatly facilitated by sharing feelings, memories, and empathy for and with others in similar circumstances.. Grief gets softer with time; we all grieve in our own way, at our own pace.

Our chat times are Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 8 - 10 p.m. (All times are Eastern). You can share or just listen... we can even chat one-on-one, if you like. At times, we all need this too.

Remembering and Missing ^i^ all of our dear children.

AAHostDianeF (aka: scream)
AAHostLindaR (aka: cloudskyz)
GRHostMicheleD (aka: demz)

Submitted by: Barby with a great big thank you to Diane and all the wonderful Hosts who give their love and compassion to others.



Terry Bears

Terry Bears are made by a member of GROWW, she first started it as therapy after her husband Terry died, hence the name Terry Bears. She started making them for the grandkids and herself and then other family member. It also helps to supplement her income and provides memories for others. She also made some GROWW Bears for the Niagara Falls Gathering in 2007.

If you are interested in purchasing these bears or have any questions please write to terrybearmemories@comcast.net.

If anyone has a craft that they do and would like to let our members know, email me at annegd@groww.org

We'd be happy to share it with our members.

Gatherings

June had 2 mini- gatherings. Heavenly Angels had one in Tunica, MS and Widowed had one in Rapid City, SD. Please see the link from the Heavenly Angels photo's <http://www.groww.org/Gatherings/tunicams2008.html>
We did not receive any pictures from the SD gathering.

Anyone can have a Gathering; it doesn't have to be big or fancy. The Heavenly Angels group even had their own T-shirts made, what a cool idea.

Gatherings are a lot of work, and turn out isn't always great. With the price of gas and plane tickets, it's nearly impossible to go anywhere without it costing a fortune.

We do miss the big Gatherings that the folks in MI used to put on, almost a third of GROWW's donations came from that one Gathering.

Health Tip

NURSE'S HEART ATTACK EXPERIENCE

I am an ER nurse and this is the best description of this event that I have ever heard. Please read, pay attention, and send it on!

Diane K.in AZ

FEMALE HEART ATTACKS

I was aware that female heart attacks are different, but this is the best description I've ever read.

Women and heart attacks (Myocardial infarction). Did you know that women rarely have the same dramatic symptoms that men have when experiencing heart attack. You know, the sudden stabbing pain in the chest, the cold sweat, grabbing the chest & dropping to the floor that we see in the movies. Here is the story of one woman's experience with a heart attack.

'I had a heart attack at about 10:30 PM with NO prior exertion; NO prior emotional trauma that one would suspect might've brought it on. I was sitting all snugly & warm on a cold evening, with my purring cat in my lap, reading an interesting story my friend had sent me, and actually thinking, 'A-A-h, this is the life, all cozy and warm in my soft, cushy Lazy Boy with my feet propped up.

A moment later, I felt that awful sensation of indigestion, when you've been in a hurry and grabbed a bite of sandwich and washed it down with a dash of water, and that hurried bite seems to feel like you've swallowed a golf ball going down the esophagus in slow motion

Phil's Corner

Hi guyz, well its Sunday July 13, 2008, I'm sitting here watching SportsCenter and her nibs Ms Anne asked me if I started my article for the July 15th deadline. I looked to see when the last article I submitted was and saw it was in February of this year, yeah yeah yeah I know I've been slacking.

With Anne passing her 11th anniversary and mine coming up in December all I can say is wow. To this day I still don't know how Judy put up with that crazy Irishman JimK. How do we manage to get the rooms paid ever year? How do we keep up with the message boards? How do we manage to keep the site going everyday despite most of us having real jobs? Simple, an incredible core of folks who will not let Judy Divers dream die. Over the past years hundreds or possibly thousands of folks have passed through GROWW. Whether visiting the chat rooms or using our message boards some folks stayed for awhile and some never left. JudyD, JimK4, Adean, Marilyn, Franknc were just some of the folks who left GROWW to go to wherever we go when we leave this life. We were part of each others lives for a few hours each night. Some would jump in to the flow of the room; others would sit in the corner and occasionally utter a sentence or two. Just the fact that they were surrounded by folks who understood what they were going through was enough comfort.

To those of you guyz who have donated to GROWW, thank you for helping keep Judy's dream alive. To those of you who could not find what you needed at GROWW, I

wish you luck in finding that place that will. Finally thanks to our dedicated hosts and staff who keep the site safe and available to the newbie who is looking for the best place they never wanted to need. Oh and by the way, I miss that crazy Irishman.

If there is anything you would like to see in the Newsletter or contribute, please send it to newsletter@growwv.org. Interesting articles, recipes, poetry or anything else that you found helped you and might help others.

The next issue will be sent on Sept. 15th, until then, be safe and take care of yourself.