

The Next Step

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The Journey of Grief

Bruce Thomas, Bereavement Coordinator (Hillsville, VA)

As individuals, we all are affected by loss differently. As a result, we deal with loss and the grief that comes with it in different ways.

Most everyone has suffered a loss — some more than others. During the average lifetime, loss is inevitable. While that is true, it is also true that you can successfully travel through this journey called grief and live again.

I once worked with a client who shared with me that she “grieved the loss of

her husband, while he was sick” and “didn’t need any bereavement services.” Four months later, she called saying she “couldn’t handle it anymore and would like to talk.” Which we did.

As I listened, and as she came to realize that grief for her was indeed like a journey, she commented, “I just want the grief to be over.” I pointed out to her that sometimes the journey of grief is like being on an interstate: Get on it and get to the destination as soon as possible. In a way, she



wanted to arrive at her destination of freedom from grief as quickly as she possibly could. It is like going somewhere while asking, “Are we there yet?” What she also came to

realize is that sometimes grief’s journey is not driving on an interstate, but instead, like walking on a dusty, gravel road in the country: slow and tiring. That was where she was.

She accepted the challenge of the “gravel road” and, in time, began to enjoy the benefits she experienced while traveling through her journey of grief.

If you find yourself on grief’s journey, we would like the opportunity to walk with you as you travel.

Kids Path Offers Grief Support for the Oft-Overlooked Bereaved

Camp registration is now available.

Ben Webb, Bereavement Coordinator (Mount Airy, NC)

Often overlooked in the events that surround a death, are children who do not fully understand what has happened. Though a child’s grief may be different in duration or expression, it is no less real than the grief of adults.

Children’s questions linger, fears grow, and worries persist. A child’s misunderstanding of death and the dying process often contribute more stress to an already painful situation. Author and grief expert Alan Wolfelt said, “Anyone old enough to love is old enough

to grieve.” The depth of a child’s grief is not determined by the number of days lived but by the measure of love experienced with the one whom has been lost.

Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care recognizes the challenges families face during a time of sickness and loss. Through our Kids Path Bereavement Support Program, we wish to assist children affected by illness and loss. We understand that every child and situation is unique. Therefore, we strive to offer grief support that will meet the needs of children in

ways that will most benefit them. An individual meeting with one of our staff is a great way to assess a child’s specific needs and provide age-appropriate support and education.

Brighter Days Children Support Group and Camp are two options provided for families. The children’s support group meets quarterly for six consecutive nights at Mountain Valley Hospice’s corporate office in Mount Airy. In this group, we seek to provide a safe environment where children

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Brighter Days Camp Calendar

June 20 (Children and teens)
DeHart Park
Stuart, VA
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

July 15 (K-5 to 5th grade)
Beechnut Family Campground
Mount Airy, NC
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

July 16 (6th to 8th grades)
Beechnut Family Campground
Mount Airy, NC
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Death Is Nothing At All (Abridged)

Henry Scott-Holland, Canon of St Paul's Cathedral

Death is nothing at all.
 I have only slipped away into the
 next room.
 I am I, and you are you.
 Whatever we were to each other,
 that we are still.
 Call me by my own familiar name.
 Speak to me in the easy way you
 always used.
 Put no difference into your tone.
 Wear no forced air of solemnity or
 sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed,
 at the little jokes we always
 enjoyed together.
 Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
 Let my name be ever the household
 word that it always was.
 Let it be spoken without effort,
 without the ghost of a shadow in it.
 Life means all that it ever was.
 There is absolute unbroken
 continuity.

Why should I be out of mind
 because I am out of sight?
 I am waiting for you for an interval,
 somewhere very near.
 Just around the corner.
 All is well.

Do you know someone who may benefit from hospice services? Recommend Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care. We offer an experience like no other hospice, providing the care and support your loved one deserves.

Ask the Staff: “Getting Through, Not Over, the Grief Process”

Josh Armstrong, Bereavement Coordinator (Pilot Mountain, NC)

Q: “I’ve been grieving for almost a year. Friends tell me I should ‘get over’ my loved one’s death, but I can’t. How much longer will my grief last?”

A: I wish I could tell you that grief has a set expiration date, a certain time or anniversary on which the pain you feel inside will suddenly end. However, the truth is that there may not be an end to *when* you grieve, but rather *how* you grieve. Initially, the negative feelings may be overwhelming. The goal is to gradually focus less on your loved one’s *death* and more on his or her *life*.

The grieving process can take longer than expected. Your friends may not understand this, even if they, too, have suffered from a loss. They may try to offer advice or comfort, unknowingly saying

hurtful things. They may even try to provide tough love, telling you when to move on. Just remember it is *your* grief, not theirs, and *you* have the final say on how you handle it. Ultimately, your grief is incomparable to anyone else’s, because everyone’s grief is as unique as a snowflake or a fingerprint.

You will have good days and bad days, depending on whatever memories come to you. The grieving process is described as a roller coaster, taking you high one day and low the next. To ensure more of the good days, take care of yourself. Employ a proper diet with plenty of rest and exercise to trigger the body’s natural defenses against negative feelings. When the bad days arrive, seek the support of friends and your Mountain Valley Hospice

bereavement coordinator. If the grief becomes absolutely unbearable, please seek the help of a medical professional.

The grieving process is a journey we all must face. We may not know its length nor its twists and turns. However, we can take comfort in knowing we don’t have to walk this journey alone.

Have a question for Mountain Valley Hospice’s bereavement team? Contact us at mtnvalleyhospice.org/forms/contact, and we may feature it in an upcoming issue.



Visit our Grief Resources section at **The Mount Airy Public Library**, for more bereavement materials.

The Next Step newsletter and all other bereavement services are offered at no cost to the community, courtesy of Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care. If one would like to make a donation, please contact Sheila Jones at 336-789-2922, or visit mtnvalleyhospice.org/forms/donate.



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Stuart, VA
276-694-4416
 Patricia Morris, BS, TRS

Bereavement Staff and Support Groups

Mount Airy
 2nd Tuesday of every month
 9:00 a.m. Good Mourning with Fonda
 Prime Sirloin

4th Tuesday of every month
 11:30 a.m. Fonda's Lunch Bunch
 Golden Corral

Elkin
 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month
 10:00 a.m. "Living with Grief"
 Matty's Restaurant

1st Monday of every month
 7:00 p.m. "Transitioning to the New"
 Fairfield Inn

4th Monday of every month
 7:00 p.m. Prime Time with Lisa
 (Loss of spouse in one's 30s, 40s, and 50s)
 Fairfield Inn

Stuart
 3rd Wednesday of every month
 1:30 p.m. Support with Patricia
 Stuart United Methodist Church

Wilkes County
 1st and 3rd Monday of every month
 2:00 p.m. Listening with Lisa
 Rose Glen Village • Wilkesboro

Yadkin County
 1st Thursday of every month
 11:30 a.m. Sharing with Sarah
 Ace's Restaurant • Yadkinville

Hillsville
 3rd Thursday of every month
 11:30 a.m. Moments with Bruce
 Hillsville Office

Kids Path cont.



*Michael shows off his "hand-ywork."
 Painting was one of the many activities
 kids enjoyed at last year's camp.*

can share their feelings through discussion and activities while building friendships with others who have experienced similar loss.

Our annual grief camp is a one-day experience. This year, it will be held at Beechnut Campground in Surry County. The camp is provided for children and teens, kindergarten through 8th grade, who have experienced significant loss.

Through games, activities, and group discussion, campers learn the feelings and emotions they are experiencing are normal and can be expressed in healthy ways. Campers will enjoy zip lining, swimming, and a special memorial service, all while learning new skills to cope with grief and build confidence for the future. Although the support groups and camp are

provided at no cost to the participants, **pre-registration is required.** To receive more information, contact Mountain Valley Hospice at 336-789-2922 or 888-789-2922.

Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care Bereavement Services

Following a patient's death, Mountain Valley provides specialized grief support services to help loved ones cope with their loss. These services are provided as part of hospice care for routinely 13 months, at no cost to the recipient, and include:

- Grief counseling and education
- Face-to-face and phone sessions
- Monthly support groups
- Monthly newsletter

For questions and comments, contact Mountain Valley Hospice at 336-789-2922 or 888-789-2922, or mtnvalleyhospice.org.

*Grief is not a disorder, a disease or sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love.
The only cure for grief is to grieve.*

— **Dr. Earl Grollman**
Author and Grief Specialist

Return Service Requested

