

What is Lost, What is Left, What is Possible

Grief's Likeness to Fall, from *The Austin Center for Grief & Loss*

As we prepare for a transition into cool mornings and early sunsets, I have been taking the time to reflect on how nature beautifully represents our mission at Austin Grief. As the trees let go of their leaves in preparation for a season of rest and recovery, it allows me to reflect on what is lost, what is left, and what is possible.



process. Everything is still very much alive and fully functioning. As we move into the "what is left" phase of grief, this can be a similar experience. While our life will never be the same again, grief work can help us slowly identify what is left in our lives. Our core group of friends, family, and support help us nourish and preserve, but they can help us grow. They can help us remember that through loss, we can rediscover life and remember there is still

love and connection in our lives.

What is lost?

I always look forward to the first signs of fall; the leaves begin to slowly change, brisk mornings, and the sun begins to change from a penetrating light to a hazy glow. As the season progresses, the leaves begin to change into vibrant colors and slowly release from the trees. Within weeks we are left with empty branches, cool days, and a sense of stillness.



What is possible?

As fall transitions into winter, we are left with a period of bleakness. It feels as if nothing is ever going to grow again. Survival is a battle for months. However, this period has purpose. The leaves fall down to the forest floor to provide enough nourishment for the earth's soil to grow more leaves for when spring arrives.

I am reminded of how we can associate this transition with the initial phase of grief. Grief can leave us empty without our loved one. The way in which our lives have completely changed from vibrant life to numbness and pain. When grief informs our whole world, it can leave us lonely and desperate for connection to our roots and core. In nature the experience of fall is very purposeful. Trees need to let go of their leaves in order to prepare for the harshness of winter. In grief, we sometimes need to preserve our core for a period of time in order to one day grow again.

we fear the dark and adore only the light. The same can be said for grief. What I try to remember is we need balance and perspective as this is what allows for our experiences to be whole.

What is left?

As nature begins to prepare for winter, preservation becomes critical. Every last bit of sunshine and water is stored in order to survive a cruel winter. What we see in the outside world may be empty branches, brown grass, and flower blooms falling away. However, the internal experience is a very different

Each year when the laurels grow and the bluebonnets begin to emerge again, I am reminded of what is possible. In the final phase of grief, we are reminded that we can find meaning and joy in life again. We can transform our experience of the harshness into nourishment for our souls. Far too often, these symbolic associations are powerful reminders that Mother Nature has an incredible influence on our lives. Death forces us to examine the purpose of life. At Austin Grief we strive to connect and empower those mourning to invest in life again. We believe that our connections to our loved ones are not gone, but our relationship may be different. With balance and purpose we can allow ourselves to love and trust again.

You Are Not Alone...

Don't be afraid to ask for help from those close to you when you need it. So much hurt and pain go unheeded during grief because we don't want to bother anyone else with our problems. Wouldn't you want someone close to you to ask for help if they needed it? Some relatives and friends will not be able to handle your grief. Find someone with whom to talk. Seek out an understanding friend, survivor, or support group member.

When you need to talk to someone who has experienced a loss of...

Spouse/Partner

Anne W. 619-992-9023
Bonnie B. 619-818-3363

Son

Christa S. 858-755-3400
Cheryl W. 619-277-0913

Daughter

Cheryl V. 760-942-7869

Parent

Paul G.* (Mother) 760-815-1482
Kate W. (Father) 916-601-4585
Nick G. (Father) 317-775-1274

Family Member/Friend

Diane L. (Brother) 619-851-3689
Pam E. (Brother) 760-415-5604
Cindy P. (Sister) 619-850-6225
Jeanie F.* (Friend) 619-417-2788
*Bilingual: English-Spanish

Helpful Websites

American Assoc. of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org

Compassionate Friends
www.compassionatefriends.org

Fresno Survivors of Suicide Loss
www.fresnosos.org

Friends for Survival, Inc.
www.friendsforsurvival.org

GROWW Friends Helping Friends
www.groww.org/Branches/sos.htm

Suicide: Finding Hope
www.suicidefindinghope.com

Suicide Prevention Resource Ctr.
www.sprc.org

Suicide is Preventable
www.suicideispreventable.org

Trevor Project
www.thetrevorproject.org

UMTR2ME You Matter To Me
www.UMTR2ME.org

Thank you Dr. Bronner

On July 22, 2019, Aaron and Rozsa Harris joined SOSL's Executive Director, Joyce Bruggeman at Dr. Bronner's in Vista to receive a generous donation of \$5,200! This all came about because of the courage and passion of one young man, Josh Alvarado. Josh was best friends with the Harris's son Aaron, who took his life in 2015. He walked through his grief and loss and experienced firsthand the impact SOSL has had in the lives of Rozsa and Aaron.

Josh works at Dr. Bronner's where they have a culture of giving. They encourage their employees to nominate a charitable cause to be considered to receive a donation. Because he believed in the work that SOSL does, Josh nominated our organization in 2018, and we received \$2,800. As a practice, Dr. Bronner's chooses to donate to different charities each year. Unfortunately, in 2019, suicide impacted their organization when they lost a valued and cherished employee to suicide. Because they knew of the work SOSL does here in San Diego, they chose to fund us again in 2019 for \$5,200!

Joyce, Rozsa and Aaron had the opportunity to tour the facility. They met many employees, enjoyed lunch, and personally thanked Josh Alvarado, Mike, David and Trudy Bronner for their generous support of our organization and the survivors of suicide loss community here in San Diego!



Mike Bronner, Joyce Bruggeman, Aaron Harris, Rozsa Harris, Josh Alvarado, David Bronner, and Trudy Bronner at Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap in Vista.

About SOSL

Survivors of Suicide Loss, Inc., is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, self-help support group system for those who have lost a relative or friend to suicide. The Hope & Comfort Newsletter staff is dedicated to the primary goal of publishing articles and information, which is assisting in the grieving and healing process of our readers. We welcome your written contributions for inclusion in the newsletter; however, we reserve the right to publish only those articles that are considered to be of benefit to the majority of our readers.

Please send all correspondence to:

Survivors of Suicide Loss
PO Box 3297
La Mesa, CA 91944-3297

Helpline: (619) 482-0297 Website: www.SOSLsd.org Email: info@SOSLsd.org

Surviving Halloween after a Suicide Loss

Halloween after a suicide loss can be challenging as you become aware of how much focus there is on death. Everywhere you look, death lingers making it incredibly difficult to put your own loss to the side. What was once a holiday filled with laughter and fun, has now become a living nightmare. If this is your first Halloween after a suicide loss, know that you are not alone in the wide array of feelings that exist inside you. Halloween can be not only traumatic for a survivor of a suicide loss, but just plain unbearable. Let's take a look at a couple of reasons why:



Graveyards, headstones, hangings and death scenes

Many survivors of a suicide loss have become all too familiar with a cemetery. It is a place that often allows you to safely feel the overwhelming pain that exists as a result of your loss. It is a place where you can be free to express emotion. It does not judge. It is a place that you can feel a sense of control, as you can decide when to go and when to allow yourself to feel the depths of the pain. During Halloween we are flooded with death imagery like graveyards and headstones. The image of my dad's tombstone changed the meaning of death for me. It was no longer a part of the circle of life, but a tragic event that introduces you to a new level of pain. Seeing those plastic tombstones are a constant reminder of the actual stone that holds the ashes of my father. The stone that displays his name and the day he died. The stone that is a reminder that he is no longer here. You better believe that every tombstone displayed in someone's yard reminds me of his.

Hangings and gruesome death scenes....I mean, what is there to say? I struggle with anger as I question how someone could display death in this manner. If they only knew how it impacted someone whose loved one died by suicide. If they only knew that the hanging body in their tree elicits a response so painful that it can be debilitating. Sadly, I often think, "You think that's scary...spend a minute in my memory, with my images, then let's talk."

Bittersweet or downright painful memories of the past

If you lost a child or adolescent, Halloween can be incredibly difficult as you think about the memories and traditions that were a part of your family. The longing becomes more intense (as if that's possible) as you look at other families joyfully participating in the festivities. The parties that seem impossible to attend, the costumes that will never be made or worn, the memories that will not be created. How can you not be in pain, when you are reminded of what used to be?

Halloween can be difficult for anybody who has lost a loved

one to suicide. I remember how much my dad loved to go to my sister's on Halloween. He would take pictures with my nieces and then happily stay back and pass out candy while they went trick-or-treating. He loved his role of passing out candy at the door. Halloween is a reminder that this will never be my reality. My own children weren't born when he passed. I will never have a picture of him with my kids in their costumes, or see his smile each time he opens the door to pass out candy. It doesn't matter how much time has passed, this reality sucks.

Trying to explain death to a child is hard enough, and the scary images certainly do not help

Kids have a number of questions after the death of a loved one. Add the additional component of suicide, and death is almost impossible to explain. I wish people understood how the death imagery that they display impacts a child who is already trying to conceptualize death. Death is scary for a young child, and these images make it so much worse. For more tips about helping a child during Halloween, read this article from The Dougy Center at

<https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/fears-and-Halloween>

Halloween often becomes the beginning of the holiday season

Halloween is often the kickoff to the holiday season. October for many is a time for pumpkin spice, comfy sweaters, pumpkins, and Fall fun. For others, it is a reminder that the next couple months are going to be difficult. Not only do temperatures fall, but your loss is magnified as you watch everyone else filled with joy. Without even knowing it, you are trying to figure out how in the world you are going to make it through the next couple months. I get it. You are not alone. We know how difficult Halloween after a suicide loss can be. Be gentle with yourself, and don't be afraid to skip the day all together. We have to take care of ourselves, do what we need to do to make the day even a pinch less painful. We will be thinking of you all this week!

Permission to reprint article from Our Side of Suicide. By Jessica on October 28, 2018.

<http://www.oursideofsuicide.com/2018/10/28/halloween-after-a-suicide-loss/>

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass...it's about learning to dance in the rain." Vivian Greene

S O S L S U P P O R T G R O U P M E E T I N G S - S A N D I E G O

Our meetings are held in an atmosphere that is warm and friendly. Anyone who has lost a family member or friend is invited to attend. Feelings shared are kept confidential and discussed only within the confines of the group meeting. Our SOSL groups provide a comfortable, non-threatening setting to share our experiences and thoughts. No fees or registration required.

September 2019

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 Labor Day SMH	3	4 ABHC TCMC	5	6	7
8	9 ECC,RCG	10 CEBC	11	12 TSG	13 GSH	14
15	16 SMH	17 4S	18 TCMC	19 SBG,OM	20	21
22	23 ECC,RCG	24 CEBC	25	26 TSG	27	28
29	30					

October 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 ABHC, TCMC	3	4	5
6	7 SMH	8 CEBC	9	10 TSG	11 GSH	12
13	14 ECC,RCG	15 4S	16 TCMC	17 SBG,OM	18	19
20	21 SMH	22 CEBC	23	24 TSG	25	26
27	28 ECC,RCG	29	30	31		

November 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 SMH	5	6 ABHC, TCMC	7	8 GSH	9
10	11 ECC,RCG	12 CEBC	13	14 TSG	15	16
17	18 SMH	19 4S	20 TCMC	21 SBG,OM	22	23
24	25 ECC,RCG	26 CEBC	27	28 Thanksgiving	29	30

4S Ranch—West Coast Martial Arts Academy / 4S

3rd TUESDAY 7:15-8:45 pm / September 17, October 15, November 19
10890 Thornmint Rd., San Diego 92127

Aurora Behavioral Health Center / ABHC

1st WEDNESDAY 7-8:30 pm / September 4, October 2, November 6
11878 Avenue of Industry, San Diego 92128 – North County Inland (Cafeteria)
From I-15 S: Exit CAMINO DEL NORTE and TURN LEFT; turn Right at CARMEL MT. RD., turn RIGHT at INNOVATION DRIVE, turn RIGHT at AVENUE OF INDUSTRY
From I-15 N: Exit CARMEL MT. RD. and turn RIGHT, turn LEFT at RANCHO CARMEL DR., turn LEFT at INNOVATION DR. turn RIGHT at AVE. OF INDUSTRY

Encinitas Community Center / ECC

2nd & 4th MONDAY S 7-8:30 pm / Sep. 9 & 23, Oct. 14 & 28, Nov. 11 & 25
1140 Oakcrest Park Dr., Encinitas 92024 – North County Coastal Room 116
From I-5: Take the ENCINITAS BLVD. exit (EAST), turn RIGHT onto BALOUR DR., turn LEFT onto OAKCREST PARK DR.

Grossmont-Sharp Hospital / GSH

2nd FRIDAY 7-8:30 pm / September 13, October 11, November 8
5555 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942 – East County (Cardiovascular Center, Room 1) Look for SOSL sign. Validated parking in structure.
From I-8 E: Take the FLETCHER PKWY exit. Turn RIGHT onto GROSSMONT CTR DR.
From I-8 W: Take the GROSSMONT CTR DR. Exit toward LA MESA BLVD. Turn RIGHT onto GROSSMONT CTR DR.

Otay Mesa—Bilingual Group / OM

3rd THURSDAY 7-8:30 pm / September 19, October 17, November 21
Border View Family YMCA—Conference Room
3601 Arey Dr., San Diego 92154

Oceanside Group Tri City Medical Center / TCMC

1st and 3rd WEDNESDAYS 7-8:30 pm / Sep. 4 & 18, Oct. 2 & 16, Nov. 6 & 20
Tri City Medical Center—4002 Vista Way, Oceanside 92056
Enter through the main lobby. Take elevators down to Lower Level LL—Classroom 6

Scripps Mercy Hospital / SMH

1st & 3rd MONDAYS 7-8:30 pm / Sep. 2 & 16, Oct. 7 & 21, Nov. 4 & 18
4077 5th Ave., San Diego 92103 – Hillcrest **Yes, we are meeting on Labor Day**
Enter thru main lobby and take elevator to Lower Level. Follow SOSL signs to Classrooms 5A & 5B. Validated parking in structure.
From CA-163 S: Take the WASHINGTON ST exit (WEST). Turn RIGHT onto 5th AVE.

South Bay Group / SBG

3rd THURSDAY 7-8:30 pm / September 19, October 17, November 21
First United Methodist Church - 1200 East H St., Chula Vista 91910
Discovery Room - located by the Sanctuary. Drive to the back of the property to park - room to the right.

Clairemont Emmanuel Baptist Church / CEBC

2nd and 4th TUESDAY S 7-8:30 pm / Sep. 10 & 24, Oct. 8 & 22, Nov. 12 & 26
2610 Galveston St., San Diego 92110 – Mission Bay Area
From I-5: Take the CLAIREMONT DR exit, (EAST) Turn RIGHT onto GALVESTON ST.
Drive down to the lower parking lot. As you leave the parking lot, walk straight ahead and the room will be in the first building on your left.

Riverside County Group / RCG

2nd and 4th MONDAYS 7-8:30 pm / Sep. 9 & 23, Oct. 14 & 28, Nov. 11 & 25
29029 Murrieta Rd., Sun City 92586 – Valley Christian Fellowship
Must call before attending: Kathy 951-679-2008

Temecula Support Group / TSG

2nd and 4th THURSDAYS—7-8:30 pm / Sep. 12 & 26, Oct. 10 & 24, Nov. 14 only
Sunridge Community Church—42299 Winchester Rd., Temecula 92590 (one mile west of the 15 freeway). Meeting in Room 105 – follow the SOSL signs.

“When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.” Author Unknown

4 Things You Need to Know about “Moving On” from Grief

June 23, 2015 • Contributed by Emily Long, LPC

The phrase “moving on” is common in the grief and loss world, but it isn’t very well understood or, frankly, all that helpful. What does it mean? What does moving on look like? How does one actually do it? Unfortunately, there aren’t clear answers. However, there are things that can be helpful to know about “moving on” after the death of a loved one, divorce, or other painful life event.

1. YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HOW OTHERS FEEL ABOUT YOUR GRIEF PROCESS.

Typically, it feels like what those around us mean by “moving on” is for us to stop hurting, stop talking about it, stop remembering, stop crying, and just stop grieving. They talk about wishing we would stop dwelling on the hurt and encourage us to just let go and accept what happened. The truth is, what they actually want is for us to stop making

them uncomfortable about our pain. Let’s face it—being with someone who is in pain and grieving isn’t the easiest of experiences. It’s difficult to watch someone we love hurting so deeply. But other people’s discomfort with your grief is their business, not yours. You are not responsible for making them feel more comfortable.

2. MOVING ON DOESN’T MEAN FORGETTING.

I suspect that the primary difficulty many of us have with the phrase “moving on” is that it often feels as if we’re being told to forget our loved one or the relationship we once had. That’s not what moving on means. Moving on is more about learning to live what I call a *both/and* life rather than an *either/or* life. It’s not about grieving or forgetting, happy or sad, black or white. It’s shades of gray. It’s about learning to live a full and happy life even as you miss

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MEDITATION MOMENT

We invite you to consider this for a few quiet moments...

By Chris Rothman, Ph.D, www.griefcounselor.org

During grieving, it is common to need breaks from our emotions. This in no way dishonors the seriousness of our concerns and the memories of our loved one. These ideas may give you some added nourishment to respond to the stress that comes with grieving.

- Lie in the sun streaming in through your windows. Bathe, breathe in the sun.
- Designate an afternoon or evening and put your cell phone away.
- Say “No” to something...(and “Yes” to yourself).
- Try gentle exercise like yoga, tai chi, or walking.
- Spend some time in nature. Hug a tree!
- When you are worried or obsessing, set up a specific time of the day to “worry” for 20 minutes. Set a timer. When time is up, do something rewarding.
- Do something you’re good at. It is important to ground yourself in your skills and abilities, even if the outcome isn’t up to par (trouble concentrating, and decreased zest are common in grief).
- Comfort yourself by taking a warm bath using your favorite scents and burn aroma therapy candles—it’s invigorating and relaxing at the same time.
- Buy yourself or your loved one a gift—and have the clerk gift wrap it. Choose the prettiest paper and bow.
- Wrap up in a warm blanket. Put on relaxation music and sip on your favorite tea or hot chocolate!
- Dressed in comfortable clothing, find a rocking chair and “rock your troubles away.”
- Play music that matches your mood. Feel understood by the songs and singers that share your experiences.
- Especially when you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed, forget about making “to do” lists, and at the close of each day, make your list of “what’s been done.” No wonder you’re tired!
- Burn Russian amber or sandalwood incense.
- Find something alive to care for: plants, pets, fish, etc.
- Eat at least one nourishing meal each day, even if the food doesn’t hit your taste buds like you’re used to.
- Put a fire in the fireplace and do some stretching and focus on yourself. (You can add your favorite soft music to this).
- Breathe—really breathe! Full belly. In through the nose, slowly out through the mouth.
- Make a memory box, collage, or journal to store your thoughts and memories.



“Memory is a way of holding on to the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose.” *The Wonder Years*

SOSL Depends on Your Generous Support.

Without your generous support, we couldn't provide the vital services SOSL offers.

This past quarter, we have had three donations from people who organized and hosted events to support SOSL.

The 2nd annual Mitchell's Mile was held on April 7th, organized by the Price family, New Hope Church and friends. The proceeds of the 5K walk were donated to two organizations: a national organization that does research and SOSL, who has offered them support. Kathy Shott, former SOSL facilitator from Chula Vista group, was the Keynote speaker. The event also had a resource fair for those who were looking for help and connection. \$6,781.84 was donated to SOSL.

They say laughter is good medicine for the soul. On March 16th, Will Deutschendorf and West Coast Martial Arts Academy hosted a Comedy Fundraiser. With some very talented comedians the night was filled with lots of laughter. The event raised \$475.

Aaron lost a cousin to suicide last year. He and his cousin's birthdays were a few days apart. Aaron wanted to raise money and awareness for suicide. His cousin's wife told him about SOSL. When Aaron spoke with the manager of Bear Roots, he found out the manager too had lost someone to suicide and he was on board to support the fundraiser. BrewHaHa Comedy and Bear Roots held the fundraiser on June 22nd and raised \$1,350.



GRATITUDE SPEAKS

When we reside in a place of Gratitude, the world changes.
This is a place for survivors to share what they are grateful for.

By Michele Madden

As the *Outreach and Support Director* for SOSL, a huge part of my job is to help plan and organize our three annual fundraising events with the help of volunteers.

On June 1st, SOSL held our 12th annual **SOSL Day "Whispers of Hope."** SOSL partnered with the Mental Health ministry from St. Gregory's the Great Church in Scripps Ranch. The Mental Health ministry provided volunteers who helped run the event, provided a table with mental health resources, and assisted in making gift bags and facilitating the groups. This year we were blessed with another group of volunteers called "Love in Action," a signing choir that preformed two songs for us. Eighty-seven people attended the event and enjoyed a light breakfast, a candle lighting remembrance ceremony, and a panel discussion with a Q&A session. Each person was also asked to decorate a tile with encouraging words. After a *Flame Broiler* lunch, the tiles were placed around the church courtyard, and everyone walked around and read each other's tiles. SOSL Day ended with the opportunity to attend loss specific groups.

One June 8th, SOSL held our 4th annual **Ride for Life.** We partnered with El Cajon Harley, Lloyd's Collision and Law Tigers. Forty-six volunteers helped at the event. We had 97 riders and 115 people attend the after party. Everyone who attended was given a bag of swag filled with information on mental health resources, how to reach out for help and SOSL community involvement. This event brought awareness to suicide prevention. Many of the riders had lost someone to suicide, but rarely talk about it. The ride gives them the opportunity to talk about it and learn about the help and support available. Many times, this is the first time they have talked openly about the loss with someone who understands. One rider was John Howard from News 8. John showed up for a ride with a good cause. But the ride touched his heart and he did a follow up story on the ride. If you missed it - check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=317960645810529>

The **Walk in Remembrance with Hope** will be on **Sunday, September 8th.** This event is our major fundraiser for the year and we need many volunteers to make it a success. You can help several ways. Create a team, register to be a walker, donate either money or in-kind donations to the walk or become one of over 100 volunteers needed for this event. Register to walk or donate at: www.walkinginhopeSD.org

I am grateful to everyone who has or continues to volunteer with SOSL. You make a huge impact on each and everyone that attends one of our events, or support the families and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide. Our newly formed **Hope Care Connection** (HCC) is looking for people who are willing to meet one-on-one with families of new loss. If you are interested learning more contact me at Michele@soslsd.org.



CONTRIBUTORS:



Anonymous (Annie)
 "I love you forever. I'll hold you dear in my broken heart until I hold you in Heaven."

John and Jolynn Gagel
 "In Memory of our son Stanton Edward Gagel"

Keemia Ranjbaran

Julie Simonton

Anonymous
 "In Memory of Kyle Donovan"

John Hartzell (Aaron James Hartzell)
 "Love you Aaron!!!"

Pati Stives (Ray Stives)
 "You are beautiful!!!"

Douglas Basinger
 "In Memory of Eva Robles"

Sidney and Veronica Hewitt
 (Rodivernino "Rudy" Hewitt)
 "One life, one voice matters now"

Michael and Margaret Strahm
 "In Memory of Aaron"

Joyce Bruggeman

Kim Thorp (Austin P Thorp)
 "Always in our hearts and never forgotten"

Leopoldo V. and Amenda B. Caniya
 (Melvin Barrera Caniya)
 "You are always in our hearts"

Leslie Joseph
 (nephew Samuel Leonard Joseph)
 "We miss you Sam"

Raphael Vinluan

Julianne Coscarart

"God bless you, sweet girl, our Christianna. We love you and always will."
 - Aunt Carol, Uncle Pete and Aunt Julie

Mike and Shannon Kurtz
 "Remembering Jeremy"

Belinda Vong

Victoria Martin

"In Memory of Ken Martin"

Kimberly Ward

Gene and Mary Curry (Tony)
 "You are our heart"

Judith Moore (Christianna Wilson)
 "Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal"

Cynthia Woodruff
 "In Memory of Gary, my loving husband"

Leah Diebel

Lucky Line Products
 "In Memory of Brayden Vong, Family of Robert Vong"

Carol Foster

"In Memory of Bill Foster"

Andrew Norelli

Maureen O'Connor-Kodis
 "In Memory of Mike Kodis"

Thank you for those of you who donate through the United Way and the CFC! SOSL is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

Continued: "Moving On" from Grief

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and long for what you have lost. It's about remembering and honoring the one you loved while also embracing the beauty and fullness of the life you still get to live. It's about the brilliance of your love and the shadow of your loss coexisting in this complex and expansive experience we call living. Grief and loss are complex, multifaceted, and multilayered. Loss and our experience of grief are integrated into our lives, not things we get rid of.

3. MOVING ON DOESN'T MEAN THE END OF GRIEF, EITHER. Moving on from grief doesn't mean a static end. It doesn't mean suddenly we're done grieving and will never hurt again. Moving on is more about moving forward than being done. Grief and loss are complex, multifaceted, and multilayered. Loss and our experience of grief are integrated into our lives, not things we get rid of. Grief changes and morphs over time. We get stronger as we carry it, the edges of it round and dull, and with time it begins to take up less space in our lives. It doesn't simply disappear. Grief can (and will) continue to remind us of our loss throughout

our lifetimes, in different ways and at different times. We move forward with life, embracing the fullness of it, even as our loss becomes part of who we now are.

4. ULTIMATELY, YOU GET TO DEFINE "MOVING ON." People will have all kinds of advice and well-meaning intentions about how you should move on, when you should do it, and what it should look like. They, however, cannot determine that for you. There are no timelines or rules to the grieving process. You will move through it at your unique pace and not one minute faster. The process of grieving is unique to each of us. No amount of pressure from others can make us move through our process any faster, not in any kind of healthy way. Only you can know when you are ready to move forward after your loss. Only you can decide what it means to let go or accept the loss you experienced. Only you can truly decide what it means to move on and move forward. Whatever that looks like for you, it is perfect and right.

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"Once you choose hope, anything's possible." Christopher Reeve