Stepping Stones™
NEWSLETTER

Refresh, Renew, & Refocus

Our lives shift in and out of seasons all the time, whether we are experiencing grief, or seeing the light at the end of the tunnel on our journey toward healing. Take this opportunity to do a little "spring cleaning" on the inside. Do things that refresh you and give you energy and renewed vitality. Take time to refocus your life. One concrete step you can take is to set up your emergency file with us. Give us a call and we can help you step by step.

Sincerely,

Lunn Funeral Home

2 Hope in Spring & Summer, *cont.*

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MARCH

HOPE
IN SPRING & SUMMER

BY BARBARA COOPER ROSS

After the long days of winter, buds, blossoms and greenery appear -- all reminding us of new, healthy seasons of life. For those who are grieving, experiencing hope in spring and summer can be difficult, often evoking strong emotions. As we witness the natural growth cycle, an acute sense of absence may be felt. It would not be uncommon to experience shock that, in spite of deep feelings of loss, flowers still bloom.

If you or someone you care about is mourning and looking for hope in spring and summer, try embracing the nurturing of flowers or trees in memory of your special someone who died. Gardening can bring quiet understanding, a natural peace we often collect as we dirty our hands in the soil.

We seek peace in the chaos of grief. Embracing the changing seasons in an active way, whether gardening or enjoying nature's beauty on a reflective stroll, can help bring a sense of peaceful order to our lives. At some point in a bereavement journey, we recognize our love endures the seasons of life, even after death. The journey is unique to each person, a process you move through, not an event to endure as if it will have a definitive end. Healthy grief work takes time.

Anger, sadness, denial and shock are all normal grief responses that

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require expression in order to heal. Sharing your sadness and loss, telling your stories, expressing intense feelings, remembering your loved one and finding ways to redefine yourself without your special person are all part of moving through grief in healthy ways.

Where are you in your journey? Will you sit among flowers or plant a memory tree? Will you share a garden with others, or simply enjoy a view of nature's beauty in a favorite place, within a blanket of solitude? Regardless of the method you choose to express your love and loss, look for hope, peace, and renewal during this season.

Barbara Cooper Ross is an Arkansas Hospice Bereavement Coordinator. From www.arkansashospice.org. Reprinted by permission of Arkansas Hospice, Inc.
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From *Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul*

I'M OKAY, MOM AND DAD

Perhaps they are not the stars, but rather openings in heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us to let us know they are happy.

INSPIRED BY AN ESKIMO LEGEND

When I returned home from the funeral of a church member, my grown daughter, Jenny, asked me about the service. I had been very moved by a story the priest told about a dragonfly, so I shared it with Jen.

A group of water bugs was talking one day about how they saw other water bugs climb up a lily pad and disappear from sight. They wondered where the other bugs could have gone. They promised one another that if one of them ever went up the lily pad and disappeared, it would come back and tell the others where it had gone.

About a week later one of the water bugs climbed up the lily pad and emerged on the other side. As it sat there, it transformed into a dragonfly. Its body took on an iridescent sheen, and four beautiful wings sprouted from its back. The dragonfly flapped its wings and took off in flight, doing loops and spins through the sunlit sky. In the midst of its joyful flight, it remembered the promise it had made to return and tell the other bugs where it had gone. So the dragonfly swooped down to the surface of the water and tried to reenter the water, but try as it would, it could not return.

The dragonfly said to itself, *Well, I tried to keep my promise, but even if I did return, the others wouldn't recognize me in my new glorious body. I guess they will just have to wait until they climb the lily pad to find out where I have gone and what I have become.*

When I had finished relating the short story, my daughter said, with tears running down her cheeks, "Mom, that's really beautiful!" I agreed, and we talked for a while about it.

Two days later, early Sunday morning,

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July 9, 1995, Jenny came into my room, waking me to say good-bye before leaving for work at a resort on Lake Okoboji. I hugged and kissed her and told her I would see her that night when I joined her for a week's vacation at the lake. I asked her if she had eaten breakfast and if she was wide awake, as we had been out late the night before. I knew she was tired.

"Yes, Mom, I'll see you later!"

Several hours later, our worst nightmare began. Jenny had been involved in a head-on collision and was flown to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Thoughts crowded in on me. Why hadn't I fixed her breakfast? Did I tell her I loved her? If I'd kept her with me a few minutes longer, would things have turned out differently? Why hadn't I hugged her a little longer? Why hadn't I kept her home with me that summer instead of letting her work at the lake? Why? Why? Why?

We flew to Sioux Falls and arrived at noon. Our Jenny was hurt mortally, and at ten o'clock that night, she died. If God had given me a choice, I would have traded places with her in a second. Jenny had so much to give this world. She was so bright, beautiful and loving.

On Friday of that week, my husband and I drove to the lake to see family, and we stopped to see where the accident had occurred. I don't remember a lot, but I know I was hysterical trying to figure out what had happened and why.

Leaving the scene of the accident, I asked my husband to take me to a greenhouse, as I needed to be around beautiful flowers. I just couldn't face anyone yet.

Walking to the back of the hothouse, I heard the fluttering of wings as if a bird or hummingbird was hitting the top of the roof. I was looking at a beautiful rose when a beautiful, large dragonfly landed within arm's length of me. I stood there looking at this lovely creature, and I cried. My husband walked in. I looked at him and said, "Jenny is telling us that she's okay." We stood and looked at the lovely dragonfly for a long time, and as we walked out of the hothouse, the dragonfly remained on the rose.

A couple of weeks later, my husband came running into the house telling me to come outside quickly. When I walked out our door, I could not believe what I saw. There were hundreds of dragonflies flying in front of our house and between ours and the neighbor's. I have never seen that many dragonflies at once in town, and the strangest thing about it was that they were only by our house.

There is no way these two experiences were just coincidences. They were more than that. They were messages from Jen.

Each time I see a dragonfly, beautiful memories of my daughter kiss my grieving heart.

Lark Whittemore Ricklefs

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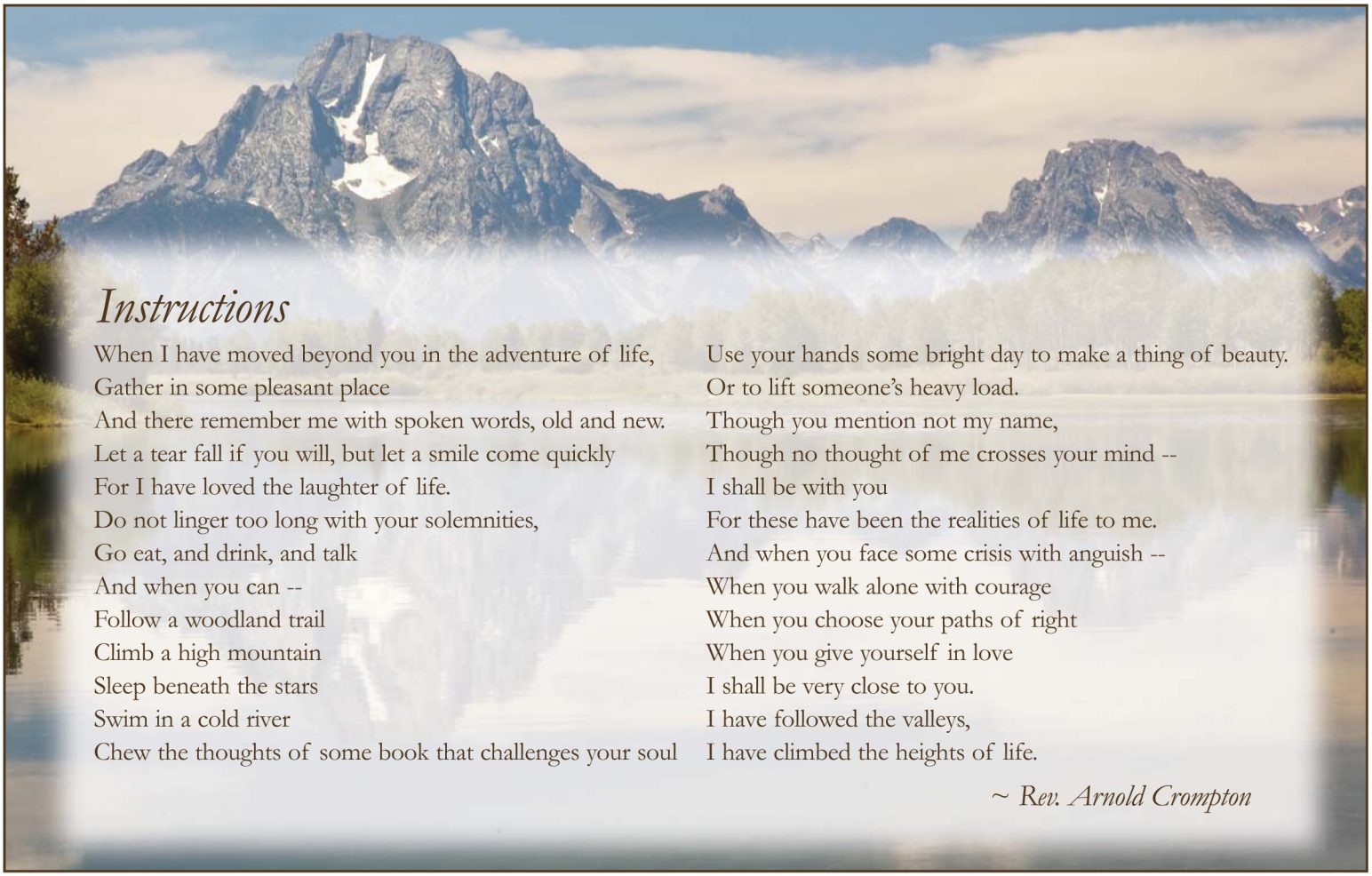
Dear Dad,

We want to thank you and Mom for taking the time to plan your funeral arrangements long before we needed to actually face this. It was such a comfort to all of us to know that we were doing everything exactly the way Mom would have wanted. Not having to make difficult decisions allowed us the time to focus on just being together and celebrate our mother and the life she lived. We know it was probably not easy for you to think about your own final plans, however, by doing so you gave us a great gift...peace of mind.

With love and gratitude,

Your Children



Instructions

When I have moved beyond you in the adventure of life,
Gather in some pleasant place
And there remember me with spoken words, old and new.
Let a tear fall if you will, but let a smile come quickly
For I have loved the laughter of life.
Do not linger too long with your solemnities,
Go eat, and drink, and talk
And when you can --
Follow a woodland trail
Climb a high mountain
Sleep beneath the stars
Swim in a cold river
Chew the thoughts of some book that challenges your soul
Use your hands some bright day to make a thing of beauty.
Or to lift someone's heavy load.
Though you mention not my name,
Though no thought of me crosses your mind --
I shall be with you
For these have been the realities of life to me.
And when you face some crisis with anguish --
When you walk alone with courage
When you choose your paths of right
When you give yourself in love
I shall be very close to you.
I have followed the valleys,
I have climbed the heights of life.

~ Rev. Arnold Crompton

We are pleased to continue our tradition of caring through these complimentary issues of *Stepping Stones Newsletter* and our professional staff.

Seymour Memorial
FUNERAL HOME
200 South Cedar Street | Seymour, TX 76380 | (940) 888-3124

If you have enjoyed this reading, please let us know! We'd love to provide you with additional grief materials and resources to help you cope during this difficult time. If you would like more information, or if you would like to speak to someone who can assist you with filing for veterans' benefits, Social Security and insurance benefits, or who can help you prepare your own or a loved one's funeral plans in advance, please reply to this email, and a funeral home representative will contact you shortly. We sincerely hope that we have been able to brighten your day with this edition of *Stepping Stones*. Please don't hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to assist you.

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