Stepping Stones

NEWSLETTER

Seize the Day

You know what it's like to lose someone you love. Depending on the circumstances surrounding the death, you may have experienced intense grief, remorse, guilt, and regrets over things left unsaid and undone. If the service was not planned ahead, you may have had all of these emotions compounded by anxiety, worry, and doubt as to what your loved one would have wanted and how your family was going to pay for the funeral. Don't leave your closest loved ones in doubt. We are here to help you plan ahead for your own or a loved one's services. It's time to seize the day so that those you love the most don't have to waste a minute in worry and doubt. Simply call us and make an appointment for a free funeral planning consultation.

Sincerely,

Lunn Funeral Home

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SEPTEMBER

FINDING MEANING IN YOUR LOSS

MARTHA M. TOUSLEY

It is difficult to imagine surviving grief, much less transcending it. How do you triumph over sorrow when it seems as if your pain will never end?

When you confront the lessons of grief, you opt for surviving and transcending the pain. If you choose to do so, you can look at the pain of loss as having a specific purpose. Turning crisis into opportunity, you can find emotional and spiritual peace. You have a choice: you can either give up and withdraw into your tragedy or you can grow from the experience. You can either succumb to the pain or decide to transform yourself. The choice to grow, to transform the self is not an easy one. It requires work, perseverance and endurance. Like everything else in grief, it is a process, but it is what makes loss worth surviving.

Chances are that you would trade everything you could ever gain in a heartbeat, if only that would bring your loved one back. But that is not an option. The only viable alternative is to make this pain count for something.

All that happens to us in life is material for our own growth. The death of a loved one can be a turning point that alters our perspective on life. It is a chance to re-think, to question, to doubt who we were, what we thought we believed, how we used to live, and how we ordered our

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priorities. It is an opportunity to find meaning in our loss. There are many lessons to be learned from grief.

LOSING SOMEONE YOU LOVE TEACHES YOU TO:

- Stop, examine and appreciate what really matters, what's important, what's truly valuable in life.
- Live fully in the present, knowing that the past is gone and the future is not yet.
- Appreciate the value and wonder of every precious moment, without taking them for granted.
- Accept the freedom and joy of spontaneity, to play, to relax and to have fun.
- Find valuable insights buried in the give and take of daily life, to slow down, daydream and fantasize.
- Simplify your life, so you have more time and energy to share with those you love.
- Accept what's happened to you, roll with the changes and keep on growing, believing that you'll make it.
- Be patient with yourself, allowing the grieving process to happen in whatever way it will.
- Keep and develop your connections with others, knowing that you are not alone.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with others openly and honestly, and sooner rather than later.
- Rethink your attitude toward death as a natural part of the cycle of life.
- Be grateful for the love you shared, however briefly, and appreciate what you have left.
- Define yourself as a survivor rather than a victim.

Share what you've learned with others. At some point in your grieving process, you may feel the need to channel your pain, as well as the time and energy once devoted to your relationship with your loved one, into something productive and meaningful. As one who truly understands the grieving process, you may feel ready to reach out to others who are suffering the pain of loss. Once you've found your own way through grief, you will have a great deal to share with other grievers: you can identify with their struggles, empathize with their sorrows and doubts, and offer valuable information and support.

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THREE YELLOW ROSES

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

I walked into the grocery store not particularly interested in buying groceries. I wasn't hungry. The pain of losing my husband of 37 years was still too raw. And this grocery store held so many sweet memories.

Rudy often came with me and almost every time, he'd pretend to go off and look for something special. I knew what he was up to. I'd always spot him walking down the aisle with the three yellow roses in his hands. Rudy knew I loved yellow roses.

With a heart filled with grief, I only wanted to buy my few items and leave, but even grocery shopping was different since Rudy had passed on. Shopping for one took time, a little more thought than it had for two.

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Standing by the meat, I searched for the perfect small steak and remembered how Rudy had loved his steak. Suddenly a woman came beside me. She was blond, slim and lovely in a soft green pantsuit. I watched as she picked up a large pack of T-bones, dropped them in her basket, hesitated, and then put them back. She turned to go and once again reached for the pack of steaks.

She saw me watching her and she smiled. "My husband loves T-bones, but honestly, at these prices, I don't know." I swallowed the emotion down my throat and met her pale blue eyes. "My husband passed away eight days ago," I told her. Glancing at the package in her hands, I fought to control the tremble in my voice. "Buy him the steaks. And cherish every moment you have together." She shook her head and I saw the emotion in her eyes as she placed the package in her basket and wheeled away.

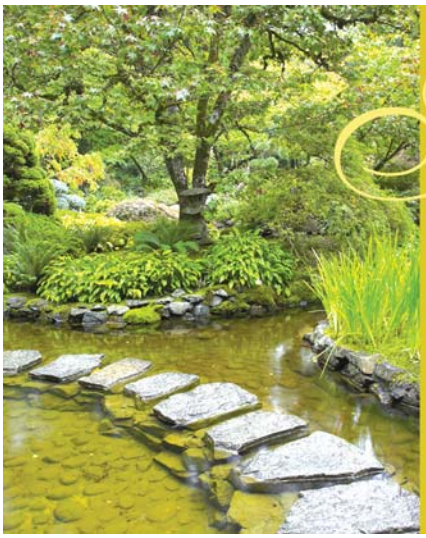
I turned and pushed my cart across the length of the store to the dairy products. There I stood, trying to decide which size milk I should buy. A quart, I finally decided and moved on to the ice cream section near the front of the store. If nothing else, I could always fix myself an ice cream cone. I placed the ice cream in my cart and looked down the aisle toward the front.

I saw first the green suit, then recognized the pretty lady coming towards me. In her arms she carried a package. On her face was the brightest smile I had ever seen. I would swear a soft halo encircled her blonde hair as she kept walking towards me, her eyes holding mine. As she came closer, I saw what she held and tears began misting in my eyes.

"These are for you," she said and placed three beautiful long stemmed yellow roses in my arms. "When you go through the line, they'll know these are paid for." She leaned over and placed a gentle kiss on my cheek, then smiled again.

I wanted to tell her what she'd done, what the roses meant, but still unable to speak, I watched as she walked away, tears clouding my vision. I looked down at the beautiful roses nestled in the green tissue wrapping and found it almost unreal. How did she know? Suddenly the answer seemed so clear. I wasn't alone.

"Oh, Rudy, you haven't forgotten me, have you?" I whispered, with tears in my eyes. He was still with me, and she was his angel.



"The little troubles and worries of life, so many of which we meet, may be a stumbling block in our way, or we may make them stepping-stones to a noble character and to Heaven. Troubles are often the tools by which God fashions us for better things."

HENRY WARD BEECHER

To laugh often and much;
to win the respect of the intelligent people
and the affection of children;
to earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;
to appreciate beauty;
to find the best in others;
to leave the world a bit better
whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;
to know that one life has breathed easier
because you lived here.
This is to have succeeded.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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.

For more information regarding prepaid funerals and consumer rights and protections under Texas state law, visit www.prepaidfunerals.state.tx.us.

Stepping Stones is a newsletter series featuring stories, poems, and informative articles of interest to persons experiencing grief. Inclusion in the newsletter does not constitute an endorsement of the authors, websites, or organizations with which they are affiliated. © 2011 FDLIC, P.O. Drawer 5649, Abilene, TX 79608.

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