

You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours. When you truly possess all you have been and done, which may take some time, you are fierce with reality.

-Florida Scott-Maxwell

Quick Links

Hollandhospice.org

YoungWidow.org
book lists, online resources
and support

GriefNet.org
online support groups

GROWW.org
online bereaved community

wpsgr.org
Grand Rapids Widowed persons
service: local groups and support

Dougry.org
website for children, teens and
parents following a loss

WebHealing.com
grief resources

Centering.org
grief resources and books

Griefshare.org
nationwide grief support
program; find one nearby

Griefwatch.com
resource for more websites

Griefwords.com

The Journey of Grief

Your journey of grief is not a welcome one. It is one that affects us all at one time or another. No one is immune to it.

For that reason, the journey of grief is natural, like the changing of the seasons.

Hospice of Holland is available to you throughout this journey. We offer many different types of support. We want you to know you are not alone in this difficult time.

Through this newsletter we hope to provide you with helpful articles, resources and reminders of upcoming events.

Seasons of Grief and Healing

Winter can seem a monstrous season of the year, sometimes blustery and cold, sometimes dreary and dark, often lasting longer than you want it to. This can also be true of the winter of your grief - days grow tedious, nights grow tedious, nights grow longer, the air seems chillier than you wish. Any shock or numbness which protected you earlier usually begins to wear off as your wintertime approaches. In the starkness before you, you cannot avoid what lies around you: all you miss and all you long for, all your hurt and all your sadness. Your loneliness can be piercing. For not only are you separated from the one you love, but you can also feel distanced from those around you, and perhaps even isolated from yourself.

The emptiness of winter can be unsettling. The silence can be deafening. **While it may not seem so at first**, this season of your grief is giving you something you need, even if you don't quite believe it yet, even if you don't understand how it can be.

Continued...



Seasons of Grief and Healing *Continued*

It may seem to others that not much is happening now. You may feel it yourself. Yet much is going on, much is stirring underneath. Just as fields of whiteness can hide what is underground, so can days of quiet mask what is shifting inside you. As you confront reminders of your loss day by day, you make room for that unyielding absence, and prepare bit by bit for what life yet holds. As you allow yourself to revisit other losses you have known, you can encourage the mending you have already begun.

The winter of your grief is a time to allow yourself simply to be. A part of you may wish to push ahead. Winter says, "Take your time." A part of you may want to put your grief behind you as quickly as possible. Winter says, "Some things cannot be hurried." A part of you may wish to avoid this season entirely. Winter says, "Despite what you may feel, this is what you need right now."

This in-between time offers a built-in opportunity to do what you might not often do: to stop and be very quiet, to pause and be fully present, to sit and be especially attentive, to walk and be unusually aware. You can let the stillness that surrounds you speak to you, and it **does** have messages. You can let the starkness that is around you teach you, and it **does** have its wisdom.

In short, you can make this time of barrenness an important part of your progress toward healing. It's a time you can use to gather yourself. This is not a time to forget the one who has died, it's a time to remember them. It's a time to recall what they have meant to you, and how much they mean to you still. It's a time to speak their name, to display their picture, and to touch their keepsakes, if that feels comforting to you. There is a sense in which the one you love can be with you as you grieve, if you let them, if you want them.

Used by permission from Augsburg Press, Seasons of Grief and Healing by, James Miller, 2000

Upcoming Events/Support Groups

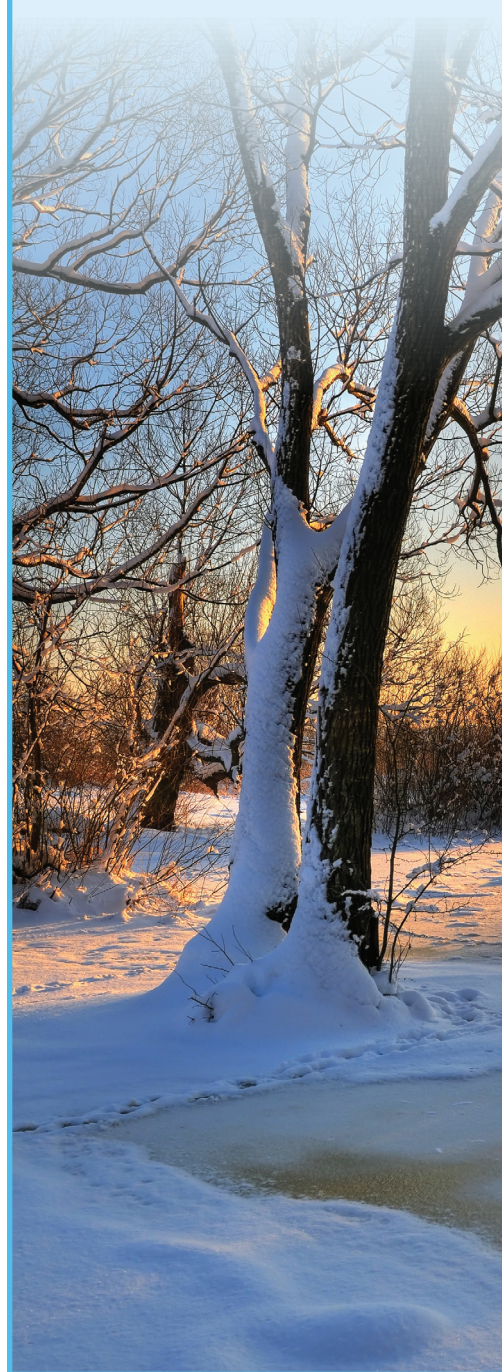
Going Solo – For spousal/partner loss. This group meets two Thursdays each month, from 10am to 11:30am, at the Hospice of Holland office, 270 Hoover Blvd. in Holland. Please call 616-355-5594 to register.

Journeys – For younger spousal/partner loss (up to 60's). This group will meet every Tuesday in March from 5:00pm to 6:30pm, at the Hospice of Holland office, 270 Hoover Blvd. in Holland. Please call 616-355-5594 to register.

Journaling Your Grief – This workshop will teach teen and adult participants to practice different ways of utilizing a journal to navigate through grief. Seasoned journal writers and novices welcome; come prepared to try new things! All materials needed for the workshop will be provided. Saturday, February 8 from 10:00am to 11:30am at the Hospice of Holland office, 270 Hoover Blvd. in Holland. Please call 616-355-5594 to register by February 4, space is limited.

"God, grant me the strength to keep moving when I can, the grace to rest when I need to, and the wisdom to know the difference"

-A Serenity Prayer for Grievers



Please remember that Hospice of Holland bereavement counselors are available to meet with you one-on-one to help you in your grieving process.

Contact our office at 616-355-5594, if you are interested in setting up a time to meet. In addition, our extensive bereavement library and bereavement support groups are available to you.