

Sound Waves



“ Let it go, Let it out,
Let it all unravel, Let it free
And it will be
A path on which to travel. ”

– Michael Leunig

In This Issue

- 1 Grieving Mindfully
- 3 SoundCare Kids
- 4 Supporting Your Child:
How can I protect my
child from the pain of a
loved one's death?
- 5 Adult Support Groups

Grieving Mindfully

On a glorious sunny Seattle afternoon many years ago, I found myself bicycling home from work. I had just turned the corner to begin the steep descent of the street on which I lived when my world was literally turned upside down. A neighborhood dog on the loose had run directly into the front wheel of my bicycle with such a force that both the bike and I were thrown into the air. When I came down on the pavement I landed on both of my knees and the acute pain that followed was extraordinary.

By the time that I had navigated my way home with my crumpled bike, it was all I could do to sit with the pain that washed through me. For some unknown reason, as I lay on my bed I was reminded of a book that I had recently read that had stated that to resist pain was to only intensify it. And so in an effort to bring some sort of relief to the pain I was experiencing I began a simple exercise of focusing on my breathing and the present moment.

Did the pain go away? No, not really. Did it shift in its intensity and persistence? Yes — absolutely.

I believe that this was the first moment when I entered into a place of living mindfully.

To live mindfully is to enter into a space where you become aware of the present moment. In that moment is the entirety of what any one of us can experience at any given time. Not the past that has been lived, nor the future that we cannot know, but simply the present moment of now.

Continued on page 2

Grieving Mindfully

Continued from page 1

When we are grieving, we may find ourselves moving between what psychologist and author Sameet Kumar, Ph.D., calls **acute grief** and **subtle grief**. Acute grief is raw and the 'ground zero' of our loss experience, while subtle grief are those moments when we seem to breathe easier and the feelings of distress lessen in their intensity.

Kumar utilizes the image of a spiral staircase. The staircase is the day-to-day walk with grief that we experience. As we move around the spiral there are moments when the intensity is almost overwhelming. Then the spiral turns and we move into a place of understanding and learning. It is an ongoing process, one that leads us to an acceptance of our life experience and one that opens us to the meaning of our pain.

In your grief, look for ways to remain mindful. Basic day-to-day tasks may be done with mindfulness — cooking, gardening, walking, and eating.

Simply enter into the task with a conscious awareness of your body, mind, and breath. If your mind wanders, bring it back to the task at hand and the present moment. Where are you? What are your hands touching? What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? Remember to breathe and enter into the now.¹

Being mindful is not always easily accomplished. But it does offer us the ability to hold ourselves in moments of pain and tenderly embrace the entirety of our experience

– Rex Allen, MA, Providence Hospice
Grief Support Services Manager

¹ Kumar, S. M. 2003. *Grieving Mindfully: A Compassionate and Spiritual Guide to Coping with Loss*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Recommended Readings

"Grieving Mindfully: A Compassionate and Spiritual Guide to Coping with Loss" by S.M. Kumar

"When There are No Words: Finding Your Way to Cope with Loss & Grief" by Charlie Walton

"Coping with Grief" by Mal McKissock & Diane McKissock

There is a brokenness
out of which comes the unbroken,
a shatteredness
out of which blooms the unshatterable.
There is a sorrow
beyond all grief which leads to joy
and a fragility
out of whose depths emerges strength.
There is a hollow space
too vast for words

through which we pass with each loss,
out of whose darkness
we are sanctioned into being.
There is a cry deeper than all sound
whose serrated edges cut the heart
as we break open to the place inside
which is unbreakable and whole,
while learning to sing.

– *Rashani, 1991*

SoundCareKids

Grief support for children, teens, and the adults who care for them.

The SoundCareKids Grief Support Groups give children, teens and their parents an opportunity to connect with others who have also experienced a loved one's serious illness or death while sharing feelings in creative, experiential ways and learning coping skills for adjusting to difficult changes. Group nights begin with pizza and play. Then kids, teens and caregivers meet in small groups (Littles 3 – 5, Bigs 6 – 8, Middles 9 – 12, Teens, and Adults) for discussion and activities.

Our regular support-group session topics include:

- Learning about grief and getting to know each other
- Exploring feelings and learning how to cope with them
- Sharing our stories
- Dealing with regret, guilt, and other unfinished business
- Identifying and adjusting to changes
- Memories and Staying connected

The SoundCareKids program is provided at no cost to families in Thurston, Lewis, and Mason counties through funding from the Providence St. Peter Foundation.

Call SoundHomeCare and Hospice
at 360-493-5928 for more
information about individual or
family counseling as well as
group schedule.



<http://on.fb.me/ikYfdd>

Supporting Your Child: How can I protect my child from the pain of a loved one's death?

“ In the midst of winter, I finally learned there was in me an invincible summer. ”

– Albert Camus

There isn't a parent who doesn't wish to protect their child from the painful realities of loss. Yet it is often these attempts at protection that prevent a child from drawing upon and building their own resilient strength.

Children are born with an innate resilience, and throughout their lives, their strengths are reinforced with each new and unfamiliar experience. Children learn from the many “small losses” they experience during childhood: a kite stuck in a tree, a best friend moving away, starting a new school, the death of a pet. One of the most important gifts we can give our children is the ability to understand that loss and grief are normal life experiences.

For most of us, the greatest fear is the fear of the unknown. With any loss, fear is increased by an overwhelming sense of helplessness and loss of control.

By giving children honest, concrete information about how a loved one's death occurred, parents can honor their children and allow them to become increasingly resilient in a time of hardship. Providing this information establishes trust and indicates that the parent recognizes the significance of the impact of the death in the child's life. Children can then begin to understand the reality of the loss, one of the most important steps to a child's path to healing.

Realizing that grief is a process, and accessing ongoing grief support and education through a program like SoundCare Kids, can better prepare a parent to walk the journey alongside their children.

– Beverly Goldsmith, Providence Hospice
Safe Crossings Children's Grief Program Coordinator

Recommended Readings

“When a Child You Love is Grieving”
by Harold Ivan Smith

“My Many Colored Days” by Dr. Seuss



Adult Support Groups

Every individual has the capacity to heal and grow after the life-altering experience of a major loss. Our goal is to help people understand and cope with their grief while offering support and opportunities to learn and grow. We help people identify needs and strengths and work with them to develop a plan to address these. We work with individuals, families and groups in the community.

For information about individual counseling or to make an appointment call: 360-493-4667.



Adult Support Groups (Ongoing)

Daytime

- 1st and 3rd Monday of each month
10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Lacey Presbyterian Church
3045 Carpenter Rd. SE, Lacey
Information: 360-493-4667
- 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month
1:30 to 3:00 p.m.
Shelton Health and Rehabilitation Center
153 Johns Court, Shelton
Information: 360-493-4667

Evening

- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice
3432 South Bay Rd. NE, Olympia
Information: 360-493-4667
- Loss of Child Support Group
(The Compassionate Friends)
1st Monday of each month
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Providence St. Peter Hospital (Executive Mtg. Room)
413 Lilly Rd NE, Olympia
Information: Allen Roth at 360-402-6711

Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice

3432 South Bay Road NE

Olympia, WA 98506

www.providence.org/pshch

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Grief Support for All Ages

Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice provides a full range of grief support and bereavement services for adults and children. We can help you better understand and cope with your grief, while offering support and opportunities to learn and grow.

See **INSIDE** for more information!

*We struggle, we grow weary, we grow tired.
We are exhausted, we are distressed, we
despair. We give up, we fall down, we let go.
We cry. We are empty, we grow calm, we are
ready. We wait quietly.*

*A small, shy truth arrives. Arrives from
without and within. Arrives and is born.
Simple, steady, clear. Like a mirror, like a
bell, like a flame. Like rain in summer. A
precious truth arrives and is born within us.
Within our emptiness.*

*We accept it, we observe it, we absorb it.
We surrender to our bare truth. We are
nourished, we are changed. We are blessed.
We rise up.*

For this we give thanks.

– Michael Leunig

