

Sound Waves



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Lessons from a Coonhound

– Rex Allen, MA, manager,
grief support services

He came to us from Georgia – tri-colored and long-legged, with ribs showing through his somewhat lackluster coat. His life had been a hard one. Since he was unable to speak in a language we could fully understand, we could only guess what troubles he may have encountered along the way.

He was also shy. While he seemed at peace with other animals, a sudden sound or movement from a human would often send him hurrying to his kennel or some dark corner of the house where we would find him huddled and shaking.

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Supporting your child:
Helping your child find strength and abundance while coping with grief?

By Jill Meyers, children's grief counselor and child life specialist

There lives within each moment another moment – a moment to be experienced, acknowledged and honored.

For children, the concept of abundance is not necessarily an accumulation of toys, objects and things. Rather abundance for them is the accumulation of details captured within a shared moment: the story that becomes a bedtime ritual, the blanket used for comfort, affirmation from an adult or older sibling. For children, abundance thrives in the smallest of details.

As a parent and caregiver, one of the most helpful ways you can offer abundance through a child's grief experience is by providing stability and the structure of a consistent routine. Within the foundation of structure, there is safety. To a child, safety offers the opportunity to experience the details of the surrounding world.

Abundance can also be described through the perspective of strengths, focusing on the strengths and unique qualities that both you and your children possess. Often during times of loss and sorrow, it can be difficult to name the strengths that live within us.

“*Not what we have but what we enjoy, constitutes our abundance.*”

– *Epicurus*

One teen shared that he was “surprised by the strength of his family and how well his family was doing” after the loss of his father. Another teen poignantly noted the advice received from a therapist stating, “You are doing the best you can at this time.”

These are two examples of how we want to offer our expression of abundance to you. We invite you to explore your strengths and unique gifts. We want you to find the meaningful details within those larger experiences that can sometimes overshadow the grace of a moment.

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.

*You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.*

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

*Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.*

*Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.*

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.*

— Mary Oliver

SoundCare Kids

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

Group nights begin with pizza and play. The kids, teens and caregivers then meet in small groups for discussion and activities designed to explore different aspects of grief. Each week builds on the concepts, discussions and activities of the previous week, so attending all six weeks is recommended.

Our regular session topics include:

Week 1: Learning about grief and getting to know each other

Week 2: Exploring feelings and learning how to cope with them

Week 3: Sharing our stories

Week 4: Dealing with regret, guilt and unfinished business

Week 5: Identifying and adjusting to changes

Week 6: Keeping memories and staying connected

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

For more information about counseling or to reserve your place in an upcoming session, call Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice at 360-493-5928. Preregistration is required.

2016 Winter Grief
Support Group

This group will meet
Thursdays from
Jan. 28 to March 3.



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

Toby the coonhound came into a family where walking and running are an integral part of daily life. Initially he wanted only to walk down the middle of streets. Perhaps the openness of the road felt safer than the closeness of a sidewalk with cars parked along its edge. However, bit by bit, he began to trust in the possibilities and opportunities that lay along and beyond the boundary of the sidewalk.

His newfound trust and keen sense of smell would often lead him up the steep steps of homes in our neighborhood. At the top of the steps, he seemed to wait in anticipation of what opportunity might lie behind any given door. As he became better known in the neighborhood, a door would often open with a greeting or a treat. No matter how often doors did not open, he never ceased taking the steps.

As I describe Toby's growth in his new life, you might say I am providing him human characteristics that may not actually be his. If that is your response, please forgive me. However, I believe we often overlook some of the best teachers that present themselves to us each day.

Toby experienced extreme difficulties and challenges in the early stages of his life. Now he finds himself in a completely new life, a world away from what he has always known. His circumstances may not be unlike your own as you try to find meaning while living in a world turned upside down.

As a teacher, Toby provides three lessons about grief. These lessons may go a long way in helping you move through your loss and integrating it into your life.

1. There will always be steps. Moving through grief comes one step at a time - no more, no less. Give yourself the gift of acknowledging the courage it takes to put one foot in front of the other.
2. Opportunities are always possibilities. With each step, remind yourself of the possibility or opportunity that may present itself in the most unexpected places or behind seemingly closed doors.
3. When we are most vulnerable, trust can become a cherished companion. When working with grief, it is easy to forget that trust can help us better understand the gifts of the teachers and the opportunities that surround us.

As you consider Toby's lessons, remember, teachers are everywhere. It may be the man or woman on the bus; the garden in need of fertilizer; or the coonhound from a Georgia shelter. You need only to open yourself to those teachers in order to gain the lessons they are prepared to provide. As you open yourself, watch in wonder as the lessons they hold for you unfold and then enfold you in their wisdom.

Additional readings

The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have by Mark Nepo

Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow by Elizabeth Lesser



Adult support groups

Everyone 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 360-493-4684.



Daytime support groups

For information about these groups, please call 360-493-4667.

- 10-11:30 a.m.
First and third Monday of each month
Lacey Presbyterian Church
3045 Carpenter Road SE, Lacey
- 1:30-3 p.m.
First and third Tuesday of each month
Shelton Fire Department building
122 W. Franklin St., Shelton

Evening groups

- A Mindful Approach to Grief (6-week series)
This group will meet for six consecutive weeks to explore how the concept of mindfulness can be an important tool in coping with grief. Preregistration is required. For information or to register, please call 360-493-4667.
6-7:30 p.m.
Tuesdays, Feb.23 – March 29
Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice
3432 South Bay Road NE, Olympia
- Loss of a Child (The Compassionate Friends)
For information or to register, please call 360-402-6711.
7-8:30 p.m.
First Monday of each month
Providence St. Peter Hospital
Executive Meeting Room
413 Lilly Road NE, Olympia

Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice

3432 South Bay Road NE

Olympia, WA 98506

www.providence.org/pshch

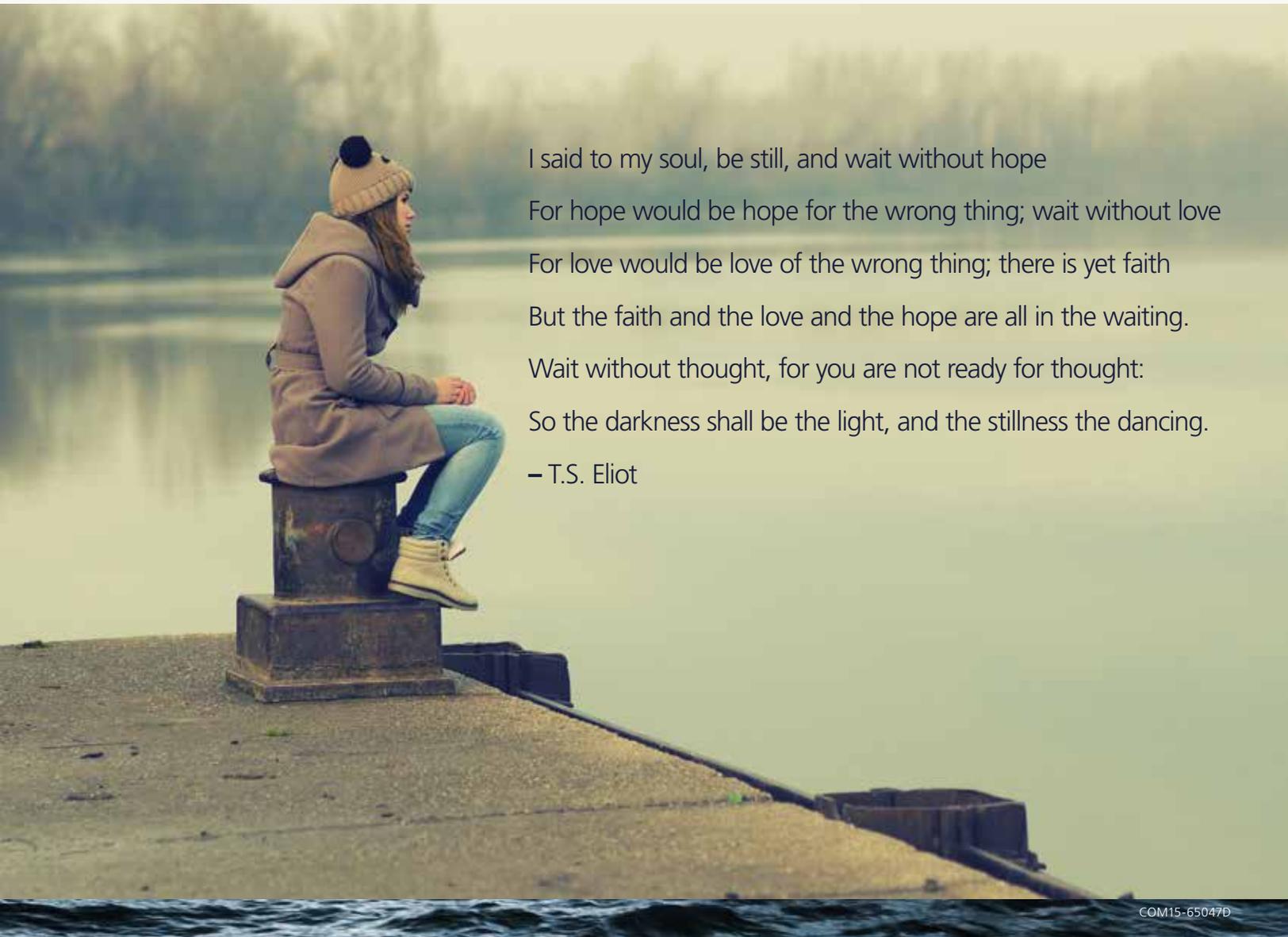
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Grief support for all ages

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!



I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
— T.S. Eliot