

## Monthly Support Groups

**2nd Tuesday** of the month from 4:00 pm. to 5:00 p.m. @ Alpert Jewish Community Center in Long Beach.  
This group offers a safe and supportive environment for participants to share their experiences and feelings related to loss.  
**Pre-registration is required.** Please contact Donna Baranyay at 562-426-7500 ext 206 for more information.

## Individual Support

The Bereavement Department of Haven Hospice offers individual support. For more information or to make an appointment for an individual meeting please contact our Bereavement Coordinator, Donna Baranyay at (562) 426-7500 ext 206

## Volunteering With Haven

Are you ready to become a Haven Hospice Volunteer? If you are interested in this rewarding opportunity, or you know anyone who is looking to volunteer his or her time, please contact Donna Baranyay, Volunteer Coordinator (562) 426-7500 ext 206.

## Help us keep our mailing list current!

If you no longer wish to receive our monthly newsletter or if the address that appears is not current, please email Jennifer Orellana at [Jennifer.Orellana@havenhealth.org](mailto:Jennifer.Orellana@havenhealth.org) or call the office at (562) 426-7500 ext 300.  
Thank you for your assistance.



# Healing with Haven

July & August 2015

## *The Roller Coaster of Grief*

By Catherine Adkins, MSW

The process of grief is like a roller coaster, except not as fun. At first, grief is very intense and can feel like a huge, terrifying plunge. As time goes on, it gets better. Sometimes you can see a drop coming and other times it


takes us by complete surprise. You may start to feel like you have adjusted and found your new normal but suddenly, an event or trigger comes along that throws you off balance and sends you into a spiral of emotions. These triggers may be special holidays or everyday occurrences such as finding a box of their belongings, driving by their favorite restaurant, hearing a song they loved, or smelling the perfume or cologne they used to wear. It is very common to encounter these grief triggers for years after your loved one has passed.

What do you do now? You probably feel like an emotional wreck! You were doing so well on this roller coaster of grief and now this simple song, sight, or smell has brought you to tears. First, if you are driving or somewhere unsafe, find a safe place; pull your car over or find a place you can have some privacy either alone or with a close loved one. Second, understand this is completely

normal. These grief triggers are common and are a signal of your love for them. Third, just breathe. Breathing has an amazing ability to calm your emotions and help you think more clearly. Finally, when you are in a safe place,

let yourself truly feel these emotions. They are real, the sadness, the anger, the loss, it is real. Allow yourself a few minutes to acknowledge, recognize, and feel these emotions. This will allow you to vent, express your emotions, and then continue on.

The intensity of grief lessens over time but these grief triggers can really creep up on us! By allowing yourself to truly feel these emotions it lets you face them and move on. When we do not have time to address this loss and we suppress our emotions it may lead to unresolved grief, long-term depression, and other mental health concerns. Grieving time and methods are different for everyone and grief triggers may really throw us for a loop. Take time to

acknowledge your feelings, feel them fully, breathe, and then move on. Grief can feel like a roller coaster but keep going and you will make it through. 



*If you would like to talk with someone about your personal roller coaster of the grief process please contact the Bereavement Department at 562-426-7500.*

# Circling the Drain

by Donna Baranyay, CT

During the grieving process how many of us have felt “stuck”? Not sure if we can move or even how to move if we even wanted to do so. I sometimes call this “circling the drain” syndrome. When we find ourselves going in circles, not sure of which direction to go we can feel frustrated, doubtful, or anxious as we try to make some sort of decision. Coping with the recent death of a loved one, especially if that person was the person that used to help us make decisions can make us feel like we are on a deserted island, left to our own devices when it comes to moving forward with our life.

In referencing the article on the front page. In what other ways do you feel you are on a rollercoaster? In addition to a rollercoaster of emotions we may sometimes feel like our coping techniques can't keep up on that rollercoaster. Oftentimes it is our fears that keep us circling the drain. Afraid to make a wrong decision, scared that if we make the wrong choice that we will not be able to shift into another way of doing something. Staying frozen in place also may feel like a safe space...albeit temporarily. Many of us may feel like we are unable to move forward out of a sense of guilt. We may catch ourselves saying something like “How can I laugh? My loved one isn't here to laugh...” or “If I am happy does that mean that I have forgotten my loved one?” or how about this one...“I don't deserve to be happy or find happiness again because of\_\_\_\_\_.”

However, I ask this question: What are your support systems? Which ones would you consider to be healthy and positive? Volunteering, working on ourselves, discovering who we are now, answering the question “Who am I now?” is a powerful start. It is not where we usually start though. Most of the time we are trying to figure out how to pay bills, which bills need to be paid, mounds and mounds of seemingly never ending paperwork needs to be addressed. Family members may be having their

individual experiences and feelings as well. Sometime we are even trying to figure out issues with the car, house, insurance, and the list goes on and on. Once these tasks are addressed then we may finally truly feel the loneliness and reality set in. The rollercoaster seems to have slowed down...we hope forever but one never knows do they?

I encourage you to take the time to look deep within yourself and discover the inner strength that I know is there. You have the courage, the strength, and the power to re-discover the joy, love, peace, and beauty in the world. It will never look quite the same again, but it is there. I am reminded of the rose. The flower represents life. The joy. The beauty. The love. What do you see when you look at a rose or better yet are holding a rose? Do you see the magnificent beauty, smell the sweet fragrance of its petals? Now take a look at



the stem. It has thorns doesn't it? What do you think the thorns represent? The challenges in life, the painful times, the struggles that we all face having this human experience. Do we dislike the rose because of the thorns? No! Many of us still look at a rose and see its beauty. In order to do that we need to accept the petals AND the thorns. Life is filled with moments of beauty, joy, and love. It is also filled with moments of deep pain, loss, grief, sadness, and anger. I believe that we wouldn't understand one without the other. Often times, it is while in the midst of our painful moments that we realize with gratitude the blessings that we have experienced. In our pain, while we are “circling the drain” we may realize how grateful we are for what we have and for what we had. Our coping skills can assist us in our healing journey if we are open. Reach out for help if needed. There are many different support groups, books, online resources, and organizations that are available if you would like that support. Please contact the Bereavement Department at 562-426-7500 if you would like our assistance. We are here to support you. 🏠

## Save the Date

Join us for our Annual Memorial Service and Butterfly release October 3, 2015 at the Seal Beach Center for Spiritual Living: 500 Marina Drive, Seal Beach CA 90740. We are offering an English service at 10 AM and a Spanish service at 12 PM. Light refreshments will be served following each service. Please join us as we remember our loved ones. For more information or to RSVP, contact Donna Baranyay, Bereavement Coordinator (562) 426-7500 ext. 206 or Jennifer Orellana, Bereavement Assistant at (562) 426-7500 ext. 300. 🏠

# Community Voices

We invite you to share your experiences with others. Please Email your submission to: [donna.baranyay@havenhealth.org](mailto:donna.baranyay@havenhealth.org)  
Or mail them to: Haven Hospice Bereavement Department, 2895 Temple Ave, Signal Hill, CA 90755

## The Moon

by Ben Novotny

*Ben Novotny is a bereaved grieving the death of a loved one who died while on hospice care.  
Ben wrote this article as a part of his healing journey.*

One starry night many years ago, a grandmother sat outside holding her newborn baby grandson in her lap. He was only a day old and he meant the world to her.

“Do you see that?” she asked him, pointing to a large round object shinning brightly in the night sky. “That’s the moon”.

The baby boy looked up and gazed at the moon in wonder and amazement.

Years went by, and the baby grew and grew. He grew until he became a little boy. The little boy’s grandmother would pick him up after school, and whenever his parents were out of town he would always stay with her.

The grandmother would cook the most delicious meals imaginable, and after dinner the two would go outside, and the little boy would gaze at the moon in wonder and amazement.

Years went by, and the little boy grew and grew. He grew until he became a teenager. The teenager no longer needed to be looked after, but every weekend he would visit his grandmother, who would cook him the most delicious meals imaginable, and after dinner the two would go outside, and he would gaze at the moon in wonder and amazement.

Years went by, and the teenager grew and grew. He grew until he became a young man. Meanwhile, his grandmother grew older and weaker, so the young man moved in with her so he could take care of her. Every night he would help her make the most delicious meals imaginable, and

after dinner the two would go outside, and the young man would gaze at the moon in wonder and amazement.

But then one day the young man’s grandmother died, and the woman who loved and cared for him and cooked him the most delicious meals imaginable was suddenly gone.

That night as the young man took a long walk deep in thought, he noticed that the moon shined brighter than ever.

“I wish you could see the moon tonight Grandma”, said the young man as he began to cry.

Just then, a butterfly appeared suddenly before him and spoke.

“Your grandmother is now one with the moon and the stars tonight”, said the butterfly. “The reason the moon shines brighter than ever tonight is because she wanted to shine her love down on you. For her love for you was bigger than the moon itself”.

Years and years went by, and the young man grew and grew. He grew until he became a father with a baby girl of his own.

One starry night, the father sat outside holding his newborn baby girl in his lap. She was only a day old and she meant the world to him.

“Do you see that?” he asked, pointing to a large round object shinning brightly in the night sky. “That’s the moon”.

The baby girl looked up, and gazed at the moon in wonder and amazement. 📷

