



PATHWAYS

Bereavement Newsletter of Hospice of the Rock River Valley
April – May 2004

GREETINGS,

My name is Chris Larson. In February I started with Hospice of the Rock River Valley as the new Bereavement Coordinator. I pray that I can contribute to this very important agency as a vital team member in serving the needs of each patient and his or her family. Each day I am learning from my co-workers and the individuals I have the privilege to meet with. I feel that I have been blessed with this opportunity to serve. Please, feel free to contact me. I can meet with an individual in my office or in his or her home. Also, grief support groups are still offered on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. A new afternoon grief support group will begin in April. It will meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. The grief support groups meet at the Hospice office. The groups are free and open to the public. Also, I am available to speak to groups. Again, it is a privilege to be a part of the hospice team. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to assist you with grief issues/ concerns.

Blessings and Peace,
Chris Larson

Following are some cherished messages from a book entitled

LITTLE MIRACLES.

Do not wait for life. Do not long for it. Be aware, always and at every moment, that the miracle is in the here and now.

Marcel Proust

Today is your day and mine, the day we have, the day in which we play our part and the whole world is starting to feel it all at once. It is no time for cynicism. This is our time to grow and build and love.

Elie Shulman

Faith and love are your natural inheritance. Fear is an invention of the mind.

Gerald Jampolsky

All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

At night I turn my problems over to God. He's going to be up all night anyway.

Carrie Westingson

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller



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***"By your side,
our family caring for
your family."***

The Painful Grace of Flight

by Mary Austin, *Bereavement Magazine*, March-April 2004

Now, that it's spring, perhaps you've seen a butterfly or two...and as summer comes, you'll surely see them alighting on flowers and dancing through the air.

Many cultures believe that butterflies travel between the spirit world and the earth, connecting people with the divine realm. A Native American legend says, "If you have a secret wish, whisper it to a butterfly. Since butterflies cannot speak, the wish is safe, and the butterfly will carry the wish to the Great Spirit."

The ancient Greeks believed that butterflies were souls, released from their bodies. In fact, ancient Greek uses the same work-psyche-for both soul and butterfly, so is the connection between the two. Early Christians also used the butterfly as a symbol for the soul, and other cultures believed that the spirits of the dead took the form of butterflies. Some have said that the soul-butterfly's ability to leave the body while we sleep explains where our dreams come from.

It may be, as summer comes, that watching a butterfly in flight will remind you of your loved one...remembering their travel from this life to whatever comes next, when we're set free from illness and pain.

It seems that you as a caregiver are also like the butterfly. As a caregiver, you are transformed. You grow...change over the time of your loved one's illness...learn to do things you never expected you could do. You grow from being a hesitant caregiver to someone able to journey with your loved one until they are set free from the struggles of this life.

When you grieve for a loved one,

you are again like the butterfly. Grief can be like the dark of the chrysalis, or the cocoon. Some scientists call this phase of the butterfly's life the resting phase, and it may be that your grief is a time of resting from the demands of life. You're wrapped up in sorrow and pain...until you begin to stretch, and move...and then the cocoon expands. You emerge from sorrow into the light of day, and realize that you're not the person you used to be. For better or worse, you're someone new, changed by your love and loss. Grief has altered your perspective, changed your view of yourself and the world. Like the butterfly, you've come out transformed...or perhaps, for you, that transformation is still ahead. You may feel that you're still in the cocoon—waiting, longing for the release into being a butterfly. Such struggles are not easy.

Perhaps you've heard the story of the man who found a butterfly chrysalis, and watched one day as a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its way out of the opening and into the world. Then it seemed to stop, exhausted, and he thought it had gotten as far as it could. He decided to help the butterfly by taking a pair of scissors, and snipping off the rest of the cocoon. The butterfly emerged easily, but it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch, expecting that, at any moment, the wings would expand and the butterfly would fly away. To fly, the wings needed to expand, and the heavy swollen body contract. But neither happened. The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and

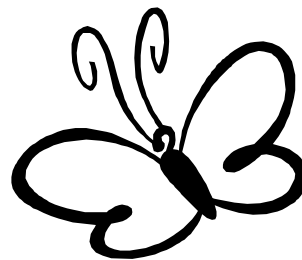
shriveled wings, never able to fly.

In his kindness, or haste, the man didn't understand that the struggle was essential for the butterfly to fly. The tight cocoon was nature's way of forcing the fluid from the heavy body into the tissue paper wings, so the butterfly would be able to fly once it came out of the cocoon. Not to struggle crippled the butterfly—as it often happens for us. In the struggle, often at the very point when we think we can't do any more, comes the gift that makes flight possible.

The struggle makes the wings—for the butterfly, and for us.

Your loved ones have struggled with illness and sorrow, and you have faced all of the complicated emotions that come with the journey. You have struggled with grief—and struggle with it still. We wish you the gift of flight, like the butterfly, whenever the time is right for you. We wish you the lifting of grief, with time, and the filling of your wings. We wish you the close connection between the butterfly and the soul—so close that when you see the butterflies this summer, and each year, your spirits may be lifted as you remember this time of transformation in you lives.

We wish you the grace of flight—and transformation.



Poetic Comfort from People Who Care

Desert Rose

By Larissa Mulholland

Bereavement Magazine, July/Aug 2002

My soul feels dry
 like the desert sand,
My heart is parched
 as the western wind,
My tears have all dried up
And my joy has flown the skies
To escape the wilderness of sorrow.
I am left to cling
To the only life and beauty there
is - your memory.
There is hope in your memory.

Sometimes

By Marcia Updyke

Bereavement Magazine, May 1990

Sometimes,
Memories are like rain showers
Sprinkling down upon you
Catching you unaware.
And then they are gone,
Leaving you warm and re-
freshed.

Sometimes, Memories are like
thunderstorms
Beating down upon you,
Relentless in their downpour.
And then they will cease,
Leaving you tired and bruised.

Sometimes,
Memories are like shadows
Sneaking up behind you,
Following you around.
Then they disappear.
Leaving you sad and con-
fused.

Sometimes.
Memories are like comforters
Surrounding you with warmth,
Luxuriously abundant.
And sometimes they stay,
Wrapping you in contentment.

**Following are two e-mails I
received and would like to
share.**

To Realize

To realize the value of a sister
Ask someone who doesn't have
one.

To realize the value of ten years:
Ask a newly divorced couple.

To realize the value of four years:
Ask a graduate.

To realize the value of one year:
Ask a student who has failed a
final exam.

To realize the value of nine
months: Ask a mother who gave
birth to a stillborn.

To realize the value of one month:
Ask a mother who has given birth
to a premature baby.

To realize the value of one week:
Ask an editor of a weekly newspa-
per.

To realize the value of one hour:
Ask the lovers who are waiting to
meet.

To realize the value of one
minute: Ask a person who has
missed the train, bus or plane.

To realize the value of one
second: Ask a person who has
survived an accident.

To realize the value of one
millisecond: Ask the person who
has won a silver medal in the
Olympics.

To realize the value of a friend:
Lose one.

Time waits for no one.
Treasure every moment you
have. You will treasure it even
more when you can share it with
someone special.

Author and lecturer Leo
Buscaglia once talked about a
contest he was asked to
judge. The purpose of the
contest was to find the most
caring child. The winner was a
four-year-old child whose next-
door neighbor was an elderly
gentleman who had recently
lost his wife. Upon seeing the
man cry, the little boy went into
the old gentleman's yard,
climbed onto his lap, and just
sat there. When his mother
asked him what he had said to
the neighbor, the little boy
said, "Nothing, I just helped
him cry."

**Don't forget that the grief
support groups are open to
the public and free of
charge.**

**Call 1-800-646-9242 if you
have any questions.**

