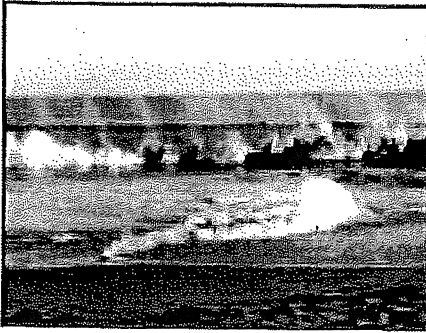


## Progress, Rebuilding and Change...some good thoughts



*Grief is like walking along a sea shore with the waves going back and forth. As the waves near high tide, they come in a bit farther and go out a bit less. From wave to wave, we notice little difference. But if we step back and view the whole seashore, we can see some change. Grief may not seem to change by the hour or by the day. But if we step back and look, we see real progress.*

How long does this grieving business take? Many people think it takes two to three years to do the grieving they need to do. It may take more or less. It will take as long as it takes.

"In grief, nothing stays put. One keeps emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I'm on a spiral? If I'm in a spiral, am I going up or going down?"

*C.S. Lewis, a Grief Observed*

Think again about the three deaths we are grieving: 1) the person who died, 2) ourselves, 3) our dreams. When we notice ourselves spending more energy on recreating ourselves, more time rebuilding our future without the person who died, this is a sign of healing. We are spiraling up, moving to the next level, moving off the plateau. But the future can be so frightening!

"The best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time."

*Abraham Lincoln*

We want the pain to be over but we resist the change. Why? Why is it so hard to change?

- Because it takes energy to come out of the cocoon, that safe womb-like place of grief. It's a place we know and are comfortable with. We already know how to cry and be alone. But we've forgotten how to laugh and make small talk.
- Because the death has changed the family dynamics. We may need more help from children, friends, or parents. Maybe we've lost some control. Or maybe we have more control and decision-making than we want.
- Because if we change, our families and friends won't like the changes. "They don't understand why I go salsa dancing." "They don't like my new friends."



What can I hang on to?

*Hope is grief's best music. Proverb*

When we are feeling as if there is no way out, nothing to look forward to and we're anticipating only days and days of emotional agony ahead of us, we need to recognize that we are not alone. There are many others who have been through grief and are now living their lives and functioning as capable, loving people in the world. We will join them one day.

After we have been through the challenging tangle of emotions, we will emerge in a clearing where we know the worst is over and we will feel ourselves gaining the strength to assimilate the changes in our life.

We need to carry hope with us, as we traverse the thicket of emotions, and realize that we will in the future, live a life that is not governed by wrenching emotion.

*As I begin to grieve, I will not abandon hope. I will realize that the others who have made the journey before me have emerged intact. They will give me faith in myself to come through the darkest parts of my life. All the ways in which I have met difficulties in the past and dealt with them will give me renewed belief in my ability to meet the challenge.*

*Reprint from A Time To Grieve  
Meditations For Healing After The Death Of A Loved One  
By Carol Staudacher*