



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

I must admit, I've got it! And, I've got it BAD!!! No, not the munchies but Spring Fever!! No more snow, no more shoveling the porch, no more cold! Just a long view of balmy weather, skies of blue (maybe a little cloudy-rainy, but hey, California has a drought!) and some sweet tea and falling asleep on the porch. How about you? Are you feeling a bit rejuvenated? I hope so. Next question, how is your relationship feeling? Cold and snowy or balmy and full of renewed energy? I hope it is the latter. If it is the former, don't forget to let us know if you need us!

This Thought is very personal to me. You are all special to Donna and I and I felt strongly that I wanted to share my feelings about loss and grieving with you. I hope you will reach out to me if it resonates with you.

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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APRIL 2015: Helping People Grieve

I am writing this one day after the 20th anniversary of our daughter's death in a car accident. In some ways it seems like yesterday when I had to tell Donna that her 16 year old Stephanie died instantly.

While this is not a thought for couples, I trust my readers will indulge me. I have gathered some thoughts that I think may be useful around the phenomenon of grief...which is Universal in so many ways.

I'll grant you that I have had special opportunities around the topic of grief, both personally and as a result of a fine Seminary education and 15 years as a pastor. I had two different classes with the indomitable Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. (She was tiny but very feisty as she stuck it to us Seminary students for being vague on our feelings about "after-life"). I also had the privilege of knowing Granger Westberg who wrote the classic little book "Good Grief" which remains an important guide for grieving people.

I'll make this simple. What a grieving person needs most is for people to have the courage to approach them and to be willing to talk and share with them about the loved one who is no longer present.

There was a huge outpouring of people who gathered when Stephanie died to talk about her life and to share deep and funny stories about her. (She was quite a force in her 16 years...we have pictures and additional stories if you want to know more!) This was comforting to all of us.

However, after some time, there came to be a strange silence in which her name was conspicuously not mentioned, especially at parties, reunions, graduations and weddings. I'm sure that people did not know what to say. The continuing thought of our Loss was too horrible to mention. The mention of her might somehow make us relive our worst nightmare or that bringing up the Loss would remind people that tragic things could happen to them, too.

We recently attended a wedding for our niece. She was a happy bride...Stephanie's

cousin and 10 years younger than Stephanie would be. We love her and her husband and are very happy for them! We were also sad...and very lonely sitting there thinking about Stephanie while no one mentioned her name. It was as if she never existed in our family. I understand the strange absence of her name. I do not fault people for this. I just felt sad. Please know that it is possible (and important) for those who have lost to feel both Joy and Pain at the same time. Our Sadness of the past does not diminish our Joy of the present. Acknowledging our loss invites our celebration of the present.

I appeal to you, if you know of someone who is grieving a loss, whether it be the loss of a child, or a partner, or a parent, or a pet...please move toward their grief and mention the loss and acknowledge the loved one. You'll be giving them a wonderful gift by validating the relationship they had and by having the courage to share their pain. We know how important validation is, and it is not limited to people who are alive.

One last thing...there are many things that bring us grief: the loss of a marriage, the loss of a job, a foreclosure, a miscarriage, an addiction, a troubled childhood story, and on and on. Losses are best healed when named, recognized, honored, and shared.

Thank you for sharing this part of our family's Journey. I welcome your feedback to this article.

David (and Donna)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES
COMING UP!

Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

June 12-14, 2015, Frederick, MD

July 24-26, 2015, Frederick, MD

August 28-30, 2015, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

March 7-8, 2015 Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Every area of trouble gives out a ray of hope; and the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable. John Fitzgerald Kennedy

"It's spring fever.... You don't quite know what it is you DO want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!" Mark Twain

"If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies." Nadine Stair

"Spring is nature's way of saying, "Let's party!"" Robin Williams

**"Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush." Doug Larson
Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. Joseph Addison**

"For a spring training drill, Yogi instructed his players to: "Pair off in threes"" Yogi Berra

**First a howling blizzard woke us,
Then the rain came down to soak us,
And now before the eye can focus -
Crocus. Lilja Rogers**

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul - and sings the tunes without the words - and never stops at all. Emily Dickinson

My great hope is to laugh as much as I cry; to get my work done and try to love somebody and have the courage to accept the love in return. Maya Angelou

Hope is patience with the lamp lit. Tertullian

All kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them. Magic Johnson

We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
Bowman & Associates, PA**

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