

'Voice of Hope'

We are all survivors of loss. Whether we like it or not, we are. We may be at different points along that continuum, but we are all survivors. **Inherent in that very word survivor, is Hope.** Our degree of hope may vary, yet what we share in common is the potential for growth and renewal from being a survivor. The lasting and cherished memories of our loved ones are what give us that possibility for hope. We may not see it or feel it right now, especially if our child/loved one has recently died, but it IS there, if we want it to be ~ **it's our choice to be open to it or not.**

Of course, we could just say that this work of grief is just too hard and unbearable, and at times, it does feel that way, especially around times of cheer and new life such as holidays and birthdays. But **what is it that gets us through those heart-wrenching times? HOPE.**

Often times we don't feel like we have many choices. We feel cut-off from our families, friends, and co-workers. We feel as if no one understands how the death of our loved one has so deeply affected us. And because we feel no one understands, we make the choice to shutdown and turn inward ~ thus, dimming our view for the possibility of hope, for the possibility of dreaming again, and for the possibility of living and loving again in a world without our loved one.

You know, part of doing grief work is reminiscing and going over and over again in our minds and experiencing in our hearts the lives of those that have died...the good times, as well as the not so good times. In the midst of yearning to touch and to kiss them.to listen to their laugh or cry.to smell their special aftershave, perfume, or the scent of their baby fresh hair.to see the twinkle in their eyes or their gentle smile.**we must 'let go' of their physical presence and hold them and cherish them in our memory.** As painful as this process is, it is **our way of maintaining our relationship with our loved one. Just because they died doesn't mean that the relationship is over ~ it is just transforming within another dimension...**and for me that means a very moving spiritual dimension.

To begin our healing, **our hearts and minds must be like an open door ~ we make the choice** to allow not only our loved one's memories to flow through, but to allow the love of our families, friends, and co-workers to comfort us in our time of woundedness. Accepting their love, as well as reaching out for it, gives us the opportunity to share the love and life of our child, father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, aunt, uncle, grandparent, or friend.

Let our voice of love and hope be heard ~ moving us beyond survival, with our loved one's 'light' forever burning in our hearts and minds.

We all have the potential to be **instruments of love and hope** on this earth. It is our responsibility to **keep our loved one's 'light' shining within us and to**

share the rainbow of their life with others. In our own time and in our own special way, **that 'light' will guide us out of the darkness, to the hope of living and loving again...**

Deb Lee Gould, Director
FOD Family Support Group
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