

# Grove Park Hospice NEWSLETTER

WINTER  
2024

1353 Grove Park NE, PO Box 701, Orangeburg, SC 29116

(803) 536-6644



## Endings Lead To New Beginnings

*The New Year has arrived. For those who are grieving the death of a loved one, the transition from one year to the other can be hard. The reality that the person we love will be left in the old year and will never experience the new one can weigh heavily on our hearts. Often, we feel even more separated from our deceased loved one because we feel as if we are moving even further ahead without them. We are entering the new year without them and it seems they are now centuries behind us. We most often think of death as an ending, not only for our loved one, but for us, too. The grief, mourning and profound sadness remind us of all we have lost. As the months go on, we miss our loved one even more and continue to focus on the ending of their lives and the ending of so many parts of our lives. (Cont. on p. 2)*

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(Cont. from p. 1) It's almost impossible to even begin to think about new beginnings. After the season of deep mourning subsides, we begin to understand that endings lead to new beginnings.

We regain some of our physical and emotional energy and slowly realize we have more bandwidth to embrace the changes and new beginnings before us. It's not uncommon to feel guilty about gradually moving forward in our lives and experiencing joy again. It's important to give ourselves permission to begin to live more fully again. The fear of leaving our loved ones behind is sometimes paralyzing until we begin to process that we don't "move on" without them, but rather move forward with them.

As this new year begins, grieve well. Part of grieving well is grabbing whatever flickers of joy come our way and holding tightly to them. Grief is the only experience that houses profound sadness and emerging joy in the heart at the same time. Follow your heart. Mourn when the pain grabs your heart and smile when you recall precious memories. Embrace the endings and the new beginnings. Somewhere along the journey, your new beginnings will bring true joy.

Laurie Taylor, <http://mygriefandloss.org/>

### **Back to Work With Grief In Tow**

When someone you love has recently died, it can feel like your whole world has come to a sudden halt. So it can be tough to confront the moment you must get back into a daily routine—and even tougher when returning to a professional environment. Unfortunately, most working people in the U.S. only get a few days of paid time off to grieve, if they get any. But no matter how long you're able to be away from your job, it most likely feels like it's too soon to go back to it. It is probably going to be rough for a little while. However, there are a few simple steps you may want to take to feel more prepared when you step back into your working life.



**Start slow:** If you know that you'll need to be returning to an office or job site soon, it may be helpful to rev up your emotional thresholds by tricking your brain into settling into a routine. Even though you're not going back to work yet, set an alarm for the time you'd usually need to get up, eat breakfast, and get ready as you normally would.

If you have a few more days, after spending some time adjusting to the first part of your day, stretch your limbs a little further and leave the house at your regularly scheduled time. You can go run errands, go to the gym, or just go for a walk with the dog. Exposing yourself to public life during the workday hours can help you prep for being composed around your coworkers and peers.

You can also slowly take on small work-related tasks before you've officially returned, such as catching up on your email or having a one-on-one meeting about coming back with your boss. However, if you start to feel exhausted or like you're taking on too much, slow back down.

**Work as a distraction:** As the day you'll be returning nears, make a list of things you're excited about when it comes to going back to work. Maybe you left a big opportunity or project undone and you're going to get some small joy out of finishing it. Or maybe it's something as simple as chatting with a friend in the office. Whether your job is technical, creative, or strategic, it can take up some of the idle space in your mind that, right now, is consumed by your grief. If you're anxious, remind yourself that some distraction can be a good thing—and a productive distraction is often even better.

If you have some flexibility once you're back, try to take on work or tasks that feel stimulating so that you're engaged and content to put your energy toward them. Make to-do lists at the beginning of your day to stay on track, and be sure to give yourself little breaks to decompress or grieve. (Cont. on p. 3)

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

We are seeking compassionate volunteers to positively impact the lives of our patients and families. Our volunteers provide emotional support, companionship, and a listening ear for our patients. If you'd like to know more about our volunteer program, please contact Phyllis at (803) 536-6644.



(Cont. from p. 2) *Be prepared to be taken by surprise:* Obviously, no amount of prep work or distraction will erase the memories of, thoughts of, and love you feel for the person who is gone. You wouldn't want them to, even if they could. When those emotional moments inevitably happen at work, you might be tempted to chase those feelings away. Instead, embrace them. If possible, find a way to step away from your job and your peers as soon as you can to process the feelings. This can be a trip to the restroom, a short walk, or maybe even just going to make a cup of tea in the kitchen. No matter what you do, expecting that these emotions will come is key to being able to deal with them.

*Addressing your coworkers and friends:* The people who work with you will likely have a range of responses when you return to the office, including awkward avoidance, or comments that might strike you as insensitive. The people around us who are not in the process of grieving often do not know what to say or how to act around someone who has just experienced a loss. Be prepared for this, and try to be understanding, even when it's difficult. They are most likely trying to be respectful and compassionate, even if they are failing. If it brings up negative feelings, return to your emotional-response strategies, and make room for your need to forgive them. It is difficult, but you do not want any lingering discomfort or anger to affect your professional relationships.

*Dealing with guilt:* You may also feel emotions you might not have anticipated around returning to work, such as guilt. By going back to your daily routine, you may have a sense of trying to "get over" the loss of your loved one or forget the weight of their loss. It might even begin to feel like you are dishonoring their memory. If you find yourself dwelling on thoughts like these, remember that this person loved you in and through your daily routines. Even if they weren't necessarily someone who regaled you for your professional achievements, they lived alongside of you in that life—and they would most likely want you to continue living it fully.

*Balancing work and other responsibilities:* Depending on when you have to return to work, you might have to do your day job while settling aspects of your loved one's estate or planning memorials, all while maintaining other aspects of daily life. It can be difficult to find a way to do it all—in many cases, you just can't.

Enlist the help of a close family member or spouse to tackle your to-do list, and set aside dedicated time to work on any paperwork or tasks related to your loss. While it might not eliminate the pressure completely, it can help compartmentalize it, allowing you to focus on one thing at a time.

The people whom you work closely with know you are grieving, and they will be understanding while you adjust to getting back to work. Take it slow and check in with yourself; rushing and burying yourself in work too soon might have adverse effects on your overall mental health. Everyone does this at a different pace, and that's OK. Listen to your inner voice about how much to take on, and honor your limits when you reach them. ■ <http://empathy.com/>



***Our Hospice Chaplain, Rev. Alexander Baker, is available to discuss with you and your family the process of spirituality in healing from grief and loss. If you need assistance or to schedule a meeting, please call (803) 536-6644.***



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*The Grove Park Family remains faithfully dedicated to*  
**RESTORING DIGNITY, OFFERING HOPE AND PROVIDING COMFORT**

**We are always looking for compassionate volunteers!  
Please call (803) 536-6644 for more information.**

## *Additional Resources:*

<http://www.aarp.org/family/lifeafterloss/>  
<http://www.hospicenet.org/html/bereavement.html>  
<http://www.hospicefoundation.org>  
<http://www.griefnet.org>  
<http://goodgrief.org/grief>  
<http://www.hospicehelp.org/events.htm>  
<http://www.griefrecoverymethod.com/about-us>  
[http://www.tributes.com/grief\\_recovery\\_center/index](http://www.tributes.com/grief_recovery_center/index)

