

LAMENTATIONS

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S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

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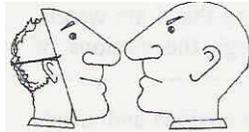


October is one of my favorite months. It is not only the month of Jim and my birthdays, but it is a month in which the weather is changing and the temperature is becoming cooler. The morning starts out cool, crisp and often foggy, but, as the day progresses, the fog burns off, the temperature becomes warmer, and it is an inviting day. The first fall after Young Jim's death was the most difficult for me because fall has always been symbolic of death. However, as I look forward (yes, I do look forward) to fall and winter this year, I am reminded that I survived that first fall, and I now know that I will also survive--and even look forward to this fall.

Our grief is so much like these fall days. In the beginning of our grief, we are definitely in a fog. We cannot see one step or one day in front of us, much less a foot ahead or any type of future. We not only cannot see, we don't want to see, for surely all our future will hold is pain and heartache because of our great loss. However, as we progress in our grief, we become more adjusted to that deep, aching loss that we have and we realize that we have survived one day, one week, or in our case, four years. We have been through many "fogs," and will continue to have these foggy days, but we also know that the days become "warmer," as the fogs burn off and the sunshine (our memories) warms our days.

Each day when I awaken, I ask God to grant me peace with and acceptance of Young Jim's death; to make the day count; and to guide me in all that I do. The "fog" is often too thick to see through, but I know that there is sunlight above it.

When you are in the dense fog of grief, you wonder if you will ever see "the light of day" again. In William Miller's book, *When Going to Pieces*

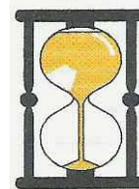


Holds You Together (You can find healing when you allow yourself to grieve), he explains the "dynamics of grief": As we look at the various dynamics of grief it will become clear that the phrase "grief work" is indeed appropriate. Grief work is called grief work because that is precisely what it is--work. Grief needs to be worked through, worked out, worked off. And it **will be** somehow, somewhere, sometime; either constructively or destructively, partially or completely, in an integrating fashion or disintegrating, health restoring or health destroying, as good grief or bad grief at the time of the loss or years removed. There is little point in dwelling on what may happen to a person if grief over a loss is not expressed and worked through. What is true of the suppression, repression or denial of any feeling is certainly true of the feelings making up the grief syndrome.

If you are unsure as to whether you are still in the "fog" of your grief, and have never had a glimpse of the sunshine, complete the self-profile of bereavement on page 2.

You probably know by now that I love greeting cards, and it seems that each year *Hallmark* adds new

holidays in which we may buy and send cards. A new holiday to me is October 8th, **National Children's Day**. I'm not sure when this was first instituted, but it is a wonderful idea and I would like to suggest that we designate that day as a day we celebrate the lives of our children. May I suggest that you burn a green candle for *remembrance* and take your list of our children's names and think of all of our children on Sunday. We don't want them to be forgotten. Perhaps you will observe this in some other manner. . . but let me also encourage you to make it a celebration of the children you still have with you. They are often forgotten on special days because we are so laden with our own grief.



October 29th is the end of **Daylight Saving Time** which means that we "fall" back one hour. What do you plan to do with that extra hour? Make it count!

October 31st is **HALLOWEEN!** A friend of mine gave me a Pegasus cookie cutter and I plan to hand out cookies to the Trick-or-treaters to remind them of Young Jim. The **trick** is to find ways of remembering Young Jim, the **treat** is when others share their memories of Jim with us. May you receive many **TREATS!!**



Grief Grafts

This Grief "inventory" is from the book, *Surviving Grief. . . and learning to live again*, by Dr. Catherine M. Sanders. This *Self-Profile* allows you to explore your own experience of grief. The statements below represent various thoughts and feelings commonly expressed by people who are grieving. How well does it describe your feelings now:

Place a check mark by the TRUE statement that is true or mostly true for you. Alongside each statement that is not true or mostly not true for you, place a check mark in the NOT TRUE column.

	TRUE	NOT TRUE
1. Immediately after the death, I felt exhausted.	-----	-----
2. My arms and legs feel very heavy	-----	-----
3. I feel lost and helpless.	-----	-----
4. I feel restless.	-----	-----
5. I have feelings of apathy.	-----	-----
6. I rarely feel enthusiastic about anything.	-----	-----
7. Life has lost its meaning for me.	-----	-----
8. I have frequent mood changes	-----	-----
9. Small problems seem overwhelming.	-----	-----
10. At times, I wish I were dead.	-----	-----
11. It is hard to maintain my religious faith in light of all the pain and suffering caused by the death.	-----	-----
12. Life seems empty and barren.	-----	-----
13. I seem to have lost my energy	-----	-----
14. I feel cut-off and isolated.	-----	-----

- 15. I tend to be more irritable with others. -----
 - 16. I often experience confusion. -----
 - 17. Concentrating on things is difficult.. -----
 - 18. I seem to have lost my self-confidence. -----
 - 19. I cry easily. -----
 - 20. I often wish that I could have been the one to die instead. -----
 - 21. There are times when I have the feeling that the deceased is present. -----
 - 22. I sometimes have trouble believing the death has actually occurred. -----
 - 23. I have the feeling that I am watching myself go through the motions of living. -----
 - 24. I feel extremely anxious and unsettled. -----
 - 25. The yearning for the deceased is so intense that I sometimes have physical pain in my chest. -----
- TOTAL -----

Total the number of check marks in each column. The number of your TRUE statements will fall into one of the following categories:

- 1 to 8 You are handling your grief very well.
- 9 to 14 There is need to take better care of yourself.
- 15 to 19 Find someone to talk with about your loss.
- 20 to 25 Seek professional help. You are holding in too much grief.

The first time I completed this questionnaire was shortly after Young Jim's death, and almost every statement was checked in the TRUE column. However, when completed this time, the numbers have drastically decreased. If you have just lost your loved one, these statements will express exactly how you feel, this is normal. Dr. Sanders makes the following statement: *It's important that you understand*

your present level of grief and the degree of help or self-help you need. You may find that help solely in reading, or you may find it necessary to seek additional professional counseling. Your score on this Self-Profile will help you to decide. As long as you actively work through the phases of your grief, you will, some day, look back on this time and see how far you have come toward your own healing and renewal.

John, the 47-year-old son of Lee and Felicia Turner, died 7-1-94. The family writes: *John was so loving and was loved by everyone who ever met him. Even as a child, his siblings and cousins remember him being fun to be with.*

John was a choreographer, dancer and a health and fitness educator. He was president of Health Wave, Inc., a company specializing in doctor/patient communications, and was author of Dr. Let's Talk.

He was so proud that all of his siblings went to college as well as his nieces and nephews.

John loved art, music, nature, and especially flowers. He had an eye for simplicity, but elegant designs. He helped many of his family and friends, decorate their apartments and homes.

To keep John's memory alive, we started John's Friendship Flower Garden in our back yard. We asked our family and friends when they thin out their perennials, or if they want to buy a flower, to donate them to John's garden.

Judy Williams, a very close high school friend of John's, read this poem at John's memorial service.

WORTHY OF MY FRIENDS

If I could have but just one plea,
I think that one prayer would be
with all that such a prayer portends
LORD, make me worthy of my friends.

Help me to be the kind of man
that loyal friends believe I am.
Help me to be as true and fine
As they believe-these friends of mine.

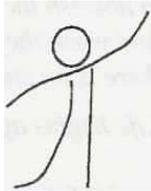
Give me the courage under stress
that they expect me to possess;
and when they smile and look at me
Oh, let me be, LORD what they see!

Help me all pretense to forgo,
and simply, without pomp or show,
repay with true sincerity
the loyal faith they have in me.

And if, sometimes, I may have erred,
in any thought or deed or word,
then help me, LORD, to make amends.

LORD, make me worthy of my
friends.

John's symbol is a dancing stick man. His master's thesis was "One Man Dancing." He always signed his letters with this symbol since it incorporated his initials, **J. T.**



Karlene Bradley's 3-year-old son, Jeffrey, died from cancer, 9-19-88. Karlene writes: I'm enclosing a copy of the letter I wrote to Jeffrey in memory of his 10th birthday. As his birth changed my life, so has his death. I feel that my experience has given me a special insight when I counsel bereaved families at Hospice. He has given me a lasting legacy.

**In Memory of Jeffrey Bradley
on his tenth birthday**

Sometimes, in my mind, I try to picture how you'd look if you were still here with me: tall and slim with dark hair and those beautiful blue eyes.

But then, more important, I think about the things that made you "Jeffrey." Your sense of humor, your intelligence, your love of books, your belief that Jesus was your friend, your courage as you endured more than any little boy should have to face, your unconditional love when you told me "you're my heart."

I'll never understand why things happened the way they did, but I'm forever thankful that you were in my life.

Until we meet again, "you're my heart, too."

Love,
Mommy
7/28/95

Kevin, the 2-year-old son of Lloyd and Regina Bingham died 9-1-7-94. The family has chosen a smiling angel with shoes because Kevin loved to wear his little shoes and go!!



Joshua, the 6-year-old son of Henry and Myra Goforth, was killed by a dog, 6-4-93. Myra responded to my request of how the siblings have reacted to the death of their brother or sister. Myra shares: *Jeremiah (13) still blames himself because he said he should have been there. The night before Joshua was killed, Joshua told me and Jeremiah that a wolf was trying to kill him, so I told him to get in bed with his brother and he would be okay. That nothing could get him. That didn't work, so I put him in bed with me and his dad. He went to sleep finally. The next night is when everything happened. It was on our wedding anniversary, so we don't celebrate it any more. It is like a part of my body is missing and I will never find it again. People say it gets better, but it really doesn't. I don't let the kids see me, I try to be happy in front of them, but sometimes Jeremiah still will say, "Mom, you are no fun any more. You used to be." It isn't fair, but I can't help it sometimes. We go to the cemetery and Jonathan (3) will kiss his picture and tell him that he loves him. And at night he will pick out a star and say, "Mom, there's Joshua's star"*

Joshua's symbols are a basketball and Barney.



Gene and Jean Gilvin's 30-year-old son, Doug, died from a brain tumor, 2-10-95. Jean described Doug: *Doug was our only son. We have three girls, but Doug was our baby. He was a great athlete in school and never gave us any trouble. He joined the Lexington Police Department in March '91 and was diagnosed with cancer in May '92. He was a very brave and determined young man and said that he was going to fight and not give up. The whole time, he just wanted to get back out all the streets in his patrol car.*

The **Lexington Herald-Leader** wrote an article about Doug: It was the one injustice Doug Gilvin couldn't stop. "He had the darndest spirit of anybody I've ever seen," said Police Chief, Larry Walsh. "You'd never know he was sick if you were around him."

He underwent chemotherapy and started driving to Maryland for experimental treatments. "Doug would patrol the streets unless the treatment sapped his strength, and then he might answer phones or help with training. He was an intensely loyal officer and never stopped being one. That dedication helped keep him going."



Ralphie, the 19-year-old son of Ralph and Dana Coomer, was killed in an automobile accident, 6-11-94. Dana writes: *July 24 was Ralphie's 21st birthday and we had a balloon lift. There were 43 of Ralphie's friends that came to the grave site and wrote on the balloons and we watched them go all the way behind the clouds. The boys and girls really enjoyed it. They miss Ralphie so much. They still visit me every week, one or two of them. It's like they all want to still keep him alive so much and I thank God for that. I don't want anyone to ever forget my child. They talk about all the good times they had with him, and what a friend he was to each of them.*



Ralph's symbols are praying hands and an Eagle.

Stephanie, the 21-year-old daughter of Mary Kate Gach, was stalked and murdered 10-9-92. Mary Kate wrote this letter to Stephanie on her 23rd birthday (9-25- 71):

My Dearest Stephanie,

My heart overflows to bursting when I consider your many gifts to me and to others and when I consider the love God showed when he chose me to be your mother. Although I rail at God and demand He tell me why your murder was allowed--and I get no answer--to that question--I always and forever--more return to the one abiding truth. Life is a gift and you, my darling, are a

gift to me from God. Knowing this makes it possible to endure the days--but oh, the pain. You weren't supposed to leave so soon, Stephanie.

Another birthday, my sweet girl. Remember your last birthday celebration two years ago? The two of us and all that seafood, you devouring so much we were forced to doggie-bag your little birthday cake. You were thrilled to be 21--grown up! Then two weeks later you left me and this earth. I died too.

Now school begins again, the second time without you in attendance. Trees unleave again, the second time without you here to notice their show. I begin another year without you beside me. I leave behind the second year of grieving, a year of realizing the reality of you gone away, a year without the cushions of shock and denial which mercifully got me through the first year. The willow oak we planted on your campus at Montevallo last September has grown taller and now a granite marker has been placed there with your name carved on it. The magnolia tree we planted for you at St. Thomas Church bloomed in the spring, contrary to the horticulturist's expectations but within divine dimensions. At your beloved John Carroll High School this school year, the first memorial scholarship in your name will be awarded. The world moves on, and stillness of the universe which began that night. It will be so until the day we are reunited. Then we'll be together again and all shall be well.

Love,
Mom,

Stephanie's symbol is a brown rabbit.



Lisa, the 14-year-old daughter of Darrell and Shirley Grisham, died from an explosion with 3 other teenagers, 7-2-93. Shirley wrote this poem:

MY LISA

Have you ever seen an angel? So sweet, so pure, so kind.

Have you ever seen her lovely smile? The room lit up, you'd find. Have you ever felt the pride that swells?

"She's helped someone," she tells! Have you known the joy she gave, as you watched her grow?

So full of life and energy and zeal she did show.

I have heard her laughter, it did truly ring.

And a merry heart was mine, when I heard her sing!

I have seen an angel, have held her for a while.

The Lord had granted me some days just to watch her smile.

She was a July ruby, a jewel of my day.

Now, that jewel's in Heaven. I'm sad she could not stay.

I longed for her presence some fifteen years ago.

Then she came into my life, and how I loved her so.

My prayer was heard and answered on that blessed day.

She was so full of life, God's promise was her name.

This world was far from kind, not good as life should be.

The kinds of things it offered, Weren't always as it seemed.

She knew she had much more to gain, in Heaven's home on high.

Then she took her final leave to meet HIM in the sky.

God had made her special, an angel from above.

I'm glad He gave her to me, to spend some time and love.

My special Little Angel, Oh, how I loved her so.

I miss her and I think of her, I'm sad to see her go.

But, God has shown to me, that we .will never part.

For, He has her in a special place, deep within my heart.

Lisa's symbols are a rainbow and a horse.



Curt and Debbi Dickinson have lost 3 babies which were miscarried in the 2nd trimester of pregnancy: Junior (12/24/80); Kimberly Melissa (8/25/87); and Angel Winter Dawn (12/25/89). Debbi is not only an author and speaker, but is now a Certified Pastoral Bereavement Consultant. She wrote the following poems about fall:

God's Master Plan

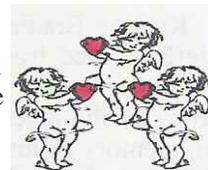
We are the rhythms of the earth and the sea. The seasons come and go. Winter melts into spring. Summer green gives way to autumn gold. Time changes everything.

One
by
one

the leaves quietly fall from the trees, letting go of life to nourish the next renewal. And when they do, there is no end. Life begins again.

fall foliage
red orange yellow
intermix with struggling green
holding onto life.

Angels and hearts symbolize their children.



Young Jim wrote this to us for our birthdays the year before his death:

I Jim Taylor, being of sound mind and body, do solemnly promise that I will do ten things you ask of me whenever and whatever you ask--Immediately!!!

This ticket is good for Jim and Dinah Taylor. Please feel free to call any time.

Signed: Your loving, caring, sweet, nice, and down right awesome son,
Jim

Jim will be 50 years old, October 17th. I never realized I was married to such an "old" man. (I plan to make his birthday a memorable one). If you have any good suggestions, please let me know!

I am not a quitter. This cartoon explains one of the reasons why I know I am not!

I'd stop eating Chocolate, but I'm not a quitter.



