

# Your Journey

## THROUGH GRIEF

*"With open hearts and expertise, we serve the seriously ill and those touched by loss."*

### Searching for "Normal"

#### A LETTER FROM THE BEREAVEMENT COORDINATOR

What is normal? After the death of someone close to us, our entire world feels like it has been flipped upside down. Our days become filled with memorial service planning, financial head aches, and seemingly endless tears. We often wonder when our "normal" life is coming back to us. Unfortunately, what was normal when our loved one was alive will never be so again. Our day to day has been forever changed by the removal of an integral member of our life. There are times after the death that we frantically fight to keep some semblance of that "normal", however by fighting to keep things as they were before the death, we cut off the potential for the formation of a "new normal." One in which we can begin to work to rebuild our lives around the loss we have suffered in a way that gives our lives meaning again.

With thoughts of comfort,  
Kaylee Kron, Bereavement Coordinator

# Just for You

## ESTABLISHING A NEW “NORMAL”

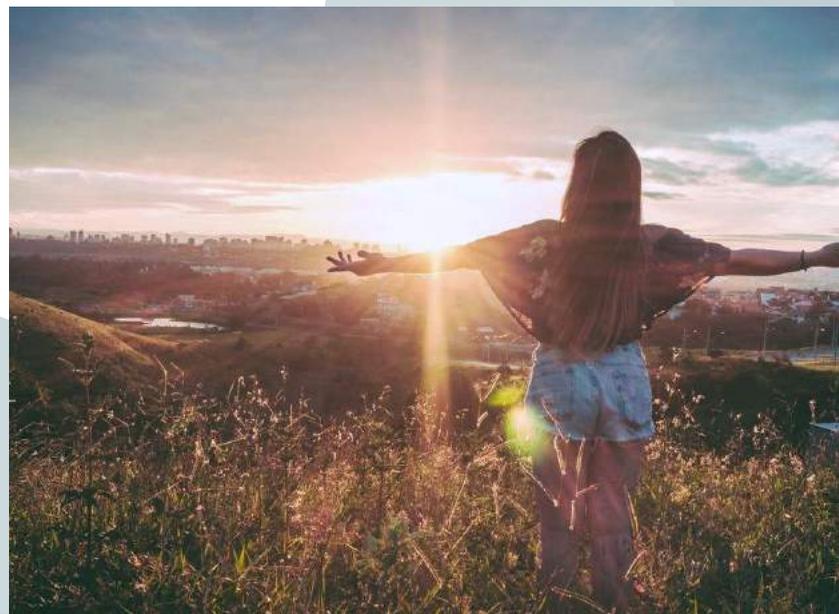
BY KAYLEE KRON

When we look back on the lives we shared with the person who has died, we often reflect on the aspects we really enjoyed; coming home to a big hug, calling them for advice or to tell them a story that only they would understand, seeing a movie with them, and so much more. After someone close to us dies, we are left with a very big hole in our lives. Their death is only just the beginning of the losses we experience. Our daily living has been impacted in a very significant way and we continue to realize those losses as time goes by. Perhaps one of the biggest losses that occurs within a death is the loss of our identity within the boundaries of the relationship we had with our loved one.

In the weeks or months or years following the death, we begin to wonder who we are now, if not a wife, a husband, a child, a caregiver, or a friend to that very special person. This questioning of identity is an indication that we are at a very special stage in the grief process; the development of a new self-identity, and as a result of that, establishing a new “normal.” This stage comes once we have reached an acceptance of the death. This is not to say that we are okay with our loved one dieing. Acceptance simply means that we recognize that this loss is real, it is painful, and life must continue to move forward.

Moving forward in life is essential to developing a new normal. Just as grief is unique to each individual, establishing a new normal is a process that varies from person to person. One commonality though, is that during this process, we are often given the choice to either move forward, or stay where we are. These choices often look like a new opportunity that presents itself.

It can be difficult to figure out if this new opportunity is something to pursue or not. We get caught up in a flurry of self-questioning; “What would others think if I chose to do this?”, “Would my loved one approve?”, “Is it too soon after the death to do this?” Questioning ourselves often



leads to erring on the side of caution, likely meaning that we do not move forward. Sometimes staying put is a good thing, however, if we are never choosing to move forward, we may start to feel stuck as though life doesn't have much meaning without our loved one. A useful tool that can be used to cut through self-questioning and self-doubt is the Grief Compass. The Grief Compass is simple to use and will get us to a place where moving forward becomes more possible. To use it, simply ask; "Is this something that feels good to me or does the thought of doing this feel wrong, or hurt me in some way?" Cutting through all the unnecessary self-doubting questions to the core of healing

will serve to make your decision much simpler. If we continually choose to move toward the choices that feel good to us, then we often end up in a place of healing. It establishes a new normal that will work best for us. So as we work toward moving forward remember that it will never mean that we do not yearn for those we love who have died, or that we prefer a life without them. Moving forward simply means that since we didn't have a choice in the matter, we are making a conscious effort to go on living a life of fulfillment. And when it really comes down to it, by moving forward, we are truly living the life that our loved one wants us to.

**"Don't forget you're human. It's okay to have a meltdown.**

**Just don't unpack and live there. Cry it out and then  
refocus on where you are headed."**

~ Author Unknown



## RECOMMENDED READING

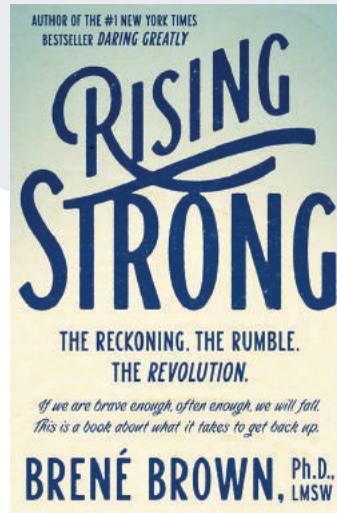
### AUTHOR BRENE BROWN, PHD. LMSW

Brene Brown, PhD. and Licensed Master Social Worker provides a wonderfully written “how to” book about what to do after we fall down, when life hands us something we didn’t want and do not know how to handle. *Rising Strong* discusses the power of rising after falling down.

Brene calls out to all those who are looking to move forward by challenging them to “dare greatly,” even when that almost certainly means failing from time to time.

Using personal accounts and endless research, Brene Brown encourages all readers to step into the arena and transform the way we live.

Although this is not a book about grief, it does give those of us who are working through grief somewhat of a road map to moving forward following a great loss.



“Grief changes us. The pain sculpts us into someone who understands more deeply, hurts more often, appreciates more quickly, cries more easily, hopes more desperately, and loves more openly.”

~ Author Unknown

# Spiritual Care

## THE NEW NORMAL

BY REV JENNIFER HACKENBRUCH

SPIRITUAL CARE COORDINATOR

What is normal? It is probably a question you have asked yourself more than once throughout your life. Your normal is different than your neighbor's normal and their neighbor's normal. And now, after the loss of your loved one, your normal is no longer the same. After your loss, there is a process of finding your new normal. The truth is, life will never be normal, like it was before the loss of your loved one. Take a breath with this: life will never be normal, like it was before the loss of your loved one. This is okay.

What is the new normal? Your new normal will be different. You will remember what normal was before your loss, and one day will have a new normal. The two will not be the same.

Allow yourself time to not be normal. Let go of trying to make normal look like it did before.

When will the new normal come to be? Only time will answer that question for you. It is okay

to not be the old normal for as long as it takes. Given time, you will settle into a new normal. In the meantime, let go of judgment of what you or others think "normal" should look like.

Breathe with this: it is okay to not be normal, until a new normal settles in.

Take a breath, all the way into your body.

Breathing in through your nose, and breathing out through your nose. Settle into this moment.

There is nothing else for you to do in this moment, except breathe.

As I breathe in

I let go of what normal was

As I breathe out

I accept not being normal, until it is.

Give yourself time, as much time as it takes, to settle into your new normal. You will find your new normal, in time.

"You're going to be okay. Just breathe and think to yourself of all the times in the past that you've felt this much pain. Remind yourself how each time, you made it through. Breathe and trust that as long as you don't give up, you will make it."

~ Daniell Koepke

# Kids In Grief

## MAINTAINING ROUTINES



When there is a death in the family, children are undoubtedly affected. With death come many changes. Perhaps this change is in where the child lives, who picks them up from school, or who they spend a holiday with. Even the smallest amount of change that occurs is felt greatly by a child in the family. As kids are learning and developing, they become reliant on their daily lives being predictable and reliable. When a death occurs, this becomes much more difficult for parents and caregivers to maintain.

Regardless of this significant life change, children continue to be in need of some normalcy, even through the early days of grief. At times, parents and guardians may feel as though a child needs less rules and more allowance to do what a child feels they need to do. What results is a child who is not only grieving, but who is also unsure about almost everything. As a parent or guardian, it is essential to maintain some semblance of routines and rules in order for a child to feel like their whole world has not been turned upside down. Here are a few tips on maintaining structure in the home while a family is experiencing grief.

1. School:
  - a. Because children do best when they know what to expect from their day, it is important that they continue to go to school following the death of someone close. The structure of a school environment can help them regulate their strong emotions by providing an 8 hour distraction from their loss.
  - b. That being said, it is also important to inform teachers and counselors at the school so that when a child needs additional support, there are understanding adults to talk to throughout the day. Make sure the child knows that they are safe to ask to take a break or go talk to a counselor.

(Continued on the next page)

2. Home:

a. When a family is grieving and dealing with the aftermath of a death, including funeral arrangements, family in town, and managing the estate, the idea of keeping a normal daily routine is simply not doable. A way to help children through the loss of normal routines is to bring them into the conversation about what their day is going to look like. Children will typically be able to follow a parent's lead as long as they are in the loop. They might even surprise a parent and become a great helper!

b. Parents and guardians often want to be extra gentle with children after someone in the family has died. This includes becoming very relaxed on routines, rules, and expectations. However, the reality is that this can cause new problems aside from grief. Maintaining rules and expectations for children will never hurt, however, sometimes maintaining rules and other times not maintaining rules will only serve to confuse a child when they really need things to be straightforward.

When navigating through a death with a child, remember that each child's grief is unique to them. As their parent or guardian, you know them best. Using these basic guidelines, with your knowledge and love as a parent and caregiver, will no doubt assist your child in finding their way through grief.

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

~ Magic Johnson



**HOSPICE**  
OF NORTH IDAHO

HOSPICE OF NORTH IDAHO  
2290 West Prairie Avenue  
Coeur d'Alene ID 83815

# Upcoming Events

HOSPICE OF NORTH IDAHO IS HERE FOR YOU

## ON- GOING SUPPORT

Register for counseling, groups, and kids camp with Kaylee Kron LMSW, Bereavement Coordinator by calling (208)772-7994.

### TEENS IN GRIEF

Find a community of peers ages 13-17 and know that you are not alone in grief. Meet up on Mondays after school for 6-weeks at the new Hospice Campus.

### PARENT LOSS

This new support group for parents begins March 1st, 2018 at 5:30 PM at the new Hospice Campus. No matter our age, losing a parent or parental figure is never easy.

### MOVING IN MARCH

Our new campus includes a community building where many grief programs will take place. Next to the Schneidmiller House at 2290 West Prairie Avenue, Coeur d'Alene.

Share this newsletter and find additional support at [www.hospiceofnorthidaho.org](http://www.hospiceofnorthidaho.org)