



# The Grieving Journey

from Greene County Council on Aging Summer 2023

## Journaling Through the Grief

In the midst of grief, we often have many different thoughts and feelings swirling around in our minds. Journaling (writing) is a way to express ourselves in a deep and profound way. Journaling offers a way to give voice to what is happening to us. The act of writing helps to clarify what we are thinking because by writing we put our feelings into words. Writing helps us give voice to our pain as we would if we were talking to another who could accept our expressions of grief. Journaling can be a therapeutic emptying. What we write is intended only for us to see, therefore it is easier to be fully honest about our feelings. Don't hold back – be angry, sad, frustrated – whatever you feel.

Some people like to put their pen to paper and start writing anything that comes to mind for a certain length of time without taking a break,

making corrections, or edits – free style. Others like to use prompts, such as the ones below.

I've been feeling...

Today is hard because...

I'm tired of people saying \_\_\_\_ to me because...

I wish my support system would...

I miss...

I feel my grief in my body, and it feels like...

When I let my mind wander, I think about...

I wish...

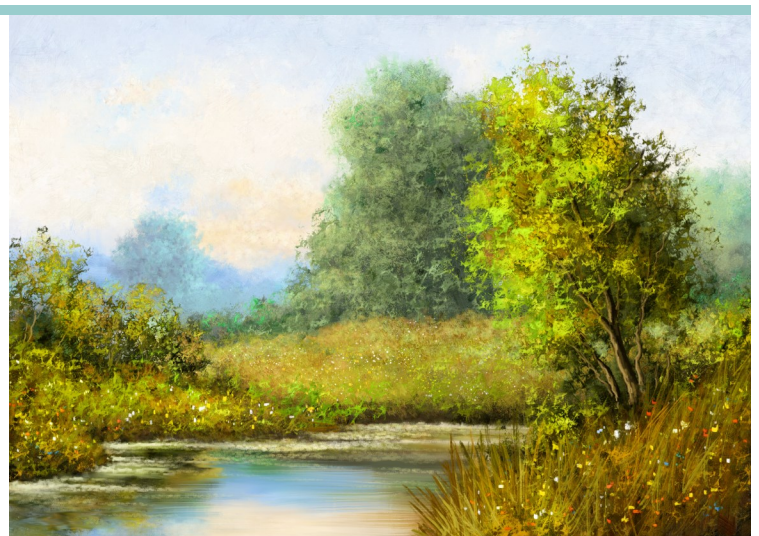
I'm angry because...

I love to think about...

Give journaling a try as you journey through your grief. You may find this method of expression to be very helpful.

*I had thought that your death  
Was a waste and a destruction,  
A pain of grief hardly to be endured.  
I am beginning to learn  
That your life was a gift and a growing  
And a loving left with me.*

— Margorie Holdburn



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## Supporting the Bereaved

Here are some helpful ways to be with someone who is grieving:

- Sit with the bereaved, listen to them, let them tell you how they are feeling. Let them tell stories about the life or death of the deceased. Some stories need to be retold.
- Validate and repeat back to them what you have heard so that they know that you have been listening and that you understand what they are feeling. (This is especially important for people who are visually impaired and are unable to see/ understand your body language.)
- Make sure you give the person permission to grieve. Grief is a foreign experience. The grieving person may feel that his/her feelings are not welcome and thus needs to hear from others that it is okay to express their feelings. We must demonstrate verbally and through our nonjudgmental attitudes and body language that the expression of grief is not only appropriate, but essential for healing.
- Respond authentically with laughter or tears. Your expression will help the grieving person to express their own feelings more openly.

- Encourage them to participate in activities while respecting their need to spend time alone.
- It is not always necessary to answer the "Why" question. When people ask, "Why did this happen," it is usually an expression of their pain, not necessarily a question that needs an answer. You can say "I don't know" or just sit in silence. Again, the bereaved person needs someone to listen.

Remember...

- The grieving process may take a long time (1-3 years). The bereaved need others to stand by them and to encourage them to be patient with themselves for as long as it takes.
- The bereaved may appear to be getting worse a month or two after the initial loss. This is often due to the reality of the loss hitting them. They need support now more than before.
- Be aware that evenings, weekends, holidays, and anniversaries may be more difficult.

### Recommended Reading

**Without** Poems by Donald Hall ~ A great book of poetry for men who have lost their spouse, but women would relate also.



*The Grieving Journey is a Greene County Council on Aging quarterly publication to accompany you in your time of bereavement after the loss of a significant person in your life.*

We hope you find this publication helpful, and welcome your comments and ideas for future issues.  
Let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

### GCCOA Grief Support Group

Group meetings are open to all those who have lost a loved one. Meetings are on the 2nd Monday of the month, 10am until noon, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton Xenia Road, Beavercreek (lower level). Participation is limited and advance registration is required. Please call the Council to learn more.