

DEALING WITH LOSS

I. DEFINITION OF LOSS: LOSS CAUSES AN EMOTIONAL INJURY/WOUND/TRAUMA

Loss can be defined as losing something that causes emotional discomfort or pain. It can be the littlest of things (keys, phones, glasses, purse, pen, etc.) to significant things (health, divorce, job loss, home loss, end of relationships) to the most severe things (loss of: spouse, child, sibling, parent, friend, etc.) From the littlest to most severe there are similar reactions to loss even though they may differ in intensity.

II. HUMAN RESPONSE TO TRAUMA: NORMAL REACTION BUT ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR

The effects of severe loss are similar to a physical injury. Severe loss causes an emotional wound—a trauma to the system that can incapacitate and require significant recovery time. It is **normal** to feel these effects just like when we are physically injured. It is OK to have these feelings and nothing to be ashamed of. These effects are not, necessarily, the function of our spiritualness, although the closer we are to the Lord the more comforted we feel.

III. EFFECTS OF SEVERE LOSS: RECOVERY FROM LOSS GOES THROUGH STAGES/PHASES

It is accepted that there are different stages that we are likely to experience as we process our grief. These are generally universal to all human beings. Each culture has their own ritual/tradition of grieving. As Christians we can delude ourselves that we are immune to these effects of grief. In truth we will experience these stages in one form or another. A person may go through all of these stages in succession or skip one or more or repeat one or more.

---**SHOCK/DENIAL**: When we have a loss, we experience an emotional wound and with most wounds we have a period of shock where we can't believe what happens. The more sudden/unexpected the loss the more intense the shock.

---**EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY/ANGER**: When the phase of shock has passed there can be a roller coaster of emotions that includes anger. There can be a sense of unfairness which produces an angry reaction to the circumstances that caused our loss/injury. This emotion of anger/resentment can be very intense, can last a long time and can come and go during our recovery.

---**GUILT/REGRET**: Next we can feel regret over what has happened. We can call this the "the would've, could've, should've" feelings shuffle. They represent all the possible scenarios that may have been done to prevent the loss. Since the window of the relationship is closed, anything that was left undone or unresolved, becomes permanent and unchangeable. These things that are unresolved can be a breeding ground for guilt and regret.

---**SORROW/DEPRESSION**: As we process the different possibilities regarding the loss of our loved one and it becomes more permanent we can slide into a state of unhappiness/depression. Again this emotion can last a long time and reoccur at any time. We are especially susceptible to depression during the holidays. Although we have a relationship with the Lord, it does not mean that we will not feel the effects of the severe loss. We don't have to hide this.

---**RESOLUTION/ACCEPTANCE**: The last phase of our recovery/processing of our grief is to come to terms with the loss. This means we have an understanding of the events, have looked at our participation in the process and released any blame or regret. We begin to look at what we want our life to be like, what our identity can be, and what hope and dreams we can look forward to as we move forward.

IV. SYMPTOMS OF LOSS: THE INJURY/TRAUMA FROM LOSS CAN DISRUPT DAILY LIVING

The trauma/ wounds created by the loss can have many consequences that affect our lives. They may produce mental, physical and spiritual issues. The list below is not an exhaustive list, there are many other symptoms.

Included in the *MENTAL ISSUES* are:

Depression	Lack of Concentration/Distracted	Lapses in Memory
Difficulty Making Decisions	Uncontrolled Anger	Confusion
Uncontrolled Emotions/Instability	Stress/Anxiety	Intrusive Thoughts

Included in the *PHYSICAL ISSUES* are:

Loss of Sleep	Loss of Appetite	Loss of Weight
Loss of Energy/Fatigue	Headaches	Stomach Aches
Numbness	Restricted Breathing	Reduced Immunity

Included in the *SPIRITUAL ISSUES* are:

Loss of Faith	Unable to Pray	Unable to Attend Church
Estrangement from God	Unable to Read the Bible	Unable to Sing Praises
Loss of Christian Friends	Escaping to Sinful Behavior	Subject to Sinful Thoughts

V. FACTORS EFFECTING RECOVERY:-THE LOSS MAY BE DIFFERENT FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Since life is unpredictable, it is not unusual for other losses to happen. This is like receiving another blow/trauma in the same place. The effects are usually worse as the new wound opens up the old wound. If there hasn't been adequate healing of the first wound, then the subsequent wounds increase the severity of the injury and the length of recovery time. The many factors that can affect recovery include the following:

Your Personality & Gender	Other Traumas/Wounds	Type of Relationship
Type of Support/Lack of Support	Your Health	Type of Death
Stress in Your Life	Childhood Traumas	Effect on Lifestyle

VI. EXPECTATIONS FOR RECOVERY:-THE AMOUNT OF TIME FOR HEALING

As with a physical wound there needs to be sufficient time for recovery/healing. This healing usually takes longer than we, or others, expect. As a result there are those who want you to get over your loss quickly. Some of their reasons are:

Depressing to Them	Makes Them Aware Of Their Own Mortality
Scared That It Could Happen to Them	Tired of Your Grieving That Affects Their Relationship With You

VII. STRATEGIES THAT ASSIST RECOVERY/HEALING:- THERE IS A NEED TO EXPRESS EMOTION & NEED OF SUPPORT

The treatments that help the healing/recovery include:

Expressing Your Feelings to God/Pray	Keeping a Journal-Written Expression	Staying With Your Routine
Expressing Your Feelings to Others	Exercising	Avoiding Major Decisions
Maintain Your Relationship with God	Reduce Other Stresses/Obligations	Stay in Contact with Others
Eat Healthy	Adequate Sleep	Regular Checkups

Biblical examples of grief, expression of emotions and what is normal by the MEN of the Bible:

-In the death of his friend Lazarus, Jesus felt and expressed the following emotions. In John 11:33 it says Jesus was "deeply moved", In John 11:35 "Jesus wept". And in John 11:38 Jesus was "once more deeply moved."

-In the death of his children Job felt and expressed the following emotions. In Job 1:20 Job "tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground and worshipped." He said "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, May the name of the Lord be praised."

-In the death of his son, David felt and expressed the following emotions. In 2 Samuel 12:16 David pleaded with God. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground and he would not eat any food.

VIII. PATHWAY OF GRIEF: -BEING ON A JOURNEY

Recovery can be likened to walking through a dark tunnel. At first you can't see the "light at the end of the tunnel" all you can see behind you is the dark opening where it felt like someone forced you to enter. As you progress down this dark pathway, you slowly began to stabilize and have some normal days and begin to see a slight glimmer in the distance. It is helpful to have individuals who have gone through the tunnel of grief to share with you that there is hope. Holidays and sentimental occurrences will still bring up the emotions but it usually happens less and less. One way to measure your progress along this pathway is to think about your loss and see if there are positive memories as well as the negative ones. The more positive memories, the more progress along this pathway.

IX. WHEN TO MAKE CHANGES:- DELAY DECISION MAKING

In some cases of loss there is immediate changes to one's lifestyle, however, when possible, delay major decision and always pray and consult others that you trust. The changes can include:

Loss of Home	Moving to New Location	Changing Jobs
Loss of Income	Loss of Relationship with Family	Changing Churches
Moving In With Family	Needing to Hire Help	Changing Holiday Traditions

X. THE SILVER LINING IN THE DARK CLOUD OF GLOOM:-OPPORTUNITY FOR STARTING OVER

The greatest silver lining in our walk of desperation in the dark tunnel of gloom is the opportunity to draw closer to the Lord. Only when we are at our weakest, are we the most available to the Lord. We are desperate and more open to his presence. This is a time in our lives when we can grow our relationship with him. It isn't likely to happen when things are going fine. It is when we are at rock bottom and our world is crashing around us, that we reach out and receive his *Comfort, Peace and Love*. We can access God's **SALVE** Sovereignty-Isaiah 4:10-11, **Assurance**/Promises-James 1:12, **Love**-Psalm 33:20, **Vitality**/Power-Colossians 1:11. **Encouragement**-I Thessalonians 2:16) to aid in our healing.

PRESCRIPTION TO AID IN THE HEALING FROM THE INJURY/TRAUMA OF GRIEF

In order to function through the stages of grief, and complete the journey, it is necessary to keep our body, mind and emotions as healthy as possible. These activities can aid in managing one's reaction to trauma/grief. They are not a cure for the pain and loneliness but they will improve your mood, state of mind and ability to function.

BODY

- ___ 1.) Do aerobics exercise and or strenuous stretching.
- ___ 2.) Do vigorous exercise – running, weight lifting, etc.
- ___ 3.) Play competitive sports, preferably team sports with body contact.
- ___ 4.) Eat appropriate amounts – based on age, body type, activity level, and metabolic rate.
- ___ 5.) Eat a balanced diet – portions of meat, vegetables, fruit, dairy products at least every other day.
- ___ 6.) Take vitamins – ensure the body receives the proper amount of minerals and nutrients.
- ___ 7.) Maintain proper eating/chewing rate – appropriate amount of time to enjoy eating.
- ___ 8.) Maintain adequate water consumption – based on climate, work, body, physical condition.
- ___ 9.) Sleep 7-9 hours per day depending on stress levels, work activity, and personality.
- ___ 10.) Schedule work, activities, and chores so that there is not too much (stress) or too little (boredom).
- ___ 11.) Schedule sleep so that there is a pattern – same bed time, wake time, extra sleep on weekends.
- ___ 12.) Daily rest – everyday should contain at least 1-2 hours of rest, not counting naps or night time sleep.
- ___ 13.) Weekly rest – practice a Sabbath day of rest.
- ___ 14.) Keep regularly scheduled medical, dental, eye appointments
- ___ 15.) Take prescribed medication according to doctor's orders.

MIND

- ___ 1.) Read magazine articles of interest.
- ___ 2.) Read newspaper to stay informed on current events.
- ___ 3.) Read a book for information and/or for pleasure (novels); join a book club.
- ___ 4.) Research online (internet) areas that you are curious about.
- ___ 5.) Work crossword, Sudoku, word search puzzles, jigsaw puzzle, etc.
- ___ 6.) Play video/computer games.
- ___ 7.) Take adult education classes.
- ___ 8.) Take college classes in an area of interest or to complete a degree.
- ___ 9.) Take time to do your hobbies, or start a new hobby (painting, crafting, needle work, fishing, etc.).
- ___ 10.) Take a cooking class and try new recipe.
- ___ 11.) Plant flowers, vegetable garden, decorative shrubs, etc.
- ___ 12.) Take up a musical instrument or join a choir/singing group.
- ___ 13.) Take up photography and go to scenic places to take pictures.
- ___ 14.) Redecorate a room, finances permitting.
- ___ 15.) Plan and complete a clothing, appliance, home, yard, and car repair project.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- ___ 1.) Do deep, calm breathing, yoga exercises.
- ___ 2.) Roll head to stretch muscle and shrugs/roll shoulders to relieve tension.
- ___ 3.) Get a back rub, head rub, foot rub, or massage from a family member, friend or professional.
- ___ 4.) Take a leisure stroll/walk.
- ___ 5.) Listen to soothing music.
- ___ 6.) Take a warm bath.
- ___ 7.) Babysit grandkids, or visit children or parents.
- ___ 8.) Talk with good friends regularly who care about you.
- ___ 9.) Go shopping and buy yourself a new wardrobe, makeup, tools, camping equipment, etc.
- ___ 10.) Get a hair cut, manicure, and pedicure.
- ___ 11.) Get a pet, if lifestyle, makes it possible.
- ___ 12.) Go out to lunch/dinner with a friend or invite them over.
- ___ 13.) Go see a movie with a friend.
- ___ 14.) Keep a journal and or write a letter to the individual you are missing.
- ___ 15.) Attend a support group or go for counseling.

SPIRITUAL

- ___ 1.) Pray at regular times - minimum of saying "Grace" for food.
- ___ 2.) Pray at spontaneous times – praise, requests, need for help.
- ___ 3.) Pray for the well being of others i.e. ministers, missionaries, etc.
- ___ 4.) Read the Bible at regular times.
- ___ 5.) Read the inspirational passages in the Bible in times of despair.
- ___ 6.) Read Christian literature
- ___ 7.) Attend regular worship services
- ___ 8.) Attend special occasion services
- ___ 9.) Attend a regular bible study/small group gathering.
- ___ 10.) Listen or watch Christian music and/or religious services.
- ___ 11.) Perform some type of service – help out, care for others.
- ___ 12.) Share your faith with others.
- ___ 13.) Meet with close friend for spiritual accountability.
- ___ 14.) If possible resist the temptation to start/increase bad habits – overeating, smoking, drinking, drugs,
- ___ 15.) Make appointment with pastor for professional spiritual guidance.

TWELVE WAYS TO DEAL WITH YOUR GRIEF

By Kelly Baltzell M.A. & Karin Baltzell Ph.D

- 1.) **Light a Candle:** A candle can be placed in a window or by a special chair and lit every night. View this as a symbolic form of love's light continuing.
- 2.) **Plant a Tree:** Place a tree in your yard or in a favorite place your loved one liked to visit. Planting a tree gives a constant, growing reminder of the continuation of life and it's many cycles.
- 3.) **Write in a Journal:** Buy a special book for journaling. Express yourself by recording feelings and releasing grief. Journaling is secret, safe and healing.
- 4.) **Make a Memory Box:** Take a shoebox or a small box. Decorate it with items that hold memories. Inside the box put things that remind you of your loved one. You might want to add a little note why this item is so special. Keep it for yourself, or pass the memories on to a person that might enjoy them.
- 5.) **Plant Flowers:** Planting favorite flowers or plants, either in your own yard or at the burial site can help heal grief and create beauty. If this is not possible donate flowers to a park, school, or public place in memory of your loved one.
- 6.) **Tell a Story:** On special anniversaries and holidays tell a story about your loved one that had impact and meaning to you. Stories help you treasure the memories and pass on important messages to others of all generations. Love shines through unique tales.
- 7.) **Make a Scholarship:** Give money to a local school in the name of your loved one. See the joy it brings as each year a student receives a scholarship in your loved one's name.
- 8.) **Sing a Song:** On the anniversary of your loss sing your loved one's favorite song(s) with other family members and friends. Music helps heal pain that normal words can't touch.
- 9.) **Give to a Charity:** Each year make a donation to your loved one's favorite charity in their name. If you prefer donate a book to your local library.
- 10.) **Celebrate with a Meal:** On the eve of your loved one's birthday make their favorite dinner and invite friends and family over to share. Tell stories about your loved one, or pass around pictures of times you enjoyed together.
- 11.) **Sharing with the Children:** After sharing stories photos with children or grandchildren, ask them to draw a picture about it. Frame the picture or place them on the refrigerator with magnets. Draw a picture yourself. Let the child in you come alive.
- 12.) **Volunteer your Time:** Do volunteer work on an issue or cause that held special meaning for your dear one and dedicate that service to their memory. Or do a walk or run for a worthy cause as a memorial.

KEEPING A PERSONAL JOURNAL

“One of the most useful means for long-term self-development is the systematic use of an ongoing workbook, diary, or journal. Such a journal, thoughtfully done, can provide a structure to assist us in paying closer attention to our lives and in evoking and developing our understanding of others and ourselves. It acts as a “reflector” of the inner course we are charting day by day, and can give us the stimulation and support which many seek from the outside world.”

THE PURPOSE OF JOURNAL WRITING – is to afford you the opportunity to reflect upon the meaning and the significance of events in your life as they apply to your inner self.

THE FOCUS OF JOURNAL WRITING – is on your unfolding awareness of the new meanings, values and interrelationship you are discovering in yourself and the world.

THE VALUES OF JOURNAL WRITING - the act of presenting your ideas on paper forces you to formulate and clarify your thoughts and their accompanying feelings, thus enhancing the power and precision of your thinking.

When you make the move from simply thinking something to actually writing it down you are increasing your commitment to your own conscious unfoldment.

Writing forces you to discriminate and to choose which of all of your thoughts are important enough to be documented, thus getting you in better touch with your sense of values.

Once you record your ideas on paper you do not have to be preoccupied with thoughts of losing them. The writing makes “room for new avenues of thinking that you may not have had time to previously consider.

Writing is an effective yet harmless way of “letting off steam” by providing you with a “fully accepting friend” that allows you to discharge your tensions and to vent all of your powerful and disruptive emotions.

THE THEMES AND CATEGORIES FOR JOURNAL WRITING – in addition to the narrative written material about your thoughts, feelings, and observations you may also choose to include:

Drawing or other visual materials (i.e., dreams, fantasies, symbols, or diagrams) that are useful in clarifying or expressing your ideas.

Illustrations from magazines or newspapers, which capture the thought or image you are writing about.

Personally meaningful quotations you may have read or heard.

A section entitled “bright Ideas” may help you to “brainstorm” about all the possible alternatives to your problems.

An inner dialogue (an imaginary conversation) between yourself and any other significant person or important event in your life will help you clarify your relationships, and to develop understanding and insight about your problems.

THE OUTCOME OF JOURNAL WRITING – in time you will find that your writing has been effective not only in helping you to define specific problem areas, but also in helping you to work through your problems and in bringing about resolution and personal growth.

For future use, your journal presents you with a fine document which can be referred to when you encounter similar problems in your life.

IDEAS FOR JOURNAL WRITING

You may find it helpful to clarify your thoughts about your loved one by recording your feelings in the form of a letter. Write a letter to the person who died, expressing your thoughts and feelings about the following issues:

1. A special memory that I have about you –
2. What I miss the most about you and our relationship –
3. What I wish I'd said or hadn't said =
4. What I'd like to ask you –
5. What I wish we'd done or hadn't done –
6. What I've had the hardest time dealing with –
7. Ways in which you will continue to live on in me –
8. Special ways I have for keeping my memories of you alive –
9. Things that I will share with your loved ones -
10. Things that I look forward to talking with you about or doing with you in heaven –

Choose one or several ideas that have significance for you, or start at the top of the list and work your way down. These topics may serve to help you come up with your own ideas specific to your situation and relationship.

GETTING BETTER

*My tears feel warm on my cheeks now . . .
Not burning hot
Is this a sign I'm "Getting Better?"*

*When I cry now I am most often alone-
In the car, or, the shower
Or, sometimes taking a walk.
I do not cry in public or feel as much panic. . .
Is this a sign I'm "Getting Better?"*

*I sleep the night thru sometimes
And awaken without tears. . .for awhile
They come now while I'm brushing my teeth. . .
Or making coffer. . .
And always gone before I say "Good Morning",
Is this a sign I'm "Getting Better?"*

*I am able to hug again
And laugh and read and eat . . .
Is this a sign I'm "Getting Better?"
Yes, I think so. . . but when does the pain end?
Perhaps when I no longer ask,
Is this a sign I'm "Getting Better?"*

Shirley Blakely Curle – TCF, Little Rock, AR

GOD'S HEALING PROCESS- SALVE
SOVEREIGNTY, ASSURANCES, LOVE, VITALITY, ENCOURAGEMENT

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY: Once we have experienced/suffered a trauma that shocks our emotional well being, we need to intellectually force our minds to recognize and accept the **sovereign** will of God. This will help counteract the chance of being stuck in the denial stage.

GOD'S ASSURANCES: As the initial shock wears off and our emotions begin to recognize the pain and damage done by the trauma, we must claim God's **assurance** and promises as our own. Rationality may be weakened and we may experience frustration and anger. His assurances provide us with the realization of the fact that everything works together for those who love him. As we claim this assurance and other promises we destroy the seeds of regret and thus are then open to his love and comfort.

GOD'S LOVE: Only when we have claimed his assurances can we experience the emotion of his **love** which gives us that comfort and peace which is the cure for depression. Drawing deeply from his love and feeling the comfort of his arms around us, is the true antidote for depression. Having been filled by his love and peace our emotions begin to stabilize.

GOD'S VITALITY: As we stabilize, we stop glancing back on the life we had and begin to look forward to the new life that we can have in his **vitality**. The look forward can be as unnerving as the look back. This is when we need to claim God's power for vitalization. This power is the enabling force that helps us move into our new life in the future. The vitalization process helps us focus on completing His work and accessing his promise of "an abundant life."

GOD'S ENCOURAGEMENT: As we become re-vitalized we can go beyond our own needs and begin to reach out and comfort others. At the point of being able to care and comfort others we have reached the acceptance stage. Although initially stabilized by his love/comfort and filled with his power, we will continue to experience flashbacks of thoughts and emotions that continue to require his **encouragement**. Daily encouragement is found in prayer and time listening to Him through His Word.

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it,
the world, an all who live in it. (Psalm 24:1)

My comfort in my suffering is this:
Your promise preserves my life. (Psalm 119:50)

For you, O Lord have helped me and comforted me, (Psalm 86:17)

Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed.
With the saving power of his right hand. (Psalm 20:6)

You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry." (Psalm 10:17)

GOD'S WORD ON SOVEREIGNTY & AUTHORITY:

"The Most High is **sovereign** over the kingdom of men and gives them to anyone he wishes." Daniel 4:25

"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble." Job 2:10

"See, the **Sovereign** Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a Shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young." Isaiah 40:10-11

"The **sovereign** Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces." Isaiah 25:8

Additional Scripture: Psalm 71:1-15, Isaiah 50:4-10, Daniel 4:25, Jeremiah 32:17-19, Psalm 24:1-2, Psalm 100:1-5, Hebrews 11:2,

Ephesians 1:18-23, Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 13:1-3, I Corinthians 15:24-26, I Peter 3:21-22, Psalm 46:1-7, Psalm 91:18

GOD'S WORD ON ASSURANCE & PROMISES:

"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full **assurance** of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 10:22

"Through these he has given us his very great and precious **promises**, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." II Peter 1:4

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has **promised** to those who love him." James 1:12

"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26:3

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." Romans 8:28

Additional Scripture: Psalm 145:13-16, Psalm 119:145-149, Psalm 85:8-13, Psalm 119:192, Acts 13:32, I Kings 8:23, Psalm 77:7-9, II Peter 3:8-13, II Corinthians 1:18-22, Acts 1:4, II Corinthians 12:9, Lamentations 3:22-33, I Thessalonians 4:13-18

GOD'S WORD ON LOVE & COMFORT:

"For God so **loved** the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"How great is the **love** the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God." I John 3:1

"We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing **love** rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you." Psalm 33:20

"If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the **love** of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who **loved** us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the **love** of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:31-39

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." II Corinthians 1:3

Additional Scripture: Psalm 89:1-2, Psalm 86:1-7, Psalm 69:13-18, Romans 5:1-5, I Peter 5:6-7, Psalm 23:1-6, Philippians 2:1

I Corinthians 1:4-7, Matthew 5:4, Exodus 34:6, I John 3:1, Ephesians 2:4, Lamentations 3:22, Jude 1:20-21, Philemon 1:7, II Cor. 7:6

GOD'S WORD ON VITALITY & POWER:

"Being strengthened with all **power** according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father." Colossians 1:11

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of **power**, of love, of self-discipline." II Timothy 1:7

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with **power** through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Ephesians 3:16

"His divine **power** has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." II Peter 1:3

Additional Scripture: Ephesians 3:20, Psalm 147:3-5, John 9:4, Psalm 20:6-9, Psalm 63:1-8, Psalm 77:10-14, Psalm 89:11-18,

Psalm 145:1-13, II Corinthians 4:7-11, II Peter 1:3-9, Romans 1:20, Romans 4:20-22, Psalm 73:22-26, John 11:25, Revelations 19:1

GOD'S WORD ON ENCOURAGEMENT & HOPE:

"For everything that was written in the past we written to teach us; so that through endurance and the **encouragement** of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4

"May the God who gives endurance and **encouragement** give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 15:5

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, **encourage** your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." I Thessalonians 2:16

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my savior and my God." Psalm 42:5

Additional Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Romans 15:4, II Thessalonians 2:16-17, Psalm 25:4-6, Psalm 42:5, Psalm 62:1-8, Psalm 147:11,

Proverbs 23:18, Romans 12:11-12, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 6:18-19, Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 15:13, Psalm 20:1-2

STARTING OVER

I. STARTING OVER-NEW IDENTITY & NEW RELATIONSHIPS:

Identity: In moving on with your life there is usually the loss of your old identity or at least a change in your identity. Whether your love one was a spouse, parent, sibling, child, friend, there is a reduction in your identity and this void needs to be filled with a new identity which usually include new relationships.

Relationships: It is extremely important to examine old relationships and determine if these will continue. Since your loss, the old relationships may not meet your, or their needs. At the same time you want to look at developing new relationships. This can be strengthening family relationship or venturing out with new relationships. If a new relationship should become romantic, seek advice/counsel as to whether you are ready and if you the two of you are compatible.

Guilt: In establishing new relationships there may be a feeling of guilt over focusing on the new and leaving behind the old. This is a natural feeling and it should not hold us back and inhibit moving into new relationships. We will never forget but always cherish the memories that we shared with our loved one. Part of the healing of the grief process is to spend more energy and time looking forward than in looking back

II. STARTING OVER-SELF EVALUATION:

After healing sufficiently to stabilize emotions and regain logical reasoning, you should evaluate your lifestyle. Most of us are uncomfortable with the unknown and anxious about it, but this is a unique opportunity in your life to make changes that previously either couldn't be made or you didn't want to make. Try to think "outside the box" to determine what you might like as a new lifestyle. This evaluative process doesn't have to lead to change but it opens the doors of opportunity. As you acquire a new identity and new relationships you may want to think about other aspects of your life. Caution should be used to make sure that you are through the grief process and your changes are not an attempt to escape but a true reflection of who you are and what you are becoming. The following are some things to consider when looking at a new lifestyle.

Internal/Personal Evaluation Strengths and Weaknesses::

It is important to evaluate ourselves as to what are our strengths and weaknesses. Going through grief usually leaves us doubting ourselves and focused on our weaknesses since we have been so debilitated. This stage requires identifying our abilities/skills, personality, vocational/job interests, health, homecare skills, hobby/leisure interests and service:

<u>Ability Strengths</u>	<u>Ability Weakness</u>	<u>Personality Stren.</u>	<u>Personality Weak.</u>	<u>Job Likes</u>	<u>Job Dislikes</u>
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____

<u>Health Strengths</u>	<u>Health Weakness</u>	<u>Homecare Stren.</u>	<u>Homecare Weak</u>	<u>Leisure Likes</u>	<u>Leisure Dislike</u>
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____

External/Environmental Evaluation:

The loss of our loved one may affect how and where we live our lives. What are the conditions of things in our environment, what things out of necessity have to change and what things do we want to change.

	<u>Current Conditions</u>	<u>Needing to Change Conditions</u>	<u>Desired Change Condition</u>
<u>Living Conditions:</u>	_____	_____	_____
<u>Finances:</u>	_____	_____	_____
<u>Family Relationships:</u>	_____	_____	_____
<u>Working:</u>	_____	_____	_____
<u>Leisure Time/Hobbies:</u>	_____	_____	_____

Education: _____
 Travel & Leisure: _____
 Pets: _____

III. STARTING OVER-DAILY ROUTINE AND HOW IT HAS CHANGED:

	<u>Daily Activity Prior To Loss:</u>	<u>Daily Activity Post Loss:</u>	<u>Desired Daily Activity in Future</u>
Time to Bed/Get Up/Hr	____/____/____	____/____/____	____/____/____
Food Preparation:	____/____/____	____/____/____	____/____/____
Eat Break., Lunch, Din.	____/____/____	____/____/____	____/____/____
Work Type/Hours:	____/____	____/____	____/____
Chores Act./Hours:	____/____	____/____	____/____
Leisure Act./Hours:	____/____	____/____	____/____
Exercise Act./Hours:	____/____	____/____	____/____
Worship Act./Hours:	____/____	____/____	____/____

What has changed the most in your daily activities and what do you want/desire to change the most in the future?

Daily Routine That Has Changed The Most:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____
- 5.) _____

Daily Routine That You Want to Change The Most:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____
- 5.) _____

IV. STARTING OVER-IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS:

Once we have completed our internal self evaluation and know what are strengths, weaknesses, interests, likes/dislikes, health, home care skills, leisure interests, volunteer/service and our external environmental reality evaluation (housing, finances, family, work, leisure, travel, pets, etc.) we can set some short term objectives and long term goals.

Overall short term objectives: _____

Long Term Goal: _____

V. THE END OF STARTING OVER-CONTENTMENT:

When we have suffered a loss and the subsequent wound, there will always be a scar. This scar is usually always tender and if poked will hurt which produces emotions. However when we have come out of the tunnel of darkness and started on a new pathway for our life we no longer are looking back to see what was in the tunnel, instead we are looking forward-peering down the path in anticipation. We have reached that final stage in grief called **acceptance**. This is where we understand that loss is a normal part of life and we have stabilized and are no longer riding the emotional rollercoaster. The following are the characteristics of acceptance/contentment

Actively pursuing new activities-take classes, join clubs, new hobby, service, travel plans, financial plans. (List):

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____
- 5.) _____

Enjoying new relationship or rekindled old relationships (Identify):

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____
- 5.) _____

Thinking of our lost loved one with positive memories (Favorite Memories):

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____

- 3.) _____
- 4.) _____
- 5.) _____