

Giving Hope

Favourite quotes or expressions:

"Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today."
~Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

"Love is the only thing that we can carry with us when we go, and it makes the end so easy."
~ Louisa May Alcott
(1832-1888)

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National Police & Peace Officer Memorial

On September 26, 2004, my family and I attended the National Police & Peace Officer Memorial in Victoria, BC.

A memorial in memory of fallen peace officers was unveiled on the lawns of the BC Legislative Buildings. My deceased husband Gerry was one of the officers remembered, and whose name is etched forever on a column of the monument.

An officer sang *In Their Eyes*, a song he had written to commemorate those who gave so freely of their lives to help others. He had sung only two or three notes before my tears began to flow. It was as though my husband had died just yesterday. The reality is that nearly 14 years has passed since his death.

I was profoundly aware that I had been taken back to that very day in a

matter of seconds. This caused me to reflect on what might happen for families when tributes are held years later, or when crash sites on roadways are adorned with flowers and memorabilia, sometimes for years following a fatal accident. While we are not responsible for reconciling another person's grief, we need to be aware that what we say and do can bring forward unresolved grief for them— even years later!

Grief -- There is No Way around It!

You know the saying – "You can do this the easy way or you can do it the hard way!" But what if the task at hand, such as grief, is already hard?

There is no easy way to grieve. It is a hard, long, and difficult journey. However, in my opinion, we can make the journey longer and more difficult by not engaging in the process.

Naturally, we want to avoid or move away from painful situations. Unfortunately, we live in a

society that supports 'moving away from the pain'. Everything is a quick fix...fast email, fast food, instant messaging and on and on... so it's easy to expect people to "heal fast" and "get back to normal" so that you are fun to be around again. For those of us who have embarked on the journey of loss, we can tell you it is not that easy.

It is said that "time heals all". That is true, especially for the bereaved. A word of caution though, it doesn't

heal in the sense that it "fixes" what is broken. It heals in the sense that by taking **all the time** we need to feel, remember and acknowledge the reality of our loss, we are able to move forward in life. When we engage in the process and take the time we need, eventually we renew our capacity to love, laugh, and plan for the future. There is no way to the other side of grief except to go through it. Take time to heal – for however long that takes! You are worth it!



"People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within."

~Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926 -2004)

Self-Care – Why we Should & Why we Don't! (Part One)

Not everyone has the luxury of escaping to exotic beaches for a vacation or a much needed stress break. In particular, when a family struggles to cope with a loss, there may not be the financial means, desire or availability of time to seek refuge from the pain. Nonetheless, recognizing our special needs during the grief process is essential to our well-

being. Loss impacts us on many levels including physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Physically we can experience a profound sense of fatigue during the grief process. This is compounded when sleep doesn't come easy and we find ourselves pacing the floor half the night.

Taking short "rest periods" throughout the day can

balance the lack of sleep. Try resting for 20 minutes, several times a day and keeping the time you go to bed and the time you get up consistent.

Exercise such as walking, yoga, or light aerobics is beneficial in helping to relieve the stress.

December's newsletter will discuss the impact loss has on us emotionally, socially and spiritually.

What is hope? By Patricia Cecchetto

Hope is putting my faith and trust in the higher power, the creator of all things, knowing He will be at my side to guide and enlighten me. Once I accept, I can go on doing whatever I am doing to the best of my ability, with what I have in my hands, being happy in achieving anything from the smallest success, to the greatest.

At age 37, my husband

suffered a serious spinal cord injury and was bedridden for 7 years. He endured 5 spinal cord surgeries. I was 32 and the mother of 3 young children. We had no family other than my aged parents.

The road was tough, but what a wonderful journey. The lessons we learned, and successes achieved outweighed all the bitter

disappointments.

Hope. We all need hope. It keeps us alive, but we need to be realistic in what we hope for. To go for a walk, to go out as a family, to be part of a community, to be accepted is also part of hope. To me, how we carry our cross is so important, for we can teach others that life has meaning after a traumatic event. It changes, but it does not mean it is over.

Other Books by Janelle Breese Biagioni

A Change of Mind: One Family's Journey Through Brain Injury is a 176 page paperback book that poignantly takes the reader through the personal trauma of brain injury. Gerry Breese, a husband, father and

constable in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was injured on May 19, 1990. This book offers a unique view into the emotions experienced by a wife and mother of two young children as she was thrust into the complex

and confusing world of brain injury. Very few authors have written with the frank honesty and directness of Janelle Breese Biagioni. To order email soulwriter@shaw.ca or visit Lash & Associates at www.lapublishing.com.