



Issues -5-19

## In This Issue!

- ⇒ Know One Knows
- ⇒ Quotes of the Month
- ⇒ Postcard
- ⇒ Who's In Charge?
- ⇒ Book Suggestion
- ⇒ Anger

## Quotes of the Month

*"Every one can master grief  
but he that has it"*  
William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

*"It's called grief work because  
finding your way through grief  
is hard work. If you put it off  
like a messy chore, it just sits  
there waiting for you."*  
Marty Tousley

*"Like fragile ice, anger passes  
away in time."*  
Ovid

You might just be tempted to SCREAM if one more person tells you, "I know how you feel". Right? NO ONE KNOWS HOW YOU FEEL! Statements made to you by "well-wishers" often convey an underlying disapproval of your grief and sadness, and may fill you with conflicting emotions and even anger. Platitude, n.= "Cliche, trite expression". You have heard many platitudes since your bereavement began. Most people are quite uncomfortable when faced with a heavily bereaved person. They literally don't know what to say to you. So they dispense platitudes, or tired expressions of sympathy, in a misguided attempt to make you feel better. It does the opposite. It never ceases to amaze me the blundering stupidity of things said to tender souls grieving a terrible loss.

And the worst are people who tell you about their Grandfather who died last spring.

As if comparing tragedies could somehow comfort you! What to do about all these platitudes?

- ◇ First, if you can remember, write each one down that someone has "used" on you.
- ◇ Then, write who said beside it
- ◇ Then look at each one, and think about it.
- ◇ What exactly did Marion mean when she made that thoughtless statement?
- ◇ Did she really mean me harm? Was her intent to deepen my misery? Or was she just feeling awkward and innocently giving misguided and useless advice?
- ◇ Unload any anger or resentment you might have about the inane things people say to you in your grief. You have enough baggage to carry on your journey.

**Forgive them, for they know not  
what they say...**

BACK TO LIFE !  
YOUR PERSONAL GUIDEBOOK TO  
GRIEF RECOVERY  
[www.recover-from-grief.com](http://www.recover-from-grief.com)



## Touchstone

### Postcards-by

#### Deacon Dan McGrath

*(Note: My wife died Oct. 23, 2015 these postcard reflection were written following her death)*

As I mentioned in my first “postcard” reflection, one of the hardest things to deal with after Carol died was folks constantly asking me, “How are you doing?” At first, I answered the question as we all do, with, “Fine, all right, Ok.” But as weeks went on, I realized I was not answering the question honestly. I was not in any way, shape or form fine, all right or OK.

I began to resent the question, even though I knew people meant well and were truly concerned. If I answered the question honestly, I would find myself crying and needing time to explain how my grief seemed so hard and painful-then apologize for my feelings, saying, “I’m sorry” or “It’s just so hard right now.”

I have learned over the past few months that we are the best judge of what we each need in dealing with grief. Every grief has its own timetable which only the griever knows. I read once that it takes seven years to adjust to the loss of someone close. There is nothing to be ashamed of if a particular moment reduces us to tears long after our loved one has died.

It’s truly unfortunate that in our culture today, we don’t like to or want to talk about death and grief. Finding closure, moving on and getting over it are encouraged and seen as signs of strength after loss. Pauline Boss says, *“We like to solve problems we’re not comfortable with, and loss is full of unanswered questions. That kind of mystery gives us a feeling of helplessness that we are very uncomfortable with as a society.”*

I remember visiting with a friend who said, “You’ll be okay, you’re strong, be tough.” I wanted to slap her, but I just walked away.

Pauline Boss goes on to say, *“There is no such things as closure. It’s a myth we need to put aside, like the idea we’ve accepted that grief has five linear stages and we come out the other side done with it. We have to stop pressuring people to get over it. It’s cruel, actually.”*

*There is no such thing as closure. We have to live with loss, clear or ambiguous. And it’s OK. It’s OK. And*

*it’s OK to see people who are hurting and just to say something simple. ‘I’m sorry.’ You really don’t have to say more than that.”*

She’s right. Recently when I was in Houston visiting family, I decided to go golfing. I joined a group of other golfers, all strangers, and after a few holes we began to talk about life and things. I mentioned that my wife had died recently. Each golfer responded respectfully saying, “I’m sorry,” and then we went on with our game. I remember thinking how kind these strangers were to acknowledge my loss and how it brought comfort. That’s all we can do or say. Nobody can fix it. It is what it is.

As in golf, even after a bad shot, you just get up and hit the ball again, always moving forward. As every golfer knows it only takes one good shot to give you hope and make you come back and play another day. It’s a great metaphor for living with grief and living life.

Finally, I leave you with the words of one of my favorite authors, Father Henri Nouwen who for me best sums up this postcard message. He writes:

*“If time does anything, it deepens our grief. The longer we live, the more fully we become aware of who she was for us, and the more intimately we experience what her love meant for us. Real, deep love is, as you know, very unobtrusive, seemingly easy and obvious, and so present that we take it for granted. Therefore, it is often only in retrospect-or better, in memory-that we fully realize its power and depth. Yes, indeed, love often makes itself visible in pain.”*

---

## Touchstone

There is a story about a man call Charles Carter who was involved in many good works. One day he felt himself becoming ill. In great distress he thought, “I can’t be sick now. I have too much to do, to many people depending on me.” But he did go to sleep, and in his sleep he had a dream in which he saw the Lord God Almighty pacing the floor of heaven, wringing his hands and saying, “What shall I do? What shall I do? Charles Carter is going to be sick. **Regardless of what we might think we are not in charge of life and things.**



Make time for self care.

© BuddhaDoodles.com

### Touchstone-Book of the Month Suggestion

Resilience, by Rich Hanson P.h.D

*How to Grow an Unshakable Core of Calm, Strength and Happiness.*

### Touchstone—Anger

You may feel that you're not angry about the death, but deep down inside, you really are. Virtually EVERY bereavement contains some element of anger. And for most grieving people, anger is a biggie, even if they don't realize it. Even if you do recognize that you are angry, you may be confused as to why this should be ("She didn't choose to die, why should I be mad?") The honest truth is that you carry with you some degree of anger that your loved one died and left you alone with such horrible pain. It really is their fault for dying! Also, you probably feel helpless in your grief. This makes you feel anxious and then angry at your own perceived inadequacies.

("I should be able to handle this!") Anger is reasonable. It is expected and normal. It is a recognized stage of grief. Look for it in yourself, acknowledge and express it. If you fail to accept your pain and validate it, repressed anger can lead to complicated grief and even clinical depression. Get in touch with your angry feelings now, or you may find yourself on an analyst's couch in a few years. So take the time right now to identify your anger.

**Who or what are you angry at?**

- \*The doctor for not saving him?
- \*Your spouse for allowing her to go to the dance?
- \*Your friend at work who is telling you to pull yourself together?
- \*The financial mess you were left to deal with?
- \*God for allowing this to happen?
- \*All the happy people who haven't had a tragedy like this strike them?
- \*Yourself for not being in control of the situation?

If you think about it, there's plenty of anger inside you right now. Just know that this is perfectly understandable, and a normal part of grief. Everyone goes through it, so don't feel guilty for being mad! And forgive yourself for feeling angry at your lost loved one. What could you possibly be mad at them for?

- \*Angry that she left you behind, and in pain.
- \*Angry that he took away your future plans and dreams.
- \*Angry that she didn't go to the doctor sooner.
- \*Angry that he didn't lead a healthier lifestyle or he drank too much.
- \*Angry that she left behind a financial or legal mess for you to deal with.

It's really important to acknowledge that you are angry, and let yourself feel it without guilt. Don't deny it or pretend you're not angry when you really are. Don't let anyone else stop it or make you feel bad for it, or force you into forgiveness. It's okay to be angry with the whole wide world right now, including your lost beloved, for the tremendous tragedy that has been forced on you. It really isn't fair, and you are justified in feeling outraged at the injustice of it all! For now, let the anger remain. Don't direct it on yourself, but direct it towards your loved one, which is where it belongs. It's okay to be angry with the person who died. It doesn't mean you love them any less, or that they were bad. Right now, directing your anger towards the deceased is helping you to survive emotionally. Over time, your anger will resolve. You may feel mad again from time to time, but over the long haul, the anger will eventually fade. Don't let the anger consume you. Express it by words, or writing, or by drawing or painting. Let it out, direct it outward. **Live with it for a while, then let it go.**



2825 Lexington Ave. Suite B  
Butte, Montana 59701

### Touchstone

#### **Book Suggestions**

- ⇒ The Wisdom We're Born With,  
by Daniel Bottlief
- ⇒ Resilience, by Rich Hanson P.h.D
- ⇒ Second Firsts, by Christina Rasmussen

### Touchstone

#### **Website Suggestions**

- ⇒ [www.postcardreflection.blogspot.com](http://www.postcardreflection.blogspot.com)
- ⇒ [www.journeyofhearts.org](http://www.journeyofhearts.org)
- ⇒ [www.DrDanGottlieb.com](http://www.DrDanGottlieb.com).

**Senior Solutions-2825 Lexington Ave. Suite B  
Butte, Montana 59701**

Phone: 406-299-3777 Fax: 406-299-2730  
[www.seniorsolutionsmontana.com](http://www.seniorsolutionsmontana.com)