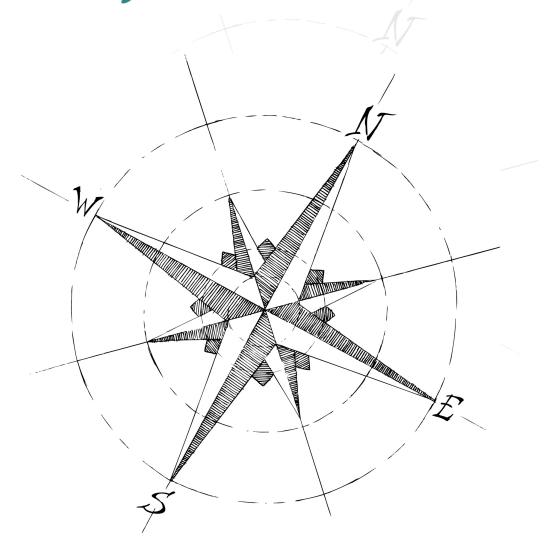
loving Spirit workshop



A FACILITED JOURNEY THROUGH LOSS

"The world breaks everyone, and afterward many are strong at the broken places."

Ernest Hemingway A Farewell to Arms

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Version 4.15.20

Self-assessment Tool

"Knowing others is wisdom. Knowing yourself is Enlightenment."
-Lao Tzu

Instructions: Please color in the block in the grid below that most closely reflects your current situation with respect to your journey of loss. Just give an honest response. You will not be judged in any way by your answer.

It's Hopeless				
I'm in Crisis				1
I'm Sad				
I'm Okay	5			
	I'm making progress	I'm trying but no progress	I don't know what to do	I'm stuck or getting worse

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Let's Talk About Scars

"The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be yourself."

-Lao Tzu

I have a two-inch scar on my left arm. It is where a basal cell carcinoma was removed years ago. Perhaps you have scars on your body, too. Most adults do. I used to think my scar was ugly and I would wear long sleeves to hide it. Now I consider it a badge of honor.

What changed was my thinking about scars.

I realized that scars do not form on dead bodies. So the mere fact that I am scarred means that I survived. It means that I had cancer, not that I have cancer currently.

I also realized that the minute we are hurt our bodies automatically go into healing mode and begin the process of forming scar tissue to protect us from our wounds. It takes time for the tissue to form. Time is part of the healing process.

The tissue that formed at my incision site is not like the rest of the skin on my body. Scar tissue is formed with a rope-like texture, made from collagen that is much stronger than mere skin. It looks different because it is different and it is different in a good way.

Where my skin is scarred is also where it is the strongest.

Scar tissue teaches us that we can literally be stronger at our broken places, just like Earnest Hemingway said in A Farewell to Arms.

I now think about all types of loss in a similar way. When we have a major loss in our lives, whether from the death of a loved one, a divorce, an illness, or some other cause, we also feel broken. It may be a kind of emotional brokenness or a physical wounding, as from an illness or accident.

The work we do to recover from our loss is like our body replacing our missing tissue with scar tissue that looks different but is stronger than the original tissue that was lost. Our journey of loss can allow us to rebuild our belief systems, discard old beliefs that no longer serve us and reclaim our essential, resilient selves.

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if it is a physical loss w	hat words do you use t	o describe what happe	ned to you?
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your ability to recover? (For e	example: although I fo	elt devastated when the loss occurred, I
can now see how I am doing b	better.)	
	/ / \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	

During the time that you are recovering from your injury it is important to allow your body to have the time and space it needs to rebuild. Allow it to rest. Surround yourself with positive energy and healing images. Make wise choices about what to eat, drink, or whom to allow in to your recovery process.

If you practice meditation, hold the image of yourself as fully recovered from your loss, different, yes, but actually stronger and better than you were before. And then, enjoy coloring the image on the next page to ground your meditation.

And if you don't meditate, you can simply take time to color the image for pleasure. Do this deliberately. Take slow considered breaths. Choose colors that speak to your heart space, not merely your headspace. As you are coloring imagine that your body is also working to mend your broken places. See yourself in complete alignment with the universal energy flow that returns you to a state of balance and wholeness again.

Enjoy the journey!

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Stages of Learning

"To realize that you do not understand is a virtue. Not to realize that you do not understand is a defect."

-Lao Tzu

Since the 1970s, we've had a theory about the four stages for learning any new skill. It is called the Gordon Conscious Competence Model. It works like this: if you have no awareness of a skill area and therefore, no ability to perform the skill; that is called unconscious incompetence. You would be at this level if you have never seen a bicycle and don't even know that they exist. You don't know, and you don't even know that you don't know, or that you may need to know how to ride a bicycle. This level of unconscious incompetence is the lowest rung on the skill development ladder.

Unconscious Incompetence

If, one day you go for a walk and happen to see someone riding a bicycle and you realize that it could be a useful way to travel, you have just discovered that this skill exists, but you still don't know how to do it. You have reached a higher stage of awareness that is called conscious incompetence. Now, at least, you know that you don't know.

Conscious Incompetence Unconscious Incompetence

Once you are aware of the skill area and your own lack of competency for the skill, you may decide that you would like to learn how to do it. So you may take lessons, study it in school, or practice the new skill. You may borrow or buy a bicycle and practice learning how to ride it. If you work at it long enough and hard enough you may develop the ability to do it well. Now, with discipline and effort, you have become consciously competent in the skill of bicycling.

Conscious Competence Conscious Incompetence Unconscious Incompetence

If you continue to pursue this skill development, over time your ability to do it may grow to the point that you will master it. With so much experience in its use, you may no longer even need to think about how to do the skill. It just comes naturally to you. You jump on a bike and take off, without a thought about pedaling or maintaining your balance. You ride gracefully wherever you want to go. Congratulations! Now you have achieved a pinnacle of mastery of your new skill that is called unconscious competence.

Conscious Competence Conscious Incompetence Unconscious Incompetence

We can apply the Gordon Training Institute's model for any skill area, including the skill of how we cope with major losses in our life. It might be that the first time we suffer such a loss, which could be the result of a divorce, a death, a career setback, or a personal change of some sort, we don't even realize that such skills exist. Or, we may know that other people cope better than we do but we just don't know how to do it.

The next two days will be spent introducing and modeling a number of skills, techniques and strategies that will increase your resilience and allow you to manage major losses more effectively. Some of them will be new to you and some of them you may already be aware of or competent in using. Our intention is that by trying them and working with them, over time you will reach the unconscious competence level of mastery so that in the future you will become a resource for others who are new to the skill area, and to the journey of loss.

This webinar will go quickly. But we invite you to take the learning with you as you depart and use it to become a master, a role model, and in inspiration to others.

Telling Our Story

"What the caterpillar calls the end, the rest of the world calls a butterfly."
-Lao Tzu

Hawai'ians use the expression, talking story, to describe how they share their life stories with each other. When they talk story it may be about the trivial day-to-day activities, or it may be about deeply personal things they need to air with a trusted listener.

Telling our story about the major losses in our lives is one way of helping ourselves heal. When we tell the story of what happened to us, our brain realizes that we are describing a past event, not a current crisis. Even if it happened just yesterday, it is still part of our history and the brain will store the memory in its historical data banks. If we don't talk about our loss it remains as a current event, an open wound, rather than one that has already started to heal.

Telling our story also gives us perspective. As we find the words to describe what happened to us we also begin to see it in the broader context of our lives. We may remember other losses we have experienced and how we survived them. Or, we may develop a philosophy that informs our journey ahead.

Sharing our stories of loss also opens the door for us to listen to other's stories as well. Listening attentively shows our care and compassion and empowers the person to go more deeply into her true feelings, rather than gloss over particularly painful parts. Telling our story and actively listening to the stories of others becomes an important part of our healing process.

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As your journey continues it will be important for you to have alternate versions of your story to use when you see fit. If you are prepared with various alternative ways to talk about your loss it empowers you to take control of situations that may otherwise be too painful for you.

Earnest Hemingway is reported to have once famously told a profound story in only six words. He said: "For Sale. Baby Shoes. Never Worn." When Princess Diana died, someone reduced that story to: "Car Crash. Princess Dies. Motherless boys." A short version of your loss story can be just am impactful as a lengthy one and it may be the only version you can bear to tell, depending on where you are in your journey.

You, alone, get to decide whether to tell your story or not. If you choose to tell, you also get to decide which version feels right to share. If you feel comfortable enough around the person who wants to know you story, you may decide to go into great detail, including the most personal or painful parts. On the other hand, if you are less comfortable with the person who is asking you to tell your story, you may choose an abbreviated version instead.

It is also perfectly acceptable, even healthy, to simply thank the inquiring individuals for their care and concern and just simply say that you don't want to share your story right now. Then change the subject or walk away.

Although there are many things that we can't control about our grief or loss situation, whether and how we tell our story is still an area where we retain a lot of power and control.

My Loss as a Journey, Not a Destination

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."
-Lao Tzu

Your participation in this Webinar indicates that at some point in the past you have suffered a major loss in life. Look around you. You are in good company. We all have major losses in our life if we live long enough. Loss is not a respecter of persons or class or education or character or religion or nationality or race or anything else for that matter. We can't prevent loss from happening to us. We can however, make important decisions about what we do in its wake.

In a state of unconscious incompetence about how to transform the impact that loss has on our lives we may start out thinking that the loss itself means the end of our life, or at least the end of our happiness, or joy, or ability to recover. We may not know that there are skills we can develop to help us bounce back, mind sets we can adopt to help us lessen the hold that the loss has on us, and techniques we can practice that hasten our return to a more natural state of existence.

Participating in this Webinar may be the first step on your own road to recovery. The journey continues after you complete it. And every step you take toward a new and improved future is a positive step on the progression from unconscious incompetence toward becoming unconsciously competent about how to manage loss, how to return to joy and love, how to help yourself heal and even how to help others.

In some countries, like Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy, women may wear black for the rest of their lives after the deaths of their husbands. It is as if the loss of their husbands' lives meant the loss of theirs as well, as they are effectively sentenced to a lifetime of mourning without end.

No matter what loss you suffered that brought you to the Webinar, your very presence means that although it may have even been the death of someone you loved very much, it did not mean the end of your life. It is a marker in your path, an important part of your journey, but not the end of it. For some, it may be the start of some new unchartered course that could not have happened but for the loss.

We use the compass as symbolic of our need to find our direction again after a major loss. It is our hope that the tools, mindsets, and skillsets you will learn in these sessions will allow you to find your true north bearing once again.

As you think about your own journey of loss, answer the questions below in the space provided.

- 1. What loss or event marked the start of your journey? Give the date and a brief description.
- 2. What evidence is there that this loss or event was not the end of your journey? Give three examples of how you have already moved beyond where you were when the event or loss happened.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
- 3. Is there an end point you have in mind that will signal to you that you have made it through this journey? Are there things you would like to do or complete? Make notes to yourself about those markers of your progression or success.
- 4. Are there some pre-conceived notions or limiting beliefs that you would have to release or let go of in order to move on from your loss? If so, make a list of those below.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
- 5. What are some of the things you are most afraid of that are associated with this loss?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

Manifestations of Grief



EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

SADNESS YEARNING ANXIETY

GUILT

IRRITABILITY NUMBNESS DETACHMENT CONFUSION

SHOCK ANGER DISBELIEF

LONELINESS

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES

RESTLESSNESS
SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL
ABSENT MINDEDNESS
INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE
HYPER ACTIVE

SURREAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

DREAM-LIKE
FLOATING
TIME BLURS
DISASSOCIATION
IT DIDN'T HAPPEN

PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES

DISGESTIVE UPSET
FATIGUE/EXHAUSTION
HEADACHES
CHEST PAINS
SORE MUSCLES
SLEEP DIFFICULTIES
POOR APPETITE/OVEREATING
SHAKINESS/TREMBLING
IMPULSIVITY
HYPO/HYPER SEXUAL DRIVER
CRYING
SIGHING
HEAVINESS

HEALTH RESPONSES

CORTISOL ELEVATION
LOWER IMMUNITY
HEART RATE
BLOOD PRESSURE
CARDIAC RISK
THROMBIC
INCREASED MORTALITY

Others:

Levels of Consciousness

"The key to growth is the introduction of higher dimensions of consciousness into our awareness."

-Lao Tzu

In his seminal work, *Power vs. Force*, Dr. David Hawkins explored the relationships between our emotions, life views and levels of consciousness. His calibrations, based on over forty years of experiments, revealed that grief lies below the level of conscious behavior (shown by the red horizontal line) and is characterized by a primary emotion of regret and a life view that is tragic.

To speed your recovery from grief pick a higher level of consciousness from the chart below and try to sustain that level of existence for short periods of time each day. Gradually increase the time spent in the higher level until it feels more natural. If you find yourself back in grief, just be aware that although you may be feeling that emotion currently, it neither means that you have to feel it continuously, nor that you will feel it forever. Use the chart like a menu and select a state of being that feels better to you than your current one.

Level	Log	Emotion	Life View
Enlightenment	700-1000	Ineffable	Is
Peace	600	Bliss	Perfect
Joy	540	Serenity	Complete
Love	500	Reverence	Benign
Reason	400	Understanding	Meaningful
Acceptance	350	Forgiveness	Harmonious
Willingness	310	Optimism	Hopeful
Neutrality	250	Trust	Satisfactory
Courage	200	Affirmation	Feasible
Pride	175	Scorn	Demanding
Anger	150	Hate	Antagonistic
Desire	125	Craving	Disappointing
Fear	100	Anxiety	Frightening
Grief	75	Regret	Tragic
Apathy	50	Despair	Hopeless

Mindsets

"If you correct your mind, the rest of your life will fall into place."
-Lao Tzu

Almost immediately after Allie died Will and I made what I think was one of the most important decisions we have made about our loss. We decided what mindset to adopt. We decided not to see ourselves as victims and not to view her death as tragic. Those were choices. We could have chosen much differently, of course and a different choice would have opened a different path to our journey. I would not say these were easy choices; rather, they were essential ones.

When Lao Tzu wrote the words above more than 2,500 years ago he expressed a great truth. Our mindset about things that happen to us in life has everything to do with how we react, recover, and relate to our life events. I felt so strongly about these mindsets I wrote a blog about them in the form of suggested New Year's Resolutions for those who are bereaved. It is repeated below because these mindsets could be adopted by anyone who has suffered a major loss any time of the year. Perhaps you will adopt one or more of them to help the rest of your life fall into place.

12.26.2014

New Year's Resolutions for the Bereaved

As the New Year approaches, many of us make resolutions to help insure that the future is brighter for us. Typically those resolutions have to do with weight loss, or exercise and are abandoned before Ground Hog Day. For those 2.5 million Americans who suffered the death of a loved one this year, I'd like to suggest ten resolutions that may lessen your feelings of loss and help you as you recover.

- 1. **Resolve not to be a victim**. Don't exploit your situation to gain favor or manipulate outcomes. Victimhood is a trap and it actually can prevent your recovery from the loss that precipitated your suffering.
- 2. Resolve to forgive anyone who may be somehow responsible for your situation, e.g., criminals, drunken drivers, doctors, the deceased, etc. This doesn't require that they ask for forgiveness, or that you tell them that you forgive them, merely that you forgive, release and bless them. Only then can you be truly free.

- 3. **Resolve not to wallow in grief**. It's impossible not to feel grief after a major loss. It's actually healthy to grieve, as it is essential to healing. But wallowing in grief is neither essential, nor healthy. If you feel an emotional response coming over you, don't run away but also don't allow it to consume you. Find a safe place. Feel it. Release it and move on.
- 4. **Resolve to talk about your feelings with someone you trust**. If you merely stuff them, they don't go away. They may come back later to sabotage your progress just when you think you are getting better. Or, they may result in medical problems that are stress related. Whether it's a therapist, a rabbi, a minister, a family member or a friend, find someone you trust and tell them what is going on for you.
- 5. **Resolve not to "catastrophise" your loss.** When you tell what happened try to choose words that are true but not so emotionally charged. Hyperbole isn't helpful because it re-stimulates the trauma of your suffering. Reality is helpful. By sticking to simple facts as you tell your story, instead of dramatic, emotionally charged descriptions, you can begin to loosen the loss's hold on your life.
- 6. Resolve to listen to other's grief stories, even if you find them trivial compared to yours. While it may be hard to hear about the death of someone else's dog when you just shared about the death of a family member, any loss of a loved one, human, or animal is a serious emotional upset. Hearing others' stories helps put ours in perspective.
- 7. **Resolve not to use platitudes in consoling others.** Expressions like: "She's in a better place now," or "God won't give you more than you can bear," or "When one door closes another one opens," although well intended, may actually cause more suffering. A simple, "I'm sorry for your loss," conveys sympathy without additional infliction of pain.
- 8. **Resolve to help others.** By lifting someone else's spirits you will also be lifting your own. And it will help you realize that you are not alone in your loss.
- 9. **Resolve not to give up on your life**. This season of grieving will pass with time. Believe that your future will be better than your current situation and you will begin to see the evidence of that happening. Believing is seeing. If you believe that things will get better, they will.
- 10. **Resolve to be grateful for everything that is right in your life**. It would be good to either speak or write your gratitude lists. By acknowledging the many good things that are happening you will soon see that in spite of your loss your life has hope and it has potential.

I'm sharing these ten resolutions because I used every one of them in my own journey of loss and they worked for me. My New Year's wish is that they will be of use to you, too. Grief does not have to be a life sentence without parole.

Happy New Year!

As you think about these suggested mindsets, are there any that you would like to adopt for your own journey? Or do they remind you of another mindset you would want to use?

Write below any mindset(s) you intend to adopt to change your mind about your loss and thereby change your life.

1.

2.

3.

Who Am I?

"At the center of your being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want." -Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

There is nothing like a major loss in life to cause us to seriously question our very existence. While we may have taken so many things for granted previously, the upsetting effect of any major shift, whether by a death, a professional setback, a divorce, or other personal upheaval, causes us to second guess our very identity. The answer to the question "Who am I?" becomes essential to finding our way back to equilibrium.

Here is a three-step exercise to help you go deeper into the essential nature of your identity. In the first step you will work alone, quietly writing three answers to the question given. In the second step you will participate as a group member in a guided meditation. In the third step you will again work alone, quietly writing or drawing your answer to the final essential question.

1. Who am !?

First, answer the question below in three different ways, but *none* of your answers can be your actual name.

Who am I?	
1	
2	
3	

We've been asking clients this simple question for over twenty years at the Maui Transitions Center and we tend to get some pretty predictable results on the first part of this process.

When we eliminate the use of our name to answer it, most clients resort to defining themselves in relation to other people or things. For example, they say things like, "I'm a mother," "I'm a husband," "I'm a parent of three children," "I'm the CEO of a company," or "I'm a lawyer," etc. In fact, we spend so much time self-identifying

with objects, titles or other relationships we often forget that we are not those things; they are merely a part of our lives, a fraction of who are actually are.

2. In the next part of this exercise we will do a guided meditation. There are three important ways to enter into a meditative state, "watch breath, soften belly, open heart." For the meditation we ask that you settle comfortably into your chair, close your eyes, let go of worrying about anything else in your life for a few minutes. Focus intently on the voice of the facilitator. Trust that the person leading the exercise knows what to do and will help you get to a satisfying outcome. Let go. Just let go. "Watch breath, soften belly, open heart."



3. After you have completed the guided meditation, in the space below write or draw your answer to the essential question:

Who Am I?

WHAT HAVE I LOST?

"Your own positive future begins in this moment.

All you have is right now. Every goal is possible from here."

-Lao Tzu

When Allie died, many people used the expression that I had lost my daughter and they were sorry for my loss. I bristled every time this was said because it seemed to imply negligence on my part somehow. Did I not watch her carefully enough? Had she wandered away, never to be seen or heard from again? No, she died. She simply died. She wasn't lost. She just died.

Her death was the start of my journey. Thus far, it has been a four-year journey from utter brokenness and almost unbearable pain to a place of greater acceptance, of developing scar tissue over the open wounds, of forgiveness, reconciliation and a return to a new normalcy.

Which begs the question when she died, what was lost?

I think the answer to this question is the same whether our loss is caused by a death or by some other major upheaval in our lives such as a divorce, or retirement, or career change or setback. To me, what I lost, at least for a while, was the meaning, identity and structure of my life.

The devastation of grief caused me to fundamentally question what my life had meant up to that point; was it being wasted, did I make the best use of my time and talents, would anyone care if I died, what had I stood for or stood against that mattered? If someone were writing about my life after I died, what would be the headline? And finally I came around to asking myself, what would be missed if my life ended tomorrow?

The identity part of my loss was trickier. I had identified myself as a mother of three children for almost thirty years by the time Allie died. When asked, I would quickly recount that I had two sons and a daughter. Since her death, I stumble when asked a question by any stranger about my children. Well meaning hair dressers, merely trying to make conversation, will say something as innocent as "how many children do you have?" And my mind does a kind of internal debate. Do I care enough about this person to tell her the whole story? Do I just say how many children I have, which is how the question was posed, or do I say how many children I had, which may be more than they wanted to know?

I was very clear that I didn't want my identity to become indelibly linked to death. Yes, I had a daughter who died. But more important to me than how or when she

died was how she lived. Allie lived her life full out, exhausting herself with things to do and places to go and people to meet and love. She stuffed so much into twenty-eight years it was remarkable. She made friendships that lasted from early childhood until her death. She invested in relationships, slowing down and listening and caring about others. Instead of having my identity become that of a mother whose daughter died, I preferred to think of myself as a mother whose daughter really knew how to live, and who lived well her entire life. That would be something to celebrate, not to mourn.

For three years after Allie died the structure of my life was almost complete chaos. We left our home in Colorado, merely locking the front door, giving away our dog, and getting on a plane for Maui. But once we arrived we never quite settled into the new structure of Maui life. We moved several times on Maui as we tried to regain our footing. And then we finally moved back to Colorado.

With so much of our lives in upheaval it was hard to find our center. Were we running from death or just running?

Relationships are Multi-dimensional

Part of the reason I felt so completely bereft was that I failed to understand what was actually lost and what remained from my relationship to my daughter after her death. My immediate conclusion was that I had lost everything; all of her, and it left me feeling pretty hopeless. With time, I came to see that our relationship was more complex than I originally thought and that while I had lost the physical aspect of it, I would no longer see her, or hear her voice, or smell her vanilla essence, I still had both an emotional and spiritual connection to her that death could not destroy.

Let me say that again in case you raced through it. When someone we love dies, we *only* lose the physical aspects of the relationship. Our emotional and spiritual relationship with them cannot be destroyed by mere death.

By working hard to understand and learn from the grief experience I came to see that when we are in a personal relationship with someone else, whether it's romantic, or familial, or close friendship, it's not just a physical relationship. Of course the physical aspect is important, as that is often the beginning of our feelings for the individual. We may find them physically beautiful or handsome. We may love looking into their eyes. We may enjoy their touch. We may find their sense of humor, or intelligence compelling. These are all physical aspects of our relationship. But relationships have other dimensions as well.

We have an emotional connection to those we love. These emotional ties begin even before birth in the case of expectant parents. Without ever seeing their child for the nine months of gestation, the parents can become completely emotionally

attached as they await its birth. Parents who miscarry or whose child is stillborn will grieve as deeply as any others even though they may never had actually held their child or had much of a physical relationship to it. I feel strong emotional ties to friends I have known since law school. It causes me to care about their wellbeing, and even though we may not see each other often, geographical distances do not weaken the emotional connection.

And we also have a spiritual connection to our loved ones. Depending on your spiritual belief system you may believe that you and your loved one were together before you entered this world. Some believe that spirits pick the family into which they will be born. Others hold that we know each other through many lifetimes and different incarnations. Whatever your belief system, have you ever felt so connected to another person that you felt you were soul mates? Did you ever meet someone for the first time and just instantly feel like you have known each other forever? Those are spiritual connections.

When a loved one dies, what is lost is the physical aspect of our relationship. We no longer get to see them, talk with them, hold them, or hear their voice. We tell ourselves that it's over. We have lost everything. But that's not true. We still are connected emotionally and spiritually. No matter what happens, we still have their loving spirit around us. We never have to lose the emotional or spiritual connections to our loved ones.

Think about the nature of the loss you are grieving. As you reflect on it, write your answers to the questions below.

/			
our journey begin?			
	our journey begin?	our journey begin?	our journey begin?

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What were the emo	tional aspects of the	relationship that you enjo	eyed the mos
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What were the spiri	tual aspects of the re	lationship that you enjoye	ed the most?
		\	
How were the emot	ional aspects of the r	elationship different from	the physical

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. What are your sp	oiritual beliefs th	nat pertain	to this relation	nship?	
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. Do you believe y	ou will ever be t	ogether ag	ain?		
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1. How do you feel abouinitual)? Does it make o your emotional and s	your grief more	bearable to real	ize that you ge	
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Un-slumping Ourselves

"If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present."

-Lao Tzu

Buddha described a frantic state of being as having a monkey mind. A monkey mind is a mind that is overtaken by a bunch of drunken, screeching, clamoring monkeys running around stirring up anxiety and fear. Buddha suggested that we meditate daily just to calm our monkey mind and to realize that our anxieties are mostly self-created. Meditation is one form of un-slumping ourselves, a means by which we cope with our anxieties and remember our authentic selves and find our true north again.

We have all seen fire alarms with glass covers that say: in case of emergency break glass. Someone planned ahead of a fire or other emergency to give simple instructions and means for alerting others to the crisis. The early planning may make the difference between a small, manageable situation and a major conflagration with devastating consequences.

Over the course of a lifetime we have all developed coping mechanisms, like the fire alarm switch, that can help us calm our monkey minds and respond quickly and appropriately in time of crisis. But perhaps we haven't taken the time to take an inventory of our coping resources and to make them readily available to ourselves for the loss we are now experiencing.

- 1. Make an inventory of your coping resources below. These may be people who will be emotionally supportive of your journey, places where you find peace and calm, things that comfort you, or activities that you find soothing or healing. If you list people, be sure to later amend your list to include their contact information.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.
 - 9.
 - 10
 - 12.
 - 13.

- 14.
- 15.
- 2. Interview other people for their ideas on how to un-slump and write the best ones below.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

The inventory you just made is crucial to your healing journey. It probably includes some items that may seem like luxuries, e.g., massage, or visits to the gym, or manicures. While you are recovering from a major loss these are not luxuries, rather they are things that can signal to your brain that it is possible to be happy again. It is possible to be fully engaged in your life again. Even going fishing, or walking your dog, or gardening, or listening to music can serve as reminders that you are still on the journey, there is more to come, and it will get better with time.

At the start of your journey you may have to push yourself to use your coping resources. It may feel like you are just going through the motions of life. But if you do use them and allow them to help you cope, you will come to a point when you are no longer merely coping, you are enjoying your life again.

As you recover it is important to protect yourself from further trauma if you can. Little things that you do can make a big difference, including making conscious choices about what you read, or watch on television or at the movies. This is not a good time to expose your self to violent action thrillers or horror movies. Anything that stimulates the monkey mind should be avoided or minimalized where possible. And, when you feel your self becoming agitated and those drunken monkeys are stirring around in your brain, use your coping resources to help restore a sense of calm and balance to your life.

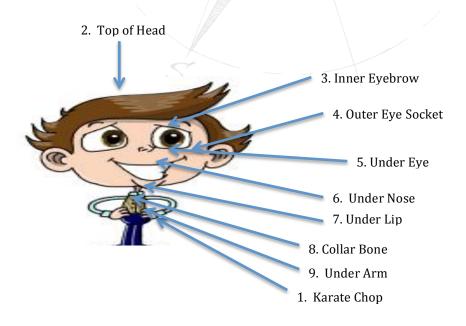
This is one way to think about it: a major loss, like the death of a loved one, creates a catastrophic amount of stress in our life. Our brain is traumatized by the loss. We need to allow the brain the time it needs to heal and recover. We need to provide a loving, supportive environment to our self, just as the staff in a hospital would provide for us if we had a broken leg.

We need to make conscious choices about how we spend our time, whom we see, what we eat, and what we read or watch on television or the movies. To the extent that we can acknowledge our injury and provide an environment for ourselves to recover, we can hasten our return to a state of wellbeing.

Tapping

What is tapping?

- -Gentle, meridian touching that combines ancient acupressure with modern psychology
- -A self-soothing technique that is used for fears, phobias, medical treatments, weight loss, etc.
- -Literally, tapping into our body's own energy and healing power
- -Reprograms our brain's flight, fight, or freeze response, allowing us to calm down
- -Relaxing
- -No needles
- -Helps with anxiety, PTSD, insomnia, anger
- -Completely free
- -Easy to learn
- -Can be done anywhere, any time
- -May repeat as often as necessary to remove emotional blocks
- -Just focus on the negative emotion/situation while gently tapping on the meridians in the sequence shown below



Locus of Control Pop Quiz

Pick Choice *a*, or Choice *b*.

- 1a. The events that affect my life are beyond my control.
- 1b. I feel responsible for how well my life goes.
- 2a. Having a good marriage means you were lucky to find the right person.
- 2b. A good marriage comes from both partners working on it.
- 3a. Employees will slack off if a strong boss doesn't tell them what to do.
- 3b. Employees work best when they are given clear goals and freedom to work in their own ways.
- 4a. Promotions usually come from being liked by the right people.
- 4b. Promotions are usually earned through hard work and persistence.
- 5a. Making a lot of money comes from getting the right breaks.
- 5b. A person's income is determined mostly by ability.
- 6a. Luck determines success or failure in life.
- 6b. Good planning and hard work determine success in life.
- 7a. I would be happier if the politicians and business leaders did their jobs better.
- 7b. It is possible to have a happy life even when there are many social and economic problems.
- 8a. Some people are easy to get along with and others are not.
- 8b. Having good relationships with others is a skill that can be learned.
- 9a. If your life is tough, that's your bad luck.
- 9b. Life isn't fair, but I usually learn good lessons from bad experiences.
- 10a. People can't change what they are like.
- 10b. People can learn better ways to do things if they try.

The *a* responses reflect external control beliefs; a mindset that outside forces, luck, and chance determine how a person's life goes.

The b responses reflect internal control beliefs; a mindset that we are able to learn from our experiences and influence how well our lives go.

From: The Resiliency Advantage by Al Siebert, Ph.D.

What Has Been My Journey?

"New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings."
-Lao Tzu

Your presence at this workshop is an indication that you are experiencing the pain of a major loss in life. You may even be feeling that it will never get better. I can assure you that this, too, will pass. I can even share a little secret with you that you may not know yet. This is it: you are stronger than you realize.

How do I know?

On my left arm there is a rather sizable scar and an indentation where skin and muscle tissue used to be. It is the site of a small surgery that I had to remove a basal cell carcinoma. It's not pretty to look at, but it actually makes me feel kind of proud when I see it. That's because scar tissue does not form on dead bodies. So the fact that I have a scar at all means that I survived skin cancer. Scar tissue is made of collagen. Because it is fibrous, it is actually stronger than the skin around it. My scar reminds me that I am stronger now in the very spot where I once was most vulnerable. I only have to glance at my arm to feel better about where life has taken me since that basal cell was diagnosed.

Four years ago, when Allie died, it left me with new scar tissue. My heart was broken. My spirit was slumped. My outlook on life was pretty bleak. I had quite a few new mental and emotional scars from the loss. And, I've been working pretty hard ever since to heal them. You are probably in a similar place, too.

The purpose of this next exercise is to remind ourselves that the wound that feels so painful to us right now is not the first wounding experience we've had, nor will it likely be the last. But if we can look back on our lives from the beginning until now, we will see that along the way we have experienced some life-changing events and learned quite a few lessons from our journey to date. Taking the time to review our life so far helps us put the current loss or difficulty in perspective. Or even if the thing we are now challenged by is actually the worst thing that has ever happened to us, we can still learn from it and grow beyond it.

1. You are now going to create a lifeline. It is a personal account of the major events in your life to date, both positive and negative. Beginning from birth, until the present time, list on the left side of the ledger below the major negative events in your life to date. Use short words or even abbreviations to remind you of the event. On the right side list the positive events. Even a young adult will have several entries on each side of the ledger. Don't worry about specific dates; just try to get within the five year time span if you can't remember exactly when a major event happened. Use the chart that follows on the next page for your lifeline.

Birth

5 Years

10 Years

15 Years

20 Years

25 Years

30 Years

35 Years

40 Years

45 Years

50 Years

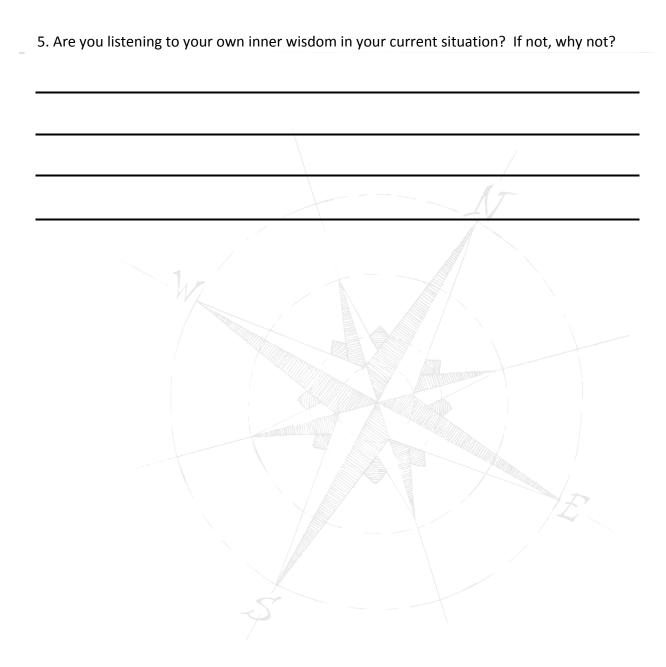
55 Years

60 Years

Over 65

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3. As you review negative events?		ate, what lesson	s have you lear	ned from eith	ner the positive o
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4. Based on what current situation		arned so far, who	at advice would	you give to s	omeone in your

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What Lies Ahead?

"A man with outward courage dares to die; a man with inner courage dares to live." -Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

Now that you have taken a look at your life to date with some perspective, it begs the question, what lies ahead? Of course, we don't really know what the future holds for any of us, but we can become clearer about what we would like it to hold. And, if we are given the gift of time, we can consciously work to manifest our intentions. One of the best ways to become clear about our intentions for the rest of our journey is to begin with the end in mind. And of course, the ultimate end is our own death.

The next exercise is intended to help you realize what the consequences would be if your life ended today. Would there be things that were important that you meant to do? Were there relationships that needed tending? What was your life's essential meaning? How would you want to be remembered?

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you need to do before you a Add to the list any things yo		the life you have led.
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18.		

The list above now becomes your to-do list. If you feel depressed and don't want to face the day, look back on this list to see if you have completed all the items you wrote. If not, get on it! After all, death is certain. The timing is not. You may not have any time to waste.

19. 20.

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Whom Do I Need to Forgive?

"In the end, the treasure of life is missed by those who hold on and gained by those who let go." -Lao Tzu

Forgiveness is a cornerstone of every religion.

Christians who recite the Lord's Prayer ask to be forgiven for their trespasses as they forgive others who trespass against them. The last words spoken by Christ were a plea to God to forgive the ones who killed him, for they "know not what they do." And in Matthew, the teaching was to be ready to forgive over and over again. "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" Matthew 18: 21-22.

Buddhists believe that hatred leaves a lasting negative effect on our karma and forgiveness has a wholesome effect. Buddha said, "You will not be punished for your anger. You will be punished by your anger. Holding onto anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else but you are the one who gets burned."

In Sikhism, forgiveness is viewed as the remedy to anger. "Where there is forgiveness there is God himself." Adi Granth, Shalok, Kabir, p. 1372

And Taoism teaches us to, "Show endurance in humiliation and bear no grudge." *Treatise on Response and Retribution.*

Judaism teaches its practitioners to ask for forgiveness when they have wronged another and sets aside the holiday of Yom Kippur as a day of atonement when Jews stop harmful behaviors, express regret for them, and repent. In the Jewish teachings a wronged person is religiously required to forgive anyone who sincerely apologizes. According to the Torah, it is forbidden to be obdurate and not allow yourself to be appeased when asked by an offender for forgiveness. "Who takes vengeance or bears a grudge acts like one who, having cut one hand while handling a knife, avenges himself by stabbing the other hand." *Talmud*, Nedarim 9.4

And in Islam, forgiveness is a prerequisite for genuine peace. Although the Qur'an makes some exceptions for violence in defense of faith, property, or life, it still teaches that forgiveness is the better course of action whenever possible. "O you who believe! Among your spouses and children there may be enemies for you, so beware of them. Yet, if you pardon, forbear, and forgive (their faults towards you and in worldly matters), then (know that) God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate." *Qur'an* 64.14

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Maybe, like me, you aren't a religious person and these scriptures have no power of persuasion for you on the importance of forgiveness. Perhaps science would be more persuasive.

The Harvard Medical school has spent more than fifty years studying how life choices make the difference in those who age well and lead happier, healthier lives well into their seventies, eighties and beyond. One of their surprising findings was that "Healing relationships are facilitated by a capacity for gratitude, for forgiveness, and for taking people inside. (By this metaphor I mean becoming eternally enriched by loving a particular person.)" The book, *Aging Well*, *Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life*, by George E. Vaillant, M.D., has become such a great teacher for Will and me that we regularly give it to friends and family.

And Dr. David R. Hawkins, in his book *Power vs. Force*, showed us that while grief has a level of consciousness of only 75, forgiveness, and acceptance take us to a level of 350, which is exponentially greater. It is only by rising to a level of forgiveness that we can hope to restore ourselves to a capacity for having love and joy in our lives again.

Finally, if neither religion nor science can convince you to forgive those who have wronged you, maybe you will do it for selfish reasons. You see, as long as we hold anger in our hearts against someone, they have power over us. It is only when we truly forgive, release and bless them that we are finally free of them.

I am not suggesting that you go find the person and tell them you forgive them. This is not a good idea. For me, forgiveness is an entirely private matter. It doesn't require the other person's involvement at all. They don't have to apologize or to even realize they have wronged us. If we wait around for an apology from them we may allow the wound to remain open forever. Forgiveness merely requires that you truly let go of the wrong and move on.

Which brings us to the question, whom do I need to forgive?

1. Think about the particular circumstances that cause you to be experiencing great loss in your life. Is there a person or persons whom you hold accountable or blame for what happened to you? If it is a career setback, perhaps you are angry with a work colleague. If you are grieving the loss of a marriage, perhaps you are still angry with your former spouse. If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, perhaps you are angry with someone or even your loved one for something that contributed to their death. On the lines below list every person or group that you need to forgive and briefly state what the offense was.

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1//				
Did you forget anyone? Think carefully a didn't put on it? How about yourself? All or failed to do that may have somehow grieving the loss of a marriage, do you for a loved one, do you hold yourself res	re you punishin made matters eel at fault for o	ing yourself for something that you did s worse? For example, if you are certain aspects of it? If it is the death		
2. On the lines below write anything you that you may also be grieving.	u did or failed t	to do with respect to your loss issue		
that you may also be giveving.				
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3. In the next part of this exercise we will do a guided meditation. As with our earlier meditation, remember the three key processes, "watch breath, soften belly, open heart." For the meditation we ask that you settle comfortably into your chair, close your eyes, let go of worrying about anything else in your life for a few minutes. Focus intently on the voice of the facilitator. Trust that the person leading the exercise knows what to do and will help you get to a satisfying outcome. Let go. Just let go. "Watch breath, soften belly, open heart."



4. After you have completed the guided meditation, stand up, walk around and feel the lightness of your being now that you have dropped some of the baggage that has been weighing you down. Release. Release.



A Helpful Tool

"The world belongs to those who let go."
-Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

And now I want to share a tool with you. One of our clients in the Maui Transitions Center called it the most important tool she'd learned to help her manage life's changes. I wrote about this tool initially in *Loving Allie, Transforming the Journey of Loss,* but it bears repeating and further explanation.

Here's how it works. Our brains are composed of basically two hemispheres. The left brain, which can be accessed through the right hand, is primarily the portion where our rational thought occurs. The left brain is essential in helping us make wise decisions, understand the logic of things, solve problems and speak. The right brain, which can be accessed through the left hand, is mostly the creative side. It is where our best expressions of art, music, inspiration and intuition occur. These two halves are connected in the middle by the corpus callosum. But the beauty of how our brains work is that both sides work together, not in isolation. It is when we have the best of both logic and creativity that we make the best decisions or express our most creative genius.

The majority of people are right handed, and the majority of time is spent in the left-brain world. That usually serves us very well. However, when life deals us a major blow, like a divorce, or loss of job, or the death of someone we love we need more help than either half of our brain provides. We need 100% of our capacity for thinking, analyzing, inventing, creating, and growing and changing to help us recover. Grief can reduce our functioning capacity to less than optimal levels. We may miss some of the opportunities to help unslump ourselves without the use of a tool like the one described below.

We have used it for years at the Maui Transitions Center and have witnessed clients making major breakthroughs from its insights. I hope it will be helpful to you as well.

1. In this exercise you will be using your left and right brain functions, and both your left and right hands. The right hand is the dominant hand for about 90% of the world. If this is true for you, you will begin writing with your right hand. If, however, you are among the 10% for whom the left hand is dominant, you will begin writing with your left hand.

A. Beginning with your dominant hand, write a letter to whomever or whatever you have lost. See them or it clearly in your mind's eye as you begin. In the letter tell them whatever you need to say in order to get everything off your chest, to clear the air. For example, if they died without goodbyes, this is the time to say them. If you are angry about some aspect of the death experience, tell them in your letter. Similarly, if it was a divorce situation, write to your ex-spouse about everything you suffered as a consequence of the failed relationship. If you are grieving the loss of a career you may want to write the letter

to your ex-boss or former partners. If you have unanswered questions, ask them. You can use the Notes pages in the back of your workbook to write your letter.

Don't rush this part of the exercise. Slow down enough to get it all on the paper. Then take a break. Walk away from the exercise and get some water to shake off what you just wrote.

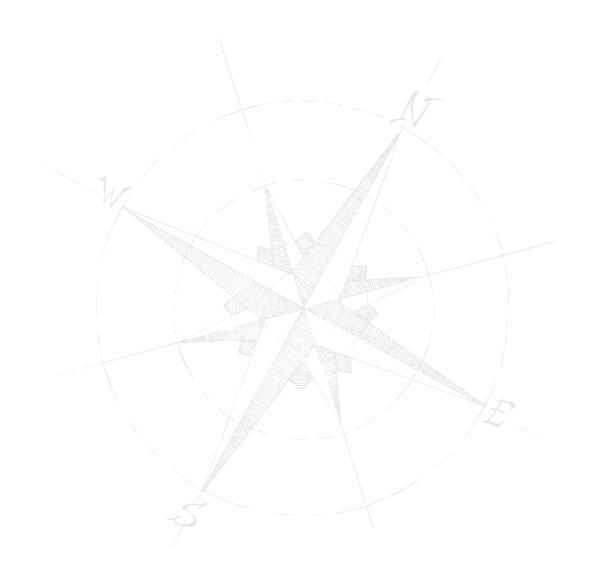
B. The second part of the exercise begins by changing hands. Move your pen or pencil to your non-dominant hand and now write a letter to yourself *from* the dearly departed, or the ex-spouse, or former employer. Let your mind wander to wherever it needs to go. Don't inhibit your thoughts. Writing with your non-dominant hand, respond to all the questions or concerns that were raised in the original letter. Write until you feel you have truly dealt with everything and if something new pops into your mind, write about that, too.

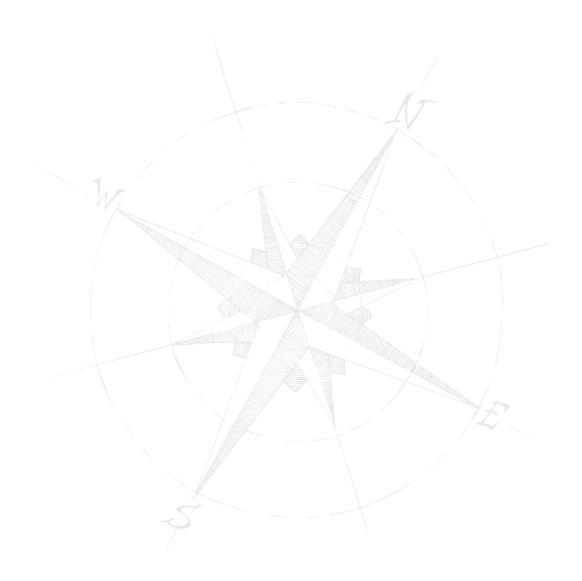
C. For the last part of this exercise it helps to have a partner. Pick someone you trust, who has been supportive of you on your journey. If you want the maximum benefit from the exercise the person you pick should be the same gender as the person you wrote to in your letter.

Now you will read your first letter aloud to your partner. Read it slowly and allow your words to sink in as you say them. Then, ask your partner to slowly read aloud your response. When you hear the words written by your non-dominant hand, it seems as if they are actually coming to you directly from the deceased or the ex. I have found this to be the case, particularly when your partner is the same gender as the loved one you are grieving.

Having witnessed these letters being written, and answered for more than twenty years, I can assure you that this exercise can have a powerful impact on your healing process.

Write Your Letter With Your Dominant Hand Here (Write what you need to get closure, including questions that weren't resolved)





Envisioning Your Own Transformation

"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be."
-Lao Tzu

TO THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TO THE		
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ge		Whatever you can do, or dre

In Greek mythology, the phoenix, a colorful bird about the size of an eagle, is said to be reborn by rising from the ashes of a previous existence. It is precisely the descent and the destruction that it brings that makes the second rising so meaningful. The initial challenge for anyone who is trying to transform a journey of loss into a better reality is to believe that they too, can rise again.

I grew up hearing the axiom: "Seeing is believing," which is basically a requirement that the proof precede the belief. But I have come to learn that the opposite is not only truer but also more powerful. "Believing is seeing," is what the Baptists call stepping out on faith. If you believe something is true then you will find evidence to support your belief.

Here's how it works. Years ago Volkswagen reintroduced the classic Beatle, a modern interpretation of a car I had once driven in college. Mine was bright orange and had about 200,000 miles on it and a hole in the floor. The new one was coming out just as Allie was turning 16 and we decided to buy one for her, sight unseen. It was to be the first new Beatle on Maui. And the moment we made the decision suddenly new Beatles began appearing everywhere we went. It was as if we had put out a vibration in the universe that said we believe again in this car and the universe promptly began delivering evidence to us of our belief.

If you believe that you can transform the loss you have experienced into something that is positive and empowering in your life, then you will also begin to see the proof that you can do it. Your level of consciousness will rise to vibrations of hopefulness and optimism, and you will attract other hopeful and optimistic people who will match your vibration and help give you what you want.

Believing in your own personal power of transformation is the first step. If you believe, you will see the proof of your beliefs almost everywhere you go. And if you hold that belief long enough, you too, will rise from the ashes, like the phoenix.

Legend has it that in the late Fifteenth Century a Japanese shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimasa sent a damaged Chinese tea bowl back to China to be repaired. The repairs were done with ugly metal staples. The belief is that this prompted Japanese craftsmen to devise a better, more aesthetic means of restoring precious damaged pottery and lacquer ware. Thus was born, Kintsugi, the Japanese art of fixing broken pottery with a resin mixed with gold, silver or platinum.

Tied to the practice was a philosophy that breakage and repair of an object are not things to be covered up or disguised, rather they are part of the object's history and add to its beauty and depth of meaning. The Japanese embraced the flawed and broken aspects of pottery in the same way that they accepted change and fate as merely aspects of the human experience, to which we are all susceptible.

As you continue your journey of transformation of loss, may you embrace the brokenness of your own spirit as well as the scars that show you have healed, and may you come to see that your beauty as a loving spirit has only deepened because of the brokenness you have endured. Like the golden repairs of Japanese pottery may you come to celebrate and honor the times when you were shattered by loss and to know that you too radiate a light that can help heal others. Not only are you stronger in your broken places, but you are more beautiful as well.

Honor the journey.

The Loving Spirit Pay it Forward Fund

Some of you may feel that you would like to sponsor the attendance of a participant at a future Loving Spirit Workshop. In fact, such a generous gift (\$125.00) might be part of how you decide to transform the loss you have suffered into something that can result in something good happening in the world.

If you would like to pay it forward in this manner, just make your check payable to Loving Spirit, Inc.

Others may choose to donate an entire workshop (\$6,000.00) in memory of a loved one. If so, please speak with any of our facilitation team members about your gift.

Of course, if you choose, your donation can be completely anonymous. But, with your express permission, I would like to list you in the third book, "Those We Love, Lessons from the Transformational Journey of Loss," as an example of those who used their generous gifts to help make it possible for others to attend these workshops. Please consider allowing us to thank you publicly for the gift, as your good works may be the inspiration that others need to pay it forward as well.

Donations in any amount will be gratefully accepted. They are also tax deductible as gifts to a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization.



A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.

Buddha

Suggested Reading

Each of the books listed below is an outstanding resource for recovering from grief or other major loss.

Bridges, William, Managing Transitions, Making the Most of Change, Addison Wesley, Reading, 1991.

Cain, Susan, Quiet, The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, Crown Publishers, 2012

Emoto, Masaru, The Hidden Messages in Water, Simon & Schuster, 2004.

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James, John W., and Freidman, Russell, *The Grief Recovery Handbook,* Harper Collins, New York, 1998.

Katie, Bryon, with Mitchell, Stephen, *Loving What Is, Four Questions That Can Change Your Life*, Three Rivers Press, New York, 2002.

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Rinpoche, Sogyal, The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, Harper San Francisco, 1994.

Tolle, Eckhart, Stillness Speaks, New World Library, Novato, 2003.

Vaillant, George E., M.D., *Aging Well, Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life, from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development,* Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 2002.

Volkan, Vamik, M.D., and Zintl, Elizabeth, *Life After Loss, the Lessons of Grief,* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1993.

Weiss, Brian L., M.D., Many Lives, Many Masters, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1988.

Weiss, Brian L., M.D., and Weiss, Amy E., LCSW, *Miracles Happen, the Transformational Healing Power of Past-Life Memories,* Harper One, New York, 20

About the Author

Dayle E. Spencer is best known for having been the founding Director of the Conflict Resolution Programs at the Carter Center of Emory University. She worked with former President Jimmy Carter for almost ten years to develop his approaches to negotiating and mediating international conflicts, including civil wars. Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for these efforts.

Ms. Spencer is a lawyer/negotiator who has organized negotiations between numerous governments and revolutionary leaders in civil war situations, including Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Front, and Liberia and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. She is one of the few Americans to have negotiated with the government of North Korea and was instrumental in arranging for peace initiative undertaken by President Carter in that region. Her work in conflict resolution has taken her to over fifty countries on five continents where she has had hands-on involvement in myriad issues.

Prior to her pioneering work at the Carter Center, she served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama and was also law clerk to Chief Judge John R. Brown, of the Fifth US Circuit Court of Appeals in Houston, Texas.

She and her husband, Will, are founders and principals in the Spencer Legacy Group, Inc., which provides conflict resolution services and advice to high net worth families.

www.spencerlegacygroup.com. They have also enjoyed a successful business consulting practice and led the Maui Transitions Center, where they taught clients how to manage personal and professional change.

Dayle has been a frequent commentator on national news broadcasts, published in academic journals as well as authored a nationally syndicated news series on human rights in South Africa, and has tried approximately 100 jury trials in federal district court.

She is the author of Loving Allie, Transforming the Journey of Loss, and Loving Spirit, Selfhelp for the Journey of Loss (2015). Additionally, she is the President of Loving Spirit, Inc., a national non-profit that is changing the way we think about, prepare for and respond to grief and loss. www.lovingspirit.info.