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H.O.P.E. Helping Overcome,
Providing Encouragement

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H.O.P.E.

Helping Overcome, Providing Encouragement

Dear Friends,

Winston Churchill famously said: "Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty . . . never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

Of course, he was encouraging the people of England during World War II when the enemy was Germany.

His words can also apply to all those facing bereavement. The "enemy" is grief and it can appear to be an overwhelming mighty force.

In order to tap into the enormous emotional, physical and spiritual energy necessary to continue on and not give in or give up, it can help to affirm faith in yourself with these kinds of statements:

- ✓ I believe I have the strength to see this through.
- ✓ I believe I have the wisdom to deal with the many changes.
- ✓ I believe I am being guided by a higher power.
- ✓ I believe I am capable of rebuilding a new life for myself.
- ✓ I believe I am able to learn and grow through this experience.
- ✓ I believe I can choose to focus on what is left not only upon what is gone.
- ✓ I believe I can find ways to be more grounded and centered.
- ✓ I believe I have the ability to create my life anew each day.
- ✓ I believe I can do whatever it takes to manage the pain of loss.
- ✓ I believe I can create meaning out of my loss.

As you move through grief keep in mind this advice from Rabbi Nachman of Breslov: Always look for the good in yourself. Focus on that good, highlight it...

GOOD HEALTH EASES STRESS

The death of a loved one and the ensuing grief and bereavement are stressful. Some people, when stressed out, engage in unhealthy habits. Others, move in the direction of healthy patterns. Good health is always a choice and when that choice is a wise one, the stress of grieving is eased considerably.

Here are some unhealthy ways of coping with stress.
Avoid them:

- **Smoking**
- **Drinking alcohol**
- **Using drugs**
- **Overeating**
- **Self-isolation**
- **Blaming**
- **Feeling like a victim**
- **Indulging in self-pity**

Here are some healthy ways of coping with stress.
Embrace them:

- **Exercising**
- **Meditating**
- **Practicing good nutrition**
- **Nurturing your spiritual side**
- **Tapping in to the power of humor**
- **Connecting with others**
- **Practicing kindness and compassion**
- **Expressing gratitude**

TIPS FOR NUDGING YOURSELF FORWARD

While you can't change the past, you can look at the experience differently. It can help nudge you forward on the journey. Here's how.

1. Make the choice. Choose life. Choose to accept reality. Choose to stop dwelling on what is gone and begin to see the new life emerging. Say to yourself, "I know this is hard but I choose to move forward."

2. Begin to contain your grief. Rather than allow it to consume most of your waking thoughts, consider scheduling blocks of "grieving time." This could be half an hour, twice a day. Remember the words of Kahlil Gibran: "When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you will see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

3. Modify your thinking. When you find yourself thinking "I'll never be happy again" stop that thought. Tell yourself it's not the truth and replace it with this: "There's no reason why I can't be happy again and have a good future with new people and new experiences." Writer Mary Engelbreit offers this reminder: "If you don't like something change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it."

4. Live in the present. The most effective way to break free from living in the past is by focusing on the present. Every morning when you wake up remind yourself that the new day is a gift. Take advantage of it. Make the most of it. "Don't let the past steal your present" is the advice of Cherralea Morgen.

5. Clarify your goals. Besides the desire to complete the grieving process, establish and clarify other goals for yourself such as: making new friends; getting some training; pursuing additional education; re-entering the work force. "If you don't know where you are going, how can you expect to get there?" asks Basil S. Walsh.

YOU CAN GROW THROUGH GRIEF . . .

"If you're a person struggling with grief right now, hang in there! There's a brighter future for you, full of life and hope... Bear in mind, too, that the pain of grief is usually worst right before we make progress in our grief work. As the old saying goes, 'It's always darkest just before the dawn.' So if you find yourself in a particularly dark time right now, perhaps it means some real progress is just around the corner. Keep looking for that light! The future is bright in spite of the present gloom; hang on to that truth!"

~ Dr. Bill Flatt in *Growing Through Grief* ~

GUIDING CHILDREN THROUGH BEREAVEMENT

On September 11, 2001, David Rathkey died as a result of the tragic terrorist attacks, while he was at work at the World Trade Center. His wife – Julia Wilcox Rathkey – became a widow and the single parent of three children. Ms. Wilcox Rathkey has since published an exceptional book titled *What Children Need When they Grieve*. Here are some suggestions she offers to parents, grandparents and other important adults in a child's life to help guide children through the grieving process:

- Say "I love you" as many times a day as you are able and show your love with actions.
- Hug your child.
- Listen to your child.
- Praise your child.
- At bedtime, give a child at least five or ten minutes of your undivided attention.

- Let your child know you are there for him/her, and be sincere in your words.
- Combine routine with love by developing a new evening ritual when putting your child to bed or saying good night. A back rub, a story, or reciting prayers can be very soothing.
- If a child upsets you with bad behavior, reprimand the behavior and not the child. Let the child know you love him/her but not the behavior.
- Loving a child means being a parent and helping a child through right and wrong. Don't use grief as an excuse for forgiving or allowing bad behavior.
- Children may need love in different ways. Some children may need comforting bedtime conversation, some may need to be held, and others might need constant attention and reassurance.
- Don't be overprotective. Guarding your child from all the outside elements is doing that child a disservice. A child needs to heal, and healing involves pain.
- Grief causes insecurity. Loving a child will help that child to regain some security.

3 WAYS TO BOOST HAPPINESS

Research from my laboratory shows that there are three strategies in particular that are effective at boosting happiness.

Number one is counting your blessings, expressing gratitude to others, appreciating what you have.

The second strategy is to practice acts of kindness, generosity, philanthropy, giving the gift of your time and resources.

The third strategy is training your mind to practice optimistic thinking, to see the glass as half full.

~ Professor Sonja Lyubomirsky ~

LEARN FROM A MISTAKE AND THEN MOVE ON

Nothing can cast more gloom over our days than failure. Yet, every life has its ups and downs. When you make a mistake or experience a failure, learn the lesson using it to establish a new chapter in your life. Don't get bogged down with regrets.

That is a lesson imparted by Wally Amos who established the gourmet cookie line Famous Amos in 1975. By 1989 at age 53, financial problems caused him to lose his company.

Today he says: "Whatever happens, learn from it and move on. Too often, we wish we had handled things differently. We start replaying in our heads all the things we should have done. Until you accept what has happened and move beyond it, you can't make things different."

Wally Amos followed his advice and moved forward becoming a professional inspirational speaker making \$10,000 per speech. In addition, he has authored five books. The lesson: don't let a failure, a mistake a setback, ruin your day and your life.

