



## **MEN'S GRIEF....**

Men and women tend to grieve in different ways. Society has generally expected that men fulfill a protector/provider role, and that women fulfill a nurturer/caretaker role. There are lots of theories and arguments about whether these roles are good or bad, where they came from and whether they can or should be changed. What we do know for sure is that they continue to have a strong influence on our behavior and how we experience and respond to our emotions. How men and women grieve is significantly linked to these roles and the different expectations society has of us. The way in which men deal with loss and grief can best be understood by thinking about their expected role in society. Despite many changes in our society, it is still part of a man's role to do nearly all of the dangerous, unhealthy and life threatening work. For example, 95% of deaths and permanent disabilities from workplace injuries are male. Men are generally expected to protect their wives, children and the community

### **How do men's role affect how they experience and respond to their emotions and grief? Men:**

- \*May tend not to be as self caring emotionally as women.
- \*Often do not want to be seen to care too much about their own emotional pain.
- \*May have to connect more consciously with their emotions or grief than women need to do.
- \*Are often reliant on women for a sense of emotional stability.
- \*May need privacy and a sense of being personally safe before they can face their emotions.
- \*May exhibit and express more anger than women appear to do.
- \*Will likely not respond favorably to be expected to be more public or obvious in their emotions than they feel comfortable with.
- \*May tend to move in and out of their grief issues and emotions more than women appear to do.
- \*Can often achieve the same progress in grieving through ritual activities (such as doing or making something) as women, who may talk and cry out their grief.
- \*May be more comfortable expressing their grief through action and activity (including thinking things through).

**Editor's Note:** I have also noticed that some men will very early on get involved in suicide prevention as a coping method for their grief. This is probably an effort to fix the lack of suicide awareness and help prevent suicide deaths in other families.

### **How can grieving men best help themselves?**

- \*By showing courage in allowing themselves to experience the painful emotions of grief (rather than pushing them underground).
- \*By communicating clearly to others their need to be alone and to deal with their feelings in private.
- \*By not shutting others out, but keeping communication open in their relationships.
- \*By tuning into their bodies (because feelings that have built up can often be discovered there and released into experience).
- \*By consciously using rituals and activity through which to express and work their grief.
- \*By slowing down and making time for being reflective and to connect with their grief (making time to grieve in order for there to be time to heal).
- \*By staying close to reliable friends and talking to them.
- \*By making time to garden or be out in the natural environment.
- \*By keeping up good health through moderate exercise, good food and plenty of sleep and not consuming too much alcohol.

*reprinted from The Bereaved Parent Support Group Newsletter, Tustin, California, July 2006*

## **TWO NEW BOOKS**

*From Suicide to Serenity, One Survivor's Story*, by Debbie Wilson, published by Booklocker.com Inc .2007  
Debbie's husband of 14 years died by suicide in August 1994. This is a very personal look into one survivor's journey through the torment in the aftermath of his death. This tragedy compelled her to start a search for a personal relationship with the true God, obtain answers to the hard questions surrounding a suicide death, find meaning in the loss and finally discover wholeness and purpose for her life.

*Crossing 13, Memoir of a Father's Suicide*, by Carrie Stark Hugus, published by Affirm Publications, LLC 2008  
Carrie's father died October 13, 1979 when Carrie was 13. years old. This is a courageous account of a thirteen year old girl whose life is instantly altered upon finding her father dead from suicide. As she rides the emotional waves of shock, guilt, confusion, shame and the obsession with WHY, she begins to embrace her new normal life. Through each struggle, you share her journey of complicated grief in the aftermath of a sudden loss. This story will give you insight as to what it takes for a teenager to survive the suicide death of a parent and the compassion to understand and support them. This true story should compel us to put more effort into providing information and compassionate support to families with the understanding that suicide has a tremendous impact on everyone.

## A Time to Weep

by Raymond F. Rogers, Greensboro, NC

I had intended to be brave  
 But anguish, like a tidal wave,  
 Swept over me and drenched my soul in sorrow,  
 I pray for strength tomorrow  
 But, tonight, I am undone  
 For someone very dear is gone!

The usual stabilizing guide, reason,  
 Has been swept aside, and I am left  
 Bereft of all but feeling.  
 I cannot speak my prayer, but it is there.  
 And God, who knows my heart, will see the tear  
 And do the healing.

Please give me leave to now indulge my grief  
 While closeted with God.  
 I do not seek relief; for this  
 Which He has sent me,  
 May help me better understand Gethsemane -  
 I'm chastened by the memory!

Is God, this moment,  
 Proffering the fellowship of suffering?  
 If so, then let it be:  
 I'll gladly taste the bitter cup that He now  
 offers me.  
 Still, in this hour, a vigil I must keep:  
 This must be my appointed time to weep.  
*reprinted from Bereavement Magazine,*  
*Sept/Oct 1994*

## Forgive me, My Son

Forgive me if I do not cry  
 The day you die  
 The simplest reason that I know is  
 Fathers are not supposed to cry.

I figured you would expect me  
 To be strong  
 To act the way I would have taught you  
 Forgive me, my son, if I do not cry  
 The day you die....  
 Forgive me if I do.

## Strength

by Terry Jago, TCF, Regina Canada

In the early days of my grief,  
 a tear would well up in my eyes,  
 a lump would form in my throat,  
 but you would not know -  
 I would hide it,  
 And I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief,  
 I would look ahead and see that wall  
 that I had attempted to go around  
 as an ever-present reminder of a wall yet  
 unscaled.  
 Yet I did not attempt to scale it for the  
 strong will survive -  
 And I am strong.

In the later days of my grief,  
 I learned to climb over that wall -  
 step by step -  
 Remembering, crying, grieving.  
 And the tears flowed steadily  
 as I painstakingly went over.  
 The way was long, but I did make it,  
 For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,  
 a tear will well up in my eyes,  
 a lump will form in my throat,  
 but I will let that tear fall -  
 and you will see it.  
 Through it you will see  
 That I still hurt and I care,  
 For I am strong.

