

The ministry of Wings is: *Honoring the Past and Rebuilding the Future.*

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Please read our ELetter and pass it on!

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Wings is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to grief awareness through education. We welcome your donations, in any amount, to support the ministry of Wings.

The following is an introductory article to the readers of our ELetter. On April 14-15, 2011, Patrick Dean will be our guest speaker at our Spring Seminars, in Wausau, WI. He is the Director of the Wisconsin Grief Education Center in Milwaukee, WI. I'd like you to know more about him and consider coming to our seminars this spring.

The Necessary Work of Grief

Patrick Vernon Dean, Director, WI Grief Education Center, www.griefwork.com

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all of you who are on a personal journey through the wilderness of your grief.

My name is Patrick Dean, and together with my friends Nan and Gary Zastrow, we'd like to walk this journey through grief together with you. We won't have all the answers to the many challenges that grief can bring, but we do promise to be faithful companions who will walk with you and offer our support and guidance as you learn more about the necessary work of your grief.

I am a former classroom teacher who wanted to learn more about how to help kids in the classroom who were learning to live again after someone they loved had died. What started out as a quest for knowledge on my part turned into a fulltime effort to support bereaved people of all ages by providing education about the experience of grief. Grief brings many challenges which can be seen as "un-asked for change" in our lives. I have spent the last twenty-three years working with thousands of people, just like yourself, people struggling to make sense of their grief and wondering and wandering through the often confusing and chaotic wilderness of their grief.

I have learned much from my fellow travelers. I have learned that grief is normal, natural, and even necessary. I have been taught by bereaved people such as you, your family, friends, and neighbors that grief is a universal human experience. We see it in all cultures everywhere around the world and right here in your own community of central Wisconsin.

No one is forever safe from the pain of loss that comes to all who have lived and loved another person or companion animal. Grief comes to the elderly, young, parents, spouses, siblings, friends, classmates and co-workers. What I have also learned is that grief is a unique human experience - as unique as the relationship you had with your loved one. You will never hear me say "I know just how you feel" because simply, I don't. A true companion that is present for you on your journey through grief offers a supportive ear and a hand to

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NAN ZASTROW
Co-Founder, Wings--A
Grief Education
Ministry

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Hope Is ...

"In a world of sadness and grief, hope is the spark of sanity that allows us to look at something differently and imagine the bright spot."
(Nan Zastrow)

Hope is a light in the darkness. And on this frosty January morning I saw hope.

A family in our town lost their house to a fire a few months ago. Everything in the house was destroyed including a car, camper and many priceless collectibles. The home was prominently located on a hillside near the highway among a cluster of trees—a pretty picture as you drove past. Nothing has happened since the fire in late fall except that the walls and remains of the house were flattened and the debris hauled away. Today, in the early darkness of morning as I drove by, I saw a Christmas tree shining brightly through the darkness in the spot where the house once stood. To me, it was a vision of hope—for the possibility of things yet to come. Awesome!

Hope is often hard to define. When we grieve, we hope. But what is it we hope for?

How do you define hope? It might be something as simple as saying "hope is a wish or a desire of something I'd like to happen." For most of us "hope" is intangible and sometimes quite elusive. I believe the definition of hope varies from one person to another.

Hope is "faith" based. Like faith it is a "belief", a strong intuition or feeling; a conviction or statement of fact. It's a belief in something unseen, unpredictable. Hope is "something" that keeps us going when we feel lost, alone, disadvantaged, or deprived. Hope allows us to move forward when there is no guarantee of success.

Hope captures the imagination and energy of everyone....everywhere. We exist for moments of

hope with plausible outcomes. We can all take one more step when we believe that the thing we hope for is attainable.

For the bereaved, hope is something less complicated...it is basic and often a matter of survival.

I've written a lot of articles and programs about hope. But now I'd like to hear from you. I'm working on a new survey on what hope means to the bereaved. Please email me with your thoughts about this question. I will incorporate your thoughts into my article that I've already begun for the July issue of Grief Digest. I've come up with 10 thoughts of what hope is to the bereaved and want to see if your ideas mirror mine.

If you are a bereaved person, what is it that you hope for...in your journey through grief?

Examples: (1) just to survive or get through this (2) that my loved one didn't suffer (3) that my loved one is okay.

Email your thoughts to: wings1@charter.net.

Later this spring, I will be releasing a book titled: Hitch Your Hope to a Star. This is a gift book with articles offering Hope during grief. If you are grieving, it will offer you messages of hope. If you wish to give the book as a gift to someone who is grieving, it will give them healing words and hopeful messages of hope.

Hope is the focus of Wings' grief ministry. We can't take away the pain, but we can companion those who hurt and offer hope during the journey. Look for the announcement. And, we "hope" that you will support our grief ministry by purchasing this latest writing from Wings! Please also send your thoughts on what "hope is" to the bereaved.

The Marbles

An inspirational story

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes.

Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

'Hello Barry, how are you today?'

'H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas. They sure look good.'

'They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?'

'Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time.'

'Good. Anything I can help you with?'

'No, Sir. Jus' admirin' th em peas.'

'Would you like to take some home?' asked Mr. Miller.

'No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with.'

'Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?'

'All I got's my prize marble here.'

'Is that right? Let me see it' said Miller.

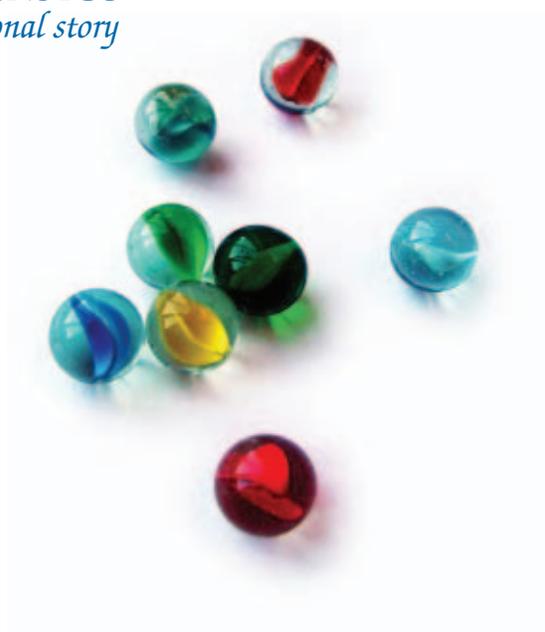
'Here 'tis. She's a dandy.'

'I can see that. Hmm mmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?' the store owner asked.

'Not zackley but almost.'

'Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble,' Mr. Miller told the boy.

'Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller.'



Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me.

With a smile she said, 'There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever.'

When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store.'

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

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The Marbles

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Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts...all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket.

Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about

her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

'Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about.

They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size....they came to pay their debt.'

'We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world,' she confided, 'but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho.'

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

I Asked God

by Unknown

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve,
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey;
I asked for health, that I might do greater things,
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things;
I asked for riches, that I might be happy,
I was given poverty, that I might be wise;
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of man,
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God;
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life,
I was given life, that I might enjoy things;
I got nothing that I asked for - but everything I had hoped for,
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered,
I am among all men, most richly blessed.

Grief Tip



A Fresh Start



The New Year can bring a feeling of a fresh start after loss. It's a time to make an effort to heal your grief going forward. Think about the kind of life you want to be living and the kind of people you want to be around you. Make an effort to surround yourself with hope by joining a support or education group. Engage in activity. It can change you from being lonely to being willing to become social again. Now is the time to begin again.

Necessary Work ...

Continued from page 1

hold, but won't pretend to have all of the answers to your good questions. It is in doing the work of your grief (what I refer to as "griefwork") that you allow others to be supportive companions, listening to your stories and challenges and triumphs on this twisting road to healing. When lost in the wilderness of feelings of grief, a wise companion is one who walks with you, side-by-side, so that you may feel less fear and concern that you are all alone.

In my seminars in Wausau in April, I will be making available knowledge and support learned over many years from people just like you - good teachers who have taught me much about life, love, loss, and the capacity of the human spirit to move towards healing and embrace a new relationship with a loved one has died.

I want to personally invite you to join me in April. I know it takes courage to come to this kind of presentation, but I promise you will be warmly received and your needs respected.

I am a nature photographer when I'm not working with the bereaved, and you may find the best part of gathering with other bereaved people at our presentation is the beautiful photographic images of nature that serve as a backdrop for our conversation about grief, healing, and life.

There will be time for questions after the presentation, but you will never be asked to participate or talk if that is not comfortable for you. This seminar is designed to be a safe places for you and your emotions as well as supportive and educational opportunities for you to learn about this most important challenge to your way your life going forward.

Even with support, griefwork is hard work, make no mistake about that. But you need not feel all alone. There are those who will extend a hand to you as caring companions who have also had their own grief challenges. ALL are welcome. Bring a friend, neighbor, or family member. Just as grief is a universal human experience, so too is healing. It is a myth that "time heals all wounds." One can wait forever if that is what they are constantly told. Through this presentation, I will offer helping hands to heal hearts and hurts for those of you willing to do the griefwork that the death of your loved one demands. Using the time of bereavement to engage in the work of your grief, is what will determine the course and path to successfully navigate your unique journey through this experience of loss and life.



Eulogy

The old man had died. A wonderful funeral was in progress and the country preacher talked at length of the good traits of the deceased, what an honest man he was, and what a loving husband and kind father he was.

Finally, the widow leaned over and whispered to one of her children, "Go up there and take a look in the coffin and see if that's your pa."

New Hope Mission by Wings

In December, Wings began a new mission to spread HOPE to those who grieve as well as those who are instrumental in helping other finds hope. Wings now has a HOPE coin.

For 2 years, Wings followed a ministry of hope through the 12 Gifts of Hope program and its How A Fortune Cookie Can Heal Grief programs. A book by the same name outlines the fantastic journey of helping people be aware of those trying to help them. We documented inspiring stories from those who let us know how they discovered a Gift of Hope in the book. Also the project came with a wonderful story about a fortune cookie.

Now the mission continues. This time through a different strategy, we are offering the Hope coin. You can give and receive hope by passing on this tangible message. A single coin can be sent to you.....if you request one via email at wings1@charter.net. Or you can order a set of coins and begin your own string of hope in your community.

Be prepared. Carry a Hope coin in your pocket or purse so you can deliver it at the most appropriate time. Hope coins are perfect for support groups and grief work therapy for counselors, clergy, etc. For more information, visit our website.

Furthermore, we encourage you to register your HOPE coin at our website so we can see how far hope can travel. If you want us to register it for you, send us an email with your name, city/state. Please be counted by registering your coin.

We've already begun to see the spark of hope this mission gives. We've had some great emails of support and thanks with personal stories, but we want to hear more. Each issue, we'll bring you a tip of how to use your hope coin.

**Order your Hope Coin today,
via email. Invoice will be sent for packages.**

**Package of 6 HOPE coins - \$5.00
Single HOPE coin, no charge**

*All proceeds go to support the ministry of
Wings-a Grief Education Ministry.*



Tip: How to Use the Hope Coin

Tuck a Hope coin in a sympathy card when you send it or leave it at a visitation. Write a simple note such as: "Wishing you brighter days filled with Hope. Know that we care, and pass it on."

A blue rectangular box containing the Facebook logo and the text "Join Us!"

Wings Page on Facebook

Wings has entered the social media network. We now have a Facebook page.

Visit us for current information on events, groups, programs, articles, surveys, and more.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Wings-a-Grief-Education-Ministry/172129829474003>

Other ways to contact Wings:

Email: wings1@charter.net

Web: www.wingsgrief.org

Mail: P. O. Box 1051

Wausau, WI 54402-1051

HEALING GRIEF Education Programs

HEALING GRIEF FROM THE INSIDE OUT

A Six-Week Series: Education and Support for Grief, Loss and Transition

This series is about people facing one of life's greatest challenges—the loss of a loved one. It can be a meaningful experience. It's not about people escaping the sorrow of grief, but rather about understanding the experience and finding meaning in it. This series offers information that can validate your emotions and answer puzzling questions. Learn how grief may affect you physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Understand the "surprises" of grief and learn why you may grieve differently. In a safe environment for adults, share feelings, ask questions, and find healthy strategies to heal the pain. Pre-registration recommended. Call 715-845-4159.

2011 Spring Series:

Meets Tuesdays, February 15, 22
and March 1, 8, 15, 22

2011 Fall Series:

Meets Tuesdays, September 13, 20, 27,
and October 4, 11, 18

Facilitators: Nan & Gary Zastrow

Time: 6:30—8:00 p.m. No Charge. | Place: Conference Room A-1, Quality Services, Aspirus Wausau Hospital

14TH ANNUAL UNDERSTANDING GRIEF SPRING CONFERENCE

Our Presenter: Patrick Dean, Director, Wisconsin Grief Education Center

A Community Seminar for the Bereaved | *Grief, Mourning, and Healing—How to avoid getting stuck*
Date: April 14, 2011 | Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm | The Plaza, Wausau, WI

A Seminar for Professionals and the Bereaved | *Getting Unstuck: What's Love Got to Do With It?*
Date: April 15, 2011 | Time: 9:00 am – Noon | The Plaza, Wausau, WI

Choose to attend one or both seminars to learn what helps the bereaved in their important struggles with their necessary grief. Understand the difference between trauma/sudden loss and anticipated loss. Grief experiences are critically different. Details of the seminars are available at our website. CEUs are available for professional licenses.

FINDING THE OTHER SIDE OF SADNESS—MOVING FROM GRIEF TO MOURNING

Many of us grieve, but not all of us mourn. What is the difference? How do we get unstuck from our feelings of intense grief and move towards a state of "new normal"? It begins with grief work. Family and friends may have considered your grief as "finished", but you may feel uncertain about facing life without your loved one. This four-week series is designed for those who feel they are ready to move forward in their grief. It offers strategies for transforming your grief by actively participating in activities that encourage grief work, building a new identity, and making positive choices for healing.

Meets Tuesdays: May 24, 31 and June 7, 14

Facilitators: Nan & Gary Zastrow Call: 715-845-4159

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m. No Charge. Group size is limited. Pre-registration required.

Place: Conference Room A-1, Quality Services, Aspirus Wausau Hospital

15TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY REMEMBRANCE PROGRAM

When the Holidays Hurt—for the Bereaved

Each year, a new theme-based program is presented with fresh ideas and personal insight about coping with grief during the holidays. When someone loved dies, the holidays can be a source of anxiety and added grief. Join us for this motivational program that helps families cope by giving them options and suggestions for managing their traditions and emotions. Discover ideas for ritual, celebration, and remembrance.

Presented by: Nan & Gary Zastrow

Tuesday, December 6, 2011 | Time: 7—9 p.m. | Place: The Rose Garden

For more information on any of these programs, contact Nan or Gary Zastrow at 715-845-4159, Wings—a Grief Education Ministry or visit our website www.wingsgrief.org or email wings1@charter.net.

Groups facilitated by: Nan & Gary Zastrow, Certified Grief Educators. Pre-registration recommended.

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

How a FORTUNE COOKIE can HEAL GRIEF

How to Find Twelve Gifts Of Hope

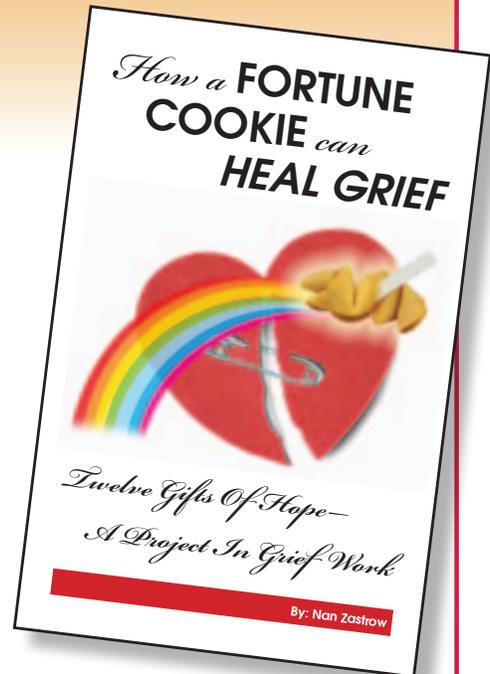
"In a world of sadness and grief, hope is the spark of sanity that allows us to look at something differently and imagine the bright spot."

Did you ever think that a fortune cookie could offer a profound message of comfort, happiness, and peace in a life stressed by grief? Nan uses the simple fortune cookie to weave a modern parable of life and teach the value of attitude and choice in grief work. The fortune cookie demonstrates the concept of HOPE.

Sometimes we are so consumed by our grief that we fail to recognize hope happening in our lives and waiting to be discovered. This book teaches us not to dismiss the small acts of kindness that help us accept that though life may not be the same, it can be good again. Discover what you might be missing!

Nan challenged individuals to participate in a project using the fortune cookie as the "tool." The project offered **Twelve Gifts of Hope** that the bereaved can either receive from others or give to themselves. This book documents the proven results. Each of the Twelve Gifts of Hope is outlined in detail with suggestions that will appeal to everyone as they discover the power to heal their won grief.

You will also find alternate suggestions for creating a similar project or you can just experience the peace and joy that others received from their discovery. You do not need to create a project to use the **Twelve Gifts of Hope** checklist to create personal enthusiasm. You will embrace countless possibilities for finding hope in the suggestions and personal stories; and you will be inspired to always look for the bright spot.



by Nan Zastrow

\$9.95

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

Available from:

- www.centeringcorporation.org
1-866-218-0101
- **Wings** - a Grief Education Ministry
Wingsgrief.org • Email: wings1@charter.net