

H.O.P.E.

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H.O.P.E.

Helping Overcome and Provide Encouragement

Dear friends,

Born to an unwed mother during World War II, Max was sent into the foster home system in rural Minnesota. His mother, a teenager from a poor family, had every intention of taking him back when she finally married. Thus she refused consent for him to be adopted. That decision complicated young Max's life. Unavailable for adoption by a stable family, his value in a foster home was as a child farm laborer.

The foster families into which he was placed were often emotionally and physically abusive. From time to time his mother would visit promising him a "real" family, but the promise was never fulfilled. Max's single source of pleasure was reading, something encouraged by his sympathetic 2nd grade teacher. Books offered him emotional release and escape from the harsh conditions of his young life. In them he saw the possibilities of a better life and a larger world than that of rural Minnesota.

At age 11, one of his books delivered Max an insight, one which would positively transform and shape his life permanently. In school he was required to read *King Arthur and The Knights of the Round Table*. He learned that Arthur's kingdom was a



wonderful world in which people intended to be honorable, trustworthy and good. In Arthur's kingdom people were kind and compassionate to each other.

"Arthur had created such a happy place. I fell in love with his kingdom," Max recalls.

Then, his epiphany enlarged as he thought to himself: "I can do this. I will lead my life as King Arthur led his. I had little in the way of value systems at that time and this seemed like such an ideal world." Max promised himself never to stray from King Arthur's code and model.

Over time he read and re-read the book, committing parts of it to memory. Today Max is a senior vice-president of a major cooperation. In that capacity, he continues to infuse his work environment with King Arthur's humanism. Max is cited by authors Rick Foster

and Greg Hicks in their book, *How We Choose To Be Happy*. They say that key to Max's happiness in life was his "intention" to move into happiness rather than depression and despair. That choice to be happy was pivotal for Max, as it is for all people, including those who are deeply grieving a loss.

Like Max, whose life was difficult, those who have experienced the loss of a loved one can and must find points of hope and happiness in order to adjust, adapt and move forward. Those points of hope and happiness can be encountered in many places: through the supportive words of a colleague, through the reading of books,

through a touching poem,

through the unconditional love of a friend.

Even though you are grieving the loss of someone you loved, today make it your goal to experience a point of hope and happiness. Remember this wisdom from Albert Einstein: "In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity."



EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE GRIEVING

One of the most effective ways of better managing the time of bereavement is via information. Read all you can about grief because the knowledge gained will be empowering for you. Here are some exceptional books to consider.

Living With Loss, Healing With Hope

by Rabbi Earl A Grollman. (Beacon Press, 2000). Rabbi Grollman's goal with this book is to deal with the "anguish of losing a loved one, whether it is a spouse, a parent, a sibling, a child, a dear friend. And, his book is "also about life, healing and finding a way through your grief." He covers the many faces of mourning and concludes with a lengthy section on healing and recovering.

Grieving a Suicide: A Loved One's Search For Comfort, Answers and Hope by Albert Y. Hsu. (InterVarsity Press, 2002). The author, an editor at InterVarsity Press, has written an eloquent and personal book upon experiencing the suicide death of his father. Mr. Hsu tackles the complex issue of suicide with clarity and compassion. His chapter titled "Is Suicide The Unforgivable Sin" is noteworthy.

A Decembered Grief by Harold Ivan Smith. (Beacon Hill Press, 1999) This book is unique because it addresses the issue of managing the holidays while grieving. While others are being festive and joyful in December, that same month often magnifies sadness and loneliness for those who have lost a loved one. Dr. Smith offers practical tips for managing and even enjoying the holiday while grieving.

Grievers Ask: Answers To Questions About Death and Loss by Harold Ivan Smith. (Augsburg Fortress, 2004). This easy-to-read



book is presented in a question and answer format. There are 25 short chapters on specific questions which grievers all share. For a 200-page book it is remarkably comprehensive.

Getting To The Other Side of Grief: Overcoming The Loss of A Spouse by Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge, RN, Ed.D; and Robert C. De Vries,

D. Min., PhD. (Baker Books, 1998). The authors, one a nurse educator and the other a pastor and professor, both lost their spouses. As a result, many of their insights come from personal experience combined with their own academic training. The book begins on a positive, hopeful note titled "Choosing The Journey."

Healing Grief by Victor M. Parachin. (Chalice Press, 2001). In this brief book of 75 pages, I've covered the range of grief topics. Unlike most others, however, this one has a section titled "Especially For Men."

The Lord is My Shepherd: A Psalm For The Grieving by Victor M. Parachin. (Liguori Triumph Books, 1992) The 23rd Psalm has delivered comfort to grievers for thousands of years. In this book, I examine the 23rd Psalm, line by line making applications for those who are grieving the death of a loved one. Each short chapter concludes with a prayer, affirmations and a reflection for a bereaved person to consider.

BOOST ENERGY WITH THESE HEALTHY TIPS

Kenneth Cooper, MD, is a pioneer in the field of preventive medicine and physical fitness. The author of 18 books, including Regaining The Power of Youth at Any Age, Dr. Cooper offers several tips for boosting energy.

1. EXERCISE.

Dr. Cooper recommends at least 30 minutes of sustained activity five times a week. The best activities for most people tend to be: brisk walking, jogging, swimming, cycling and aerobic dance.

2. TAKE A MULTIVITAMIN.

Various clinical trials reveal that people who take a multivitamin had improved immunity against infectious diseases and more energy.

3. PREVENT DEHYDRATION.

Most people don't consumer enough water which leads to depleted energy, weakness, dizziness and headaches. Dr. Cooper recommends at least six, eight-ounce glasses of water daily and more on days you exercise. Add to this his warning against caffeinated beverages, such as coffee, tea, soda, etc. These initially boost energy, but the energy plunges when the stimulant wears off.

