

H.O.P.E.

Sent to you by

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H.O.P.E.

Helping Overcome and Provide Encouragement

Dear friends,

A man who suffered a very troubled youth and whose guidance counselor labeled him "most likely not to succeed," founded a highly successful brokerage firm. He was living a past-paced, luxurious life when it came to an abrupt halt. At age 31 he was convicted of fraud and spent three years in a federal prison.

While in prison he vowed to turn his life around. There he read more than 600 books to stimulate his mind and energize his will. Upon release, he lost 60 pounds, stopped smoking and quit gambling. He has

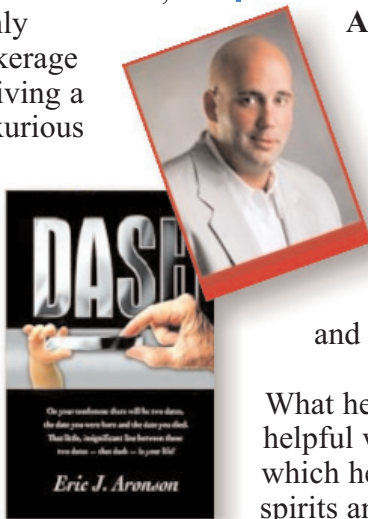
become an author, speaker, life coach and president of a small corporation devoted to helping others.

That man is **Eric Aronson**. In his book, "*Dash*," Mr. Aronson tells of being in prison and feeling quite hopeless. He wondered how he could survive the "ordeal of being away from everyone and everything I loved."

What he found tremendously helpful was an affirmation which he used to boost his spirits and keep hope alive. That affirmation contains a wonderful series of positive statements which can be utilized by all who feel imprisoned by grief. As this new year begins, read these affirmations and, like Mr. Aronson, you will find that

they can bring balance, perspective and hope to your life just now.

Things may not seem to be working out for me right now, but I know that I will make the best of the situation. I know that I will do everything that I can, one day at a time. I will get through this as a winner. I will not worry but rather look at what I am going through as a challenge: a time to develop patience and self-confidence and realize that I can change my attitude even if I can't change my circumstances. I am a survivor! I am going to handle this. I am going to find strength I didn't know I had. Soon enough, I will be on the other side, and I will look back on this time and draw strength and courage from the fact that even though the road was rocky, I made it through and carried on.



SHOULD CHILDREN ATTEND THE WAKE, FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE?

The child should be the main factor in making this decision. If the child wishes to attend, let him or her. However, prepare them by explaining what they will see and what will take place at the visitation or service.

Children have very limited experience with death, so it helps to explain what a funeral home is; what they will see there, i.e. a casket, a body, flowers. They need to know ahead of time that people may be crying and that crying is a natural expression of loss.

Be sure that the information you offer is age appropriate. Never force or coerce a child into attending a funeral.

It often helps to have another significant adult assigned to be by the child's side during the visitation or service. That way if you, as the parent, need to visit with others your child is not left alone.



LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH THE GAUNTLET OF GRIEF

Chris Dewelt, a professor in Joplin, Missouri, vividly remembers the phone call: “Mr. DeWelt, you need to come to the hospital. Your wife and family have been in an accident.” At the hospital he was told that his oldest son did not survive the accident. Since that time, Mr. Dewelt has written an article outlining what he and his wife, Carol, learned through the gauntlet of grief. They hope their insights can help others who are mourning. Here are some of the lessons they learned.

GRIEF COMES IN WAVES.

A helpful image for Mr. Dewelt for dealing with the intense pain was the realization that the pain itself ebbed and flowed. He pictured himself standing in the surf of the ocean and feeling the wave push against his leg. “I could choose to stand and resist the power of grief, or I could choose to lie down and let it flow over me, as it raced on past toward the shore. Grief will come, and it will go. The intense pain will subside. The waves will cleanse our souls and bring true healing.”

GRIEF CAN'T BE RUSHED.

Mr. Dewelt tells of a “comforter” who came to him while his family was still hospitalized and while the funeral for his son, Matt, had not yet taken place. The visitor pressured Mr. Dewelt to find “closure” for this “event.” “To the one who is in sorrow ‘closure’ sounds like dismissal, and that is the last thing you want to do when you are still dealing with what ‘good-bye’ means.”

EVENTS CAN TRIGGER GRIEVING.

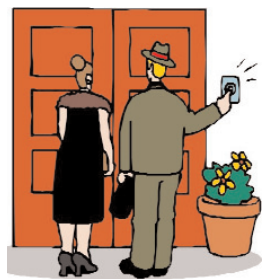
Happy events for other families often trigger grief in those who have lost a child. “When the child’s friends get married, graduate, do well in sports, go on to college, have their own children, or experience virtually any achievement, it is always bittersweet for the parent who has lost a child.”

In addition to these lessons learned, Mr. DeWelt also offers these four tips for helping others experiencing grief.

1. Share a memory. After the funeral a few people stopped by their home and shared memories of DeWelt’s son. His wife was especially appreciative of hearing those memories.

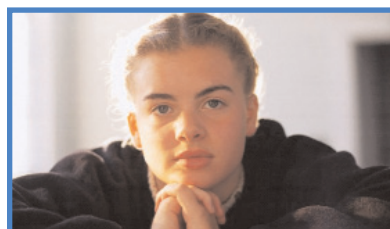
2. Let people cry. Mr. Dewelt notes that some people are afraid of saying or doing anything for fear the bereaved will cry. “Don’t worry, I’m probably a lot healthier emotionally if I am willing to weep than if I am unwilling to do so,” he says.

3. Send a note. “We still have every note with a personal word in it.”



4. Come around later. Right after a loss, the community of family and friends rallies around. However, as the weeks slip by everyone returns to “normal” except for those mourning. “The one grieving has many lonely days and empty moments. A month, two months, two years, even 20 years after the loss itself there are precious people who still say a word from time to time. As

you respond to grief, be as unpredictable as the grief itself, and you will be a big blessing.”



What teens want parents to know when a friend dies

In her book, “*When A Friend Dies: A Book For Teens About Grieving & Healing*”

author Marilyn E. Gootman, EdD., outlines the following statements which teens would like their parents to understand when a friend has died.



■ “I love you, and I know that you love me.”

■ “I know you are worried about me because of what has happened.”

■ “I need to deal with this. Please don’t try to protect me.”

■ “When I talk to you about my feelings, I’d appreciate it if you just listened.”

■ “Sometimes I might not want to talk to you. I might want to talk to my friends instead. They are going through the same things I’m going through. We understand each other. Sometimes I may want to talk to another adult I know – a teacher, counselor or religious leader. This doesn’t mean that I’m rejecting you – just that I want to talk to someone who isn’t so close to me.”