



Grief: The Reluctant Journey



BY LARRY DAWALT

Director of Spiritual & Grief Care Services

I like to travel. I enjoy new sights and sounds and I especially enjoy meeting new people. I like hearing different accents, eating different food and experiencing the intricacies of a different culture. Trips you want to take are usually memorable. It's the journeys you don't want to take that can be difficult- like the journey of grief.

Molly Fumia, author of the book [Safe Passage](#), describes grief this way:

“Grief is a journey, often perilous and without clear direction, that must be taken. The experience of grieving cannot be ordered or categorized, hurried or controlled, pushed aside or ignored indefinitely. It is as inevitable as breathing, as change, as love. It may be postponed, but it will not be denied.”

Many are afraid to begin the journey because they don't know where it will lead. It is just too difficult to think about 'going there.' Others do not want to take the journey because they are angry about their situation and don't think it is 'fair' that they are there in the first place. Others just want it all to go away and think there is no use 'going there' because nothing anyone can say or do will bring their loved on back.

That's why I call grief 'the reluctant journey.' It is a journey of processing a life-shattering experience while trying to maintain some semblance of normalcy. Yet the fact of the matter is that life will never be the same. An empty house, an empty seat in the car, an empty place at holiday dinners, clothes hanging dormant in the closet all contribute to that feeling of a world full of broken pieces.

Others around us may say to 'move on' or 'let go' but how can we let go of someone who has become such a permanent part of our life? What does 'recovery' mean and is it even possible?

Recovery means different things to different people because grief is as unique as the relationship that brought it about. Learning about the grief process is helpful, but learning about the uniqueness of your own grief is even more valuable. When the pieces start to come together, the resulting picture will be different than before. Like the loss of a leg, you may learn to walk again, but you won't walk like before. Yet, the journey has value

because we learn to carry on. Allow us to walk with you on the journey of grief and introduce you to others walking their journey.

Our support groups consist of educationally focused sessions, providing an opportunity to learn and reflect upon your grief in a trusting, supportive environment. We will offer “Grief- The Reluctant Journey” groups in four locations: our Uptown office, our South Charlotte Office, the Levine and Dickson Hospice House, and our Hospice & Palliative Care Lincoln County office. Groups will meet during the day as well as during evening hours.

I encourage you to call us at 704.335.4300 or email us at cummingsg@hpccr.org today and sign up to be part of one of our groups. Through the generous support of our donors, Hospice and Palliative Care Charlotte Region offers its services without regard to insurance status or ability to pay. Groups are open to those served by HPCCR or to those who may have been impacted by an unexpected loss.