



PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

By Nadine Boyd

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Perhaps it's been a little while since you began your grief journey, and you are beginning to feel like you will never be back to your old self. You are dreading upcoming holidays or family get togethers, you may not feel joy in activities you once felt passionate about; you may have lost friends or family members who feel helpless they cannot bring you comfort, or you just never want to join them in activities or occasions you once enjoyed together. You may have even lost employment because you were in so much pain you couldn't function in your day to day life.

When does it get better? The short answer is that it's different with everyone. Each person heals from grief in their own way and in their own time. You must remember also that you will never be your "old" self again. Grief changes you forever. You may be a little more patient, a little more understanding, a little kinder. But you may no longer enjoy activities with friends or passion for projects because you no longer feel a priority to do so. Instead, you may find new friends or appreciate spending time with family members who understand what you are feeling and where you are in your grief journey.

What if it's been a little while since you began your grief journey, you think you are doing ok and then out of the blue, it hits you and you have that "kicked in the stomach" pain all over again? Grief is often a "two steps forward, one step back" journey. Try to breathe through it, accept that there will be times like this, and do the best you can to get through this time. Do something you and your child enjoyed together. Take a walk or a drive to a place that is special to both of you and spend some time with your memories. Share memories with those who loved your child. Perhaps make a craft that honors your child for the upcoming holidays such as a Christmas ornament or a centerpiece or a placemat for the Thanksgiving table. It will bring you comfort to know your loved one is present.

Here's the deal, though: I give you the power. The power to grieve when and how you wish. The power to grieve as long as you need to. The power to learn to be this new changed person. The power to speak up when you are not up to carrying on old family traditions, the power to create new, meaningful family traditions, the power to sometimes just "be" in your still, quiet place, free from the chaos and rage of your pain.

In friendship,

Nadine

