



# Hospice Highlights

## **Grief vs Suffering**

By Diana Wood

Grief is a natural reaction to loss; loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of a pet. Grief sucks. It hurts. It feels like life isn't worth living. It comes in waves... washing over you, receding, and then it comes again. It seems to go on forever. The feelings of emptiness and sadness are overwhelming. At some point you might reach out for help only to learn that there are all these stages of grief you must get through. It starts with denial and then moves to anger then bargaining, pain and guilt. Some people experience depression. And then, out of the blue, the waves come washing over

you again. This may happen many times before you come to the final stage.... acceptance. All of these are normal and must be felt before you can heal and begin to live again.

Suffering, on the other hand, is when you get stuck in these waves, and wouldn't you know it. .... you can't swim. Suffering is scary because you feel like you are drowning and there is no escape.

According to the Sixteenth principle of Buddhist psychology, "*Pain is inevitable. Suffering is not. Suffering arises from grasping. Release grasping and be free of suffering.*" But it is hard to let go, it feels like

we are doing a disservice to our lost loved one, that in order to honor them we must cling to the suffering. It is a slippery slope for sure.

But here's a thought. Instead of trying to "get over" the loss, why not try taking it with you. The loss will be with you forever and I sometimes think that people feel they fail when they can't "get over it." When we finally get to the place of acceptance, we can move forward with our loss instead of trying to leave it behind.

Grief is inevitable after a loss. If you are having trouble navigating your grief give us a call. 250-635-4811

If you keep these in the back of your mind  
you will always be prepared for the unexpected.



**Terrace Hospice Society**

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