

Resource:

The Burnaby Hospice Society
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**On Losing a Loved One who has
'Passed-Over' and 'Gone Home'****About Us:**

- Began in 1987.
- Partner of the Burnaby Palliative Care Program.
- Offers an in-depth volunteer training program as well as advanced training courses.
- Community based, non-profit charitable organization.
- Offers resources and referral information.
- Educates the community.

Mission Statement:

To provide compassionate care to individuals and families during the dying and grieving process and to educate the community about death and dying.

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www.stmcfoundation.ca

Direct line: 604-244-1646

Few events can affect our living and bring so profound a change as the 'passing-over' and 'going-home' of a loved one. The impact can feel like an earthquake. Life seems to have been ripped apart; our world crumbles, and now feels unsafe and unsteady. My life-line, my anchor, is gone and loneliness, despair, and anger creep in like the tides on the shore.

If these words describe what you're experiencing, then you may also wonder if you'll ever recover. Yet as difficult as this time is, know that you can hold on, that you will find comfort and that you can get through. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Realize that whatever you are feeling is OK –**

The feelings of shock, anger, denial, depression, despair, guilt, confusion, bitterness, and regret are okay. There's no one path through the feelings of grief. But there's one reliable guideline – keep feeling. The only way out is through.

- **Deal with the practical necessities.**

Do what must be done; postpone what you can. And ask for help. Family and friends want to do something; tell them

what you need. Ask their advice. For important legal and financial matters consult experts and professionals whose experience will ease your burden.

Just remember that it's wise during the first months of grief to avoid making major decisions, such as moving residence, and refusing to continue to stay active and connected with your family, friends, and outside societies, auxiliaries, social groups etc. A good rule of thumb "Is to not make any major significant changes in one's life-style – moving residence, selling property for a year."

- **Be with others – and with yourself**

Your loneliness may at times seem so crushing and unbearable. After all, you have lost – your friend, lover, partner, companion, confidant, supporter, and helper. Others cannot take their place or make the pain go away. But their presence can bring consolation. Take time to be with persons you're comfortable with, persons you can talk to, and persons you can hug.

Then again, sometimes you have to let yourself be with the loneliness. To learn from it? Is the God of your understanding more accessible in its shadow? What wisdom, what solace, what mystery can enter your heart through its brokenness? Take time for your whole self – mind, body and spirit. Eat well, sleep well, exercise, stay in contact with your friends, and above all ask for a hug.

- **Begin to redefine your life.**

Your life has changed and there is nothing that can be done to reverse that change. Be gentle with yourself as you

get used to this new reality as any change brings with it chaos and loss of control, and unexpected blessings.

Great loss can challenge ones spiritual beliefs. You may be angry with God or feel that God has abandoned or punished you. Know that you don't have to go through this darkness of spirit alone; there are pastors, ministers, religious leaders and counsellors there to be of assistance.

Great loss can also open a deeper awareness of what's truly important in life. Let your pain make you more compassionate, more understanding, and more loving. Let it teach you how **not** to take for granted life's wonder and goodness. Life's blessings and loses, life's living and dying, life's moving forward and not backwards.

Give thanks for the relationship that has been shared. Be aware of how the others love, presence, and their own life experiences have left you a richer, stronger individual. The difference that they made in your life is a part of their legacy and you carry that with you always.

- **Take heart**

During the worst periods of your grieving, you may doubt that life will ever seem joyful and worthwhile again. It will, One day you'll realize that your laughter is different, you actually feel happy and you even have a sense of peace. Life won't ever be the same though and neither will you.

There may always be a small place within you that's empty, a wound that never heals. Value it! It's the God of your understandings way of sustaining your connection to the one who was so significant to you in your life journeying.