

Control

The pain we feel is almost constant for many months but there are times when it completely overwhelms us.

At these times we can do nothing but pace and wail. We wring our hands. Our bodies tremble with agony and despair. We feel regret; wishing to the depth of our souls that we could redo the yesterday when our child died. We feel intense longing for our child, so intense we don't believe we can stand it another minute. We feel completely alone, it is as though no one exists in this world but us. Between sobs, phrases like "My God I can't go on," "What am I going to do?" or "It hurts so badly," comes out of our mouths over and over again. We feel as though we are at the bottom of a deep pit and there is no way out. We feel consumed with an indescribable anguish.

It is at these times we might be advised by those around us to "calm down" or to "control ourselves." It is my opinion that is exactly what we should not do.

Mistakenly I tried to "control" my emotions after Arthur died, but when I could "control" no longer my grief would pour out of me in a raging torrent. I noticed that for days after one of these sessions, I felt a great release of pressure, but never did realize that these wailing sessions were helpful and healing.

Every emotion carries with it energy. Sadness, anger, guilt, regret are with us constantly in our grief, but the energy caused by them cannot be released as it builds. It is like a tea kettle. The water is constantly boiling, but it is in spurts that the steam pushes itself out the lid. The uncontrolled crying session is the steam of our boiling emotions forcing itself out. As with the lid on the tea kettle, these sessions are our safety valves.

These sessions can last from a few minutes to over an hour. They are self-terminating and they are exhausting. After such a session we are worn out just as we would be after hard physical exercise. Sometimes we can even sleep after them. Early in our grief they may be frequent, but as time goes on and you allow yourself to experience them and not try to inhibit them, they will become farther apart.

Don't take the advice of those around you to "get hold of yourself." On the contrary, surrender yourself to your pain. Cry. Wail. Rant. Wring your hands. Voice your anger, your guilts, your regrets. Expend your pent-up emotions. You will feel much better afterwards.

Margaret Gerner
TCF, St. Louis, MO



A Day

*A laugh a day
keeps the heart pumping,
A tear a day
keeps the mind clear.*

*A smile a day
gives joy to others.
A hug a day
gives the hopeless hope.*

*A thought a day
Brings loved ones near,
A memory a day
Brings you closer to me.*

*Laughs, tears, smiles, hugs,
Stitched with thoughts and memories
They're all in my days without you.*

Pam Burden TCF. Augusta. Ga.

*Although the world is very full Of
suffering, it is also full of the
overcoming of it.*

Helen Keller