

WICS Newsletter

Widowed Information and Consultation Services

January & February 2016

THAT HELPLESS FEELING

Dorothy Hanley

An earthquake brought home with a bang just how helpless we are when the forces of nature are visited upon us. Hurricanes, blizzards, floods ... all forces over which man can rarely exert control. Perhaps control consists of running away from an approaching storm, but actually controlling an outburst of nature not much can be done.

While you may never have considered it, grief is one of the natural phenomena over which most people have no control. There seem to be some people who with great strength of will manage to override emotions.

Whether this is to their long-term advantage is questionable. In the beginning, it may portray what the public would prefer to think of as the way to deal with grief, but quite possibly in the long-run prove to be the opposite of healthy grieving.

Some people have absolutely no control over whether or not they will throw themselves full tilt into their grieving ... I was one of those. Once the shock wore off, I was entirely consumed by grief... I didn't recognize myself in any way. I, who had been a relatively sane and collected person, became a frightening, raging, screaming stranger to myself.

Scared to the bone of what I had become, I had visions of being dragged off to a mental institution. Several years after the death of my father, my mother had just such an experience. Apparently the death had opened her to underlying schizophrenia from which she suffered the rest of her life.

For months, my aim in life was to try to hide from everyone the possibility that I was quite mad. When Bill died (in the '70s), there were no books ... and I think that to this day, books don't adequately describe the loss of control the grieving experience can cause ... it's very frightening. In my opinion, that's why it's so necessary to talk to someone who has lived through grief, they know things that can't be learned from books.

What put me back together, eventually, was the [WICS] group. We were eight very frightened people, who, looking at each other, realized we

were experiencing the same sorts of madness. If that was true, perhaps it was normal ... the relief when we realized the truth was enormous and freeing. We were free to be as crazy as we seemed to be, because, if nothing else, we had company ... other folks who understood what was happening.

A willingness to abandon oneself to total grieving takes courage. It takes courage as well, to look for help during such a vulnerable time. I think it's a natural thing to want to hide behind a "good face", to be as calm as possible for the sake of those who look at us during this time. However, it's difficult to keep up the 'front', sometimes it's just impossible for most of us.

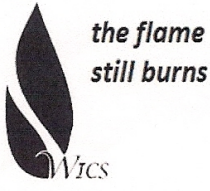
The other kinds of natural disasters usually allow us to be open about our fears. We've all seen pictures of people running from disaster with fear and horror on their faces. We've all understood how that was possible. It's too bad that most of the uninitiated public can't give grieving people the same understanding and permission to be fearful and cry when their lives have been shattered by a death.

Well, did it all get tied together, or have I failed? I never know just how successful these pieces are. Perhaps if it makes enough sense, you will be able to show it to someone who needs to know how natural your grieving is ... regardless of their opinion.

Doesn't it drive you nuts when someone who hasn't had the same experience believes they know best how you should react? What nerve!

Well, enough of this ... take it as permission to feel your feelings and realize that when life is totally changed by a death it's reasonable to be emotionally distraught for a period of time ... a period that lasts much longer than we would believe.

Hang in there, the craziness will taper down and not be so frightening ... with luck within the first year. But, remember, we're all different, so there's no timetable for anything ... not even sanity!



Support Group Meetings

For all widowed men and women who would like to share their concerns and experiences and discuss coping skills.

BALLARD: 7 p.m. Tuesdays

5433 Leary Ave NW - Ballard Landmark Assisted Living (mtg room near front desk)
Contact: **Doug** 206.441.9490 or **Pat** 206-367-1669

BELLEVUE: 7 p.m. Mondays

10420 S.E. 11th St. - Pilgrim Lutheran Church (Corner 11th St. & Bellevue Way)
Contact: **Kathy** 425.653.7209 (best to call M, W, F during the day) or email at:
clancyKa@comcast.net

COVINGTON: 7 p.m. Tuesdays

25810— 156th Ave SE - St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Contact: **Le** 253.630.0324 or email at: saraacree@comcast.net

FEDERAL WAY: Currently, this group is not having meetings, but are looking for a new place and time. They are continuing to give support, information and connection.

Contact: **Molly K.** 253.839.4560

KIRKLAND: Currently, this group is not having meetings. But, they are offering support, information and connection.

Contact: **Holly** via email: hlfinkbeiner@gmail.com

RENTON: 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays

211 Burnett North, Renton Senior Center
Contact: **Burnie** 425.255.1888 or email at: burnie@comcast.net

WICS invites you to send a gift in memory of your loved. We rely on your donations.
Your gift allows us to continue supporting grieving families in our community.

Please help us help others by sending a LOVE GIFT today.

All donations are tax deductible.

*Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation.
Check to see if your employer will match your gift.*

Gifts of Love

Amount: \$ _____ From: _____

In Memory of: _____

Message: _____

Send Acknowledgement to (name): _____

Address: _____

Return to: WICS, P.O. Box 66896, Seattle, WA 98166

2016 EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates

for the following WICS events:



February 27, 2016

LUNCH, BUNCO & SILENT AUCTION

Information and registration on page 5.



June 3-5, 2016

SEABECK RETREAT

Don't miss this healing weekend! Plan to attend!
Information & Registration Form in the next newsletter!



December 3, 2016

**BUS TRIP to LEAVENWORTH AND
ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING**

THE NEW YEAR

The New Year ... we wish we could wave a magic wand and make everything fine for you this year, but, except in fairy tales, that's not what happens. We can't make the pain stop ... you must live through it yourself.

Perhaps knowing us will help. Meeting people who had the same feelings as you (oh, yes, we did!), and who are feeling strong and well can give you hope that you will be whole again, too.

It's helpful to have an ally when life is a struggle ... just someone who can say, "I know it's hard, but you will win."

When you talk to us, and we say "I understand," you can be sure we do - we've been there. We can't make it go away, but we can help you understand what's happening.

We can't tell you when it'll be over, but we can give you hope of better times.
~ Dorothy Hanley

IT'S FEBRUARY!

It's February ... spring is within sight. You're making it through winter ... it may be boring and depressing, but like everything else, it doesn't last forever.

Here we are ... Valentines' Day to contend with. Perhaps this wasn't a biggie at your house. If it was, what can you do to get through? Well, how about taking a Valentine treat to the nearest nursing home. There are, no doubt, many people there who don't ever have visitors and who would be so thankful to have you drop by.

There are other ways to volunteer ... in other places. You know, what we hear at WICS is, "Every time I help someone else, I find I've helped myself." Some people tend to scoff at that comment, but we've heard it so often, there must be something to it. Why not give it a try. It might not work the first time, but like most things, you have to do something more than once to get the best effect.'

Remember when it comes to Valentines' Day, you made it through the other holidays ... you'll make it through this, too.
~ Dorothy Hanley

Subscriber Form

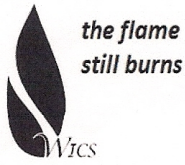
Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Return to: WICS P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166

Subscription: \$25 per year



Annual WICS Celebration

LUNCHEON ~ BUNCO ~ AUCTION



Over 80,000 people have received services from WICS since it began in 1974. In celebration of our 42 years, we invite all WICS, WICS WEDS and their FAMILIES and FRIENDS to join us for an afternoon of fun, food and friendship.

Saturday, February 27, 2016
11:30am – 4:30pm

~ Lunch will be catered by Renton Technical College Culinary Arts Program ~

Where:
Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church
2650 148th Ave SE
Bellevue, WA 98007

Cost:
\$35 per adult
\$10 per child under age 10



Reservation Deadline
Wednesday, February 17, 2016



For more information:

WICS Office: 206-241-5650 ~ Email: wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net ~ Web: www.kcwics.org

Please Name: _____

PRINT Address: _____

clearly: City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Number of tickets @ \$35 each. Total: \$ _____

Number of tickets for children under age 10 @ \$10 each. Total: \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

_____ I am not able to attend, but here is my **Donation** of \$ _____

Methods of Payment

By Check: Check #: _____ ***Please make checks payable to "WICS"***

By Credit Card: PLEASE *print clearly* the information below. Circle one: **Visa** **MasterCard**

Person's Name as it appears on card: _____

Billing Address for this card: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

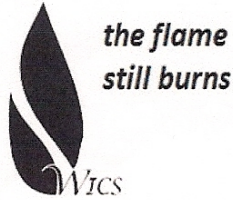
Card Number: _____ V code (3 digits on back of card): _____

Expiration date: (Mo/Yr) _____ Phone number: _____

Your Signature: _____

Mail This Form and Your Payment to: **WICS PO Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166**

WICS Newsletter
PO Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166



Jan. & Feb. 2016

NON-PROFIT ORG
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Lunch, Bunco & Auction
Feb. 27, 2016
Information & Registration - page 5
~ ~ ~ ~ ~
Seabeck Retreat
June 3-5, 2016
Save the Date! ~ Plan to Attend!!

Widowed Information and Consultation Services (WICS)

- WICS is non-sectarian and is not affiliated with any other agency.
- WICS is a program that offers group support to men and women who are coping with the death of their spouse/partner. Since its beginning in 1974, WICS has served more than 80,000 men, women and families.

Phone: **206-241-5650**

Website: www.kcwics.org

- The most frequent inquiries at WICS are for clarification of the grief process, such as “Are my feelings normal?” or “Am I losing my mind?” and also seeking help for dealing with loneliness.
- When a widowed person telephones or visits a WICS support group, he or she can be sure to find other widowed people who will listen and understand. A warm and supportive atmosphere is provided for those who call on the service.