

KNOWING OUR GRIEF

From a sweet little collection of teachings I offer this:

To open our own heart like a Buddha we must embrace the ten thousand joys and the ten thousand sorrows.

My reading is that the *ten thousand* refers to the limitless and unending. The *joys* are the countless little, but sometimes undeniable details that life in the moment can bring us, some easily missed but certainly much more sought after and embraceable. But the *sorrows*? We carry them along with us in so many ways: disappointments and slights gathered from childhood, missed opportunities and self-failures, broken relationships and of course, the loss of loved ones. As we widen our scope we may come to feel the burden of the vast hardships of humanity: dislocation, abuse at the hands of the powerful, malnourishment and the list goes on. Sorrows are a universal gift from our life on earth, something that binds us all. In my time working with the residents of Lathrop, it becomes clear that as we age the commonality of loss and disappointment is like the shared floor on which we all stand. High summer may seem a strange time to shine light here, but loss knows no season. My family and I just lost someone close, and though her passing brought us all together, it also leaves us in tender touch with our own fragility, and of course concerned for the future of the husband and daughter left behind. On the Wellness path, the healthy emotional life is built on learning how to stand in loss and, as the Buddha urges, then learning to embrace it. That is the process of grief, and I am clearly no expert but do know that there is no right way to do it, but that do it we must. Likely we are all familiar with the classic stages of grief, and I would suggest that few of us can fully grieve without support. Two new opportunities are coming to Lathrop that could lead to providing for some of that on-going need for support, now or when your time of need comes.

LETTING GO with MARY STANTON, LICSW – WEDNESDAY JULY 17, 2PM IN THE MT TOM ROOM

Mary M. Stanton, LICSW is a local therapist who, in her private practice specializes in supporting individuals during times of loss and transitions and is also a bereavement counselor for the Hospice of the Fisher Home. [and a well-respected former colleague of Rob's] Please join Mary for a conversation about loss and grief. In this interactive session she hopes to explore the question, "despite our multiple losses throughout life, especially as we age, how do we grieve and remain resilient?" If there is interest, Mary is happy to consider setting up an on-going bereavement group.

[Reminder- in Easthampton Adele Oppenheim facilitates a weekly support group, which has regular participants but does accept new members who are able to commit to the group. Contact Adele if you feel you would like to explore joining their discussions.]

BEREAVEMENT GROUP FORMING IN NORTHAMPTON

Resident Audrey Bernstein is offering to form and facilitate a peer bereavement support group for the residents of the Northampton community. Whether you are recently or more distantly bereaved, or feel that you would like to share and seek support with others moving through grief, contact Audrey to let her know you are interested. More details to follow.