

# Phoenix Rising

This grief newsletter is sent to members and friends of Paradise Valley United Methodist Church following the loss of a loved one. PVUMC pastors are available to you if you need one-on-one support. Contact the church office for more information at 602-840-8360. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, contact the church office or e-mail [ddoran@pvumc.org](mailto:ddoran@pvumc.org).

Debbie Doran, Editor

## Notion of Grief

I had my own notion of grief.

I thought it was a sad time

that followed the death of someone you love.

And you had to push through it

To get to the other side.

But I am learning there is no other side.

This is no pushing through,

But rather,

There is absorption.

Adjustment.

Acceptance.

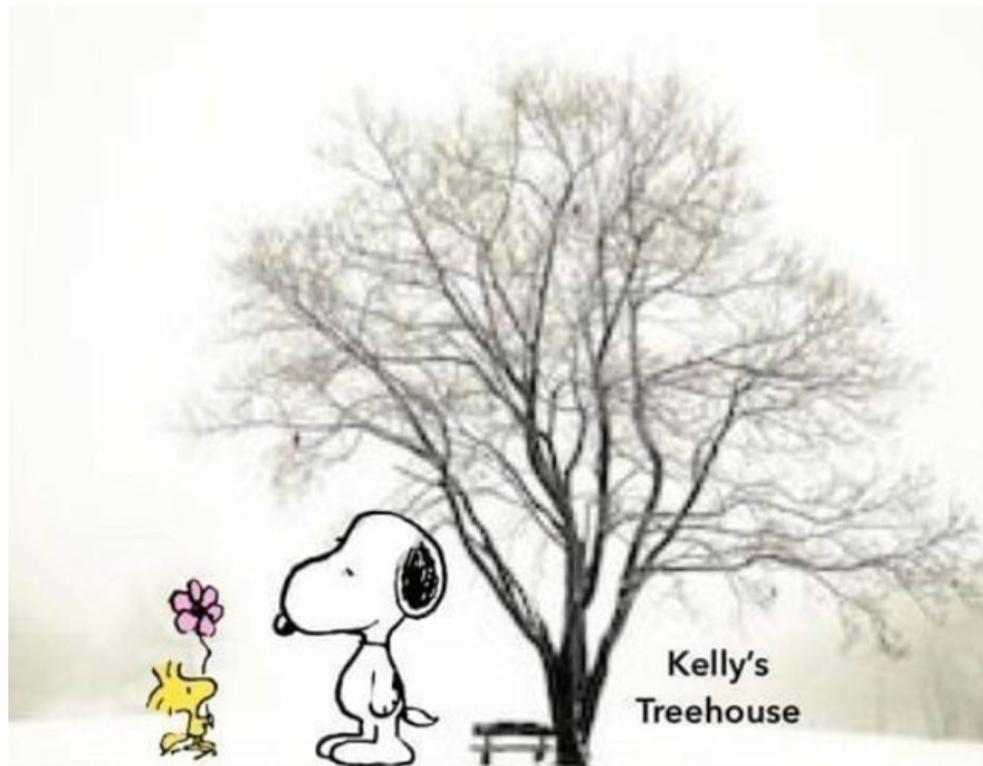
And grief is not something you complete.

But rather you endure.

Grief is not a task to finish,

And move on.

But an element of yourself<sup>1</sup>



**I believe that the  
hardest part of healing  
after losing someone you love  
is to recover the "you" that  
went away with them.**

## Journey Through Grief: My Sister's Passage

My boys and I were enjoying a mesmerizing performance by Cirque du Soleil with an unusual theme for a circus: death. In the show, a clown imagined his own funeral, but the show was far from solemn. While parts were beautifully haunting, the rest was simply joyful. Life, death, and the afterworld were celebrated with dancing, laughter, jubilant music, and acrobatic acts that seemed to defy human possibility.

I was still wrapped in my post-show euphoria when I got home and opened a message from my brother-in-law.

“Your sister has passed over peacefully in her sleep,” it read.

I didn't move. I simply looked at the words silently until I heard myself quietly say, “OK.”

I waited for a different reaction, but nothing else came.

I felt fear when she first told me about the cancer, and guilt for being so far away. I'd felt hopeful after a successful treatment, then crushed when the cancer progressed anyway. Helplessness, anger, desperation, and sorrow were just some of the emotions that flowed through me during my sister's illness.

Yet in the quiet of my home, as I learned her fight was over, what flowed through my body was surprisingly light. My sister was released from her frail body the same day I witnessed a stunning rendition of heaven and death, filled with beauty, celebration and joy.

Thank You, Lord, for reminding me that death is a passage to something even more glorious than the most gifted artists can imagine or express.<sup>2</sup>

## What Do I Do Now?

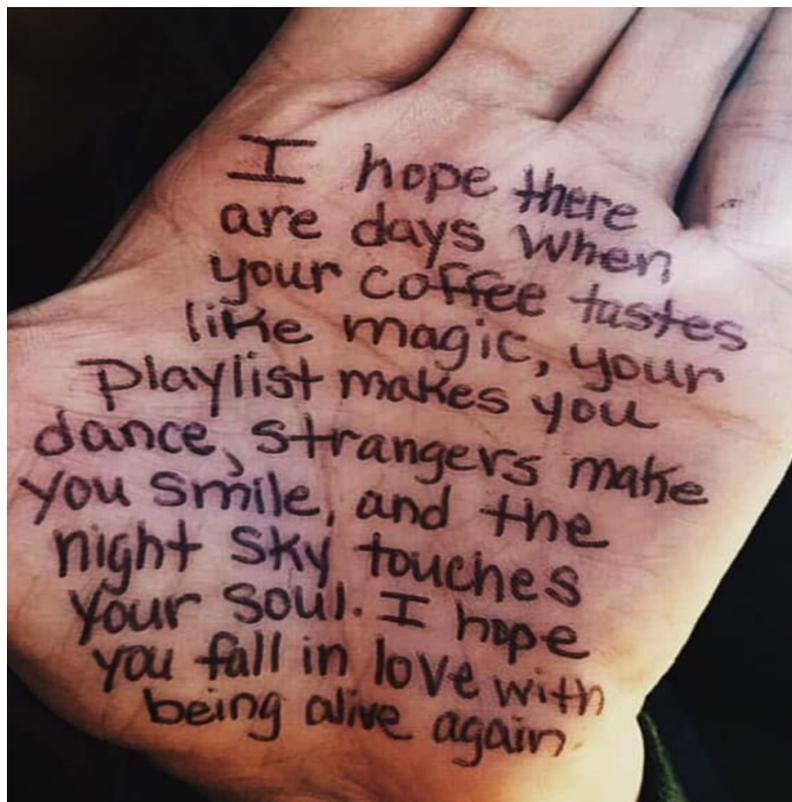
March brings a new month to this new year.

New thoughts to absorb. New words to hear.

New connections with others. New steps to take.

How did I get to this place and situation in life?

What do I do now?<sup>3</sup>



## What Is Grief?

Jim Carrey once said: Grief is not just an emotion – it’s an unraveling, a space where something once lived but is now gone. It carves through you, leaving a hollow ache where love once resided.

In the beginning, it feels unbearable, like a wound that will never close. But over time, the raw edges begin to mend. The pain softens, but the imprint remains – a quiet reminder of what once was. The truth is, you never truly “move on.” You move with it. The love you had does not disappear; it transforms. It lingers in the echoes of laughter, in the warmth of old memories, in the silent moments where you still reach for what is no longer there. And that’s okay.

Grief is not a burden to be hidden. It is not a weakness to be ashamed of. It is the deepest proof that love existed, that something beautiful once touched your life. So let yourself feel it. Let yourself mourn. Let yourself remember.

There is no timeline, no “right” way to grieve. Some days will be heavy, and some will feel lighter. Some moments will bring unexpected waves of sadness, while others will fill you with gratitude for the love you were lucky enough to experience.

Honor your grief, for it is sacred. It is a testament to the depth of your heart. And in time, through the pain, you will find healing – not because you have forgotten, but because you have learned how to carry both love and loss together.<sup>4</sup>

### Footnote:

1. Anonymous
2. Karen Valentin; “Walking in Grace;” Guideposts; Thursday, February 5, 2026
3. Paula Rugen
4. Jim Carrey