

**Session 6 – How To Live An Empowered Life  
Taking Responsibility For Living a Life of Passion & Meaning**

*“Each day comes bearing its own gifts.  
Untie the ribbons.”*

~ Ruth Ann Schabacker

Will you choose to mourn openly, honestly and actively so that you can heal? Will you choose to keep your grief inside and allow it to fester? Will you choose to merely survive or will you choose to live?

It is important to know that you don't recover from grief. We learn to reconcile to it knowing that our life is forever changed.

Mourners often not only heal but grow through grief. Often it changes a person in profound ways such as a renewed passion for life and the clear understanding that life can be short and fleeting. Our lives can potentially be deeper and more meaningful after the death of someone we loved.

**Have you noticed yourself embracing a deeper meaning to life?**

*(if not it's OK, you will with time)*

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You will know that you're beginning to reconcile your grief when it's no longer the first thing you think of each morning and the last thing before sleeping. When you start to have some energy again and when you eat and sleep normally. When you can laugh and have fun more than before and when you begin to make plans for the future.

According to Dr. Alan Wolfelt, *“Every human being wants to mourn well. It is as essential as breathing. Some people make the choice to give momentum to their mourning. While others will deny or avoid it. The path you choose will make all the difference. Move toward your grief and go on to live until you die.”*

**It is easy to fall into sadness and despair not wanting to do anything but cry. So what can you commit to doing this week to help yourself not only mourn but to find time for a little joy?** *(example; spend time with grandchildren being silly, go out to lunch with some friends)*

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This journey of grief often challenges you to reconsider the importance of using your potential. In fact, in some ways death loss seems to almost free the potential within us. When a death occurs unexpectedly or at a younger age more questions arise around “What am I meant to do with my life?” and “Does My Life Really Matter?”

My hope is that rather than dragging you down, your grief will ultimately lift you up, then it is up to you to embrace and express your new found potential.

**Does this offer you any ideas, insight into where you might go from here?**  
(if not it's OK, it will in time)

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In time you may find that you are growing emotionally and spiritually as a result of your grief journey.

Growth that means a new balance, a perspective with no end points. Know that your life will never be exactly the same as it was when your spouse was alive.

Growth mean exploring our assumptions about life, often these assumptions we had can make our life richer and more life affirming.

**Consider the ways in which you may be growing since the death of your precious husband or wife:**

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## *BONUS:*

### **How to Cope With Significant Dates**

Anniversaries of the death, birthdays, wedding anniversary can be especially hard. The first year will be the most difficult.

These are times when you may want to plan ahead. If you work you may want to take the day off not only to give your emotions a rest but to honor the memory of your spouse.

Your wedding anniversary may be a particularly difficult day. Chances are you will shed tears and think about what might have been. That's pretty normal.

Reach out to others on these days. Have your family honor the memory of your spouse in a way that is special and meaningful not only to you, but to others who also mourn the loss. Remember, not only have you lost your partner but your children have lost a parent and it is important that everyone's feelings are included and respected.

Anniversaries are also opportunities to honor your spouse. Here are suggestions;

- Create a memorial fund in their name
- Plant a tree or garden in their name
- Donate money to a charity in their name
- Plan a party, have fun, share fond and joyful memories
- Write a poem about your spouse and submit it in a writing contest
- Make their favorite meal and invite family & friends to join in
- Ask your church to remember them in a religious service
- Share with people in your support group so you have additional support



One woman invited friends & family to a party honoring her husband & told them all to bring a stuffed animal which she then donated to the Children's Hospital in his name.

## *My closing thoughts...*

The journey of grief is never ending. No you can't get back to what was, but to progress requires you to acknowledge your loss and practice self-care during this time. This self-care will fortify you for the ongoing ups and downs of your grief journey. Remember to be self-nurturing is to have the courage to pay attention to your needs.

Finally, *“just as you surrendered to the mystery of love, you must surrender to the mystery of grief.”*

*Do you need more support? Contact me for personal one on one coaching via phone or Skype. You are not alone!*

*JoAnne Funch*

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**Don't let your loss be the defining moment of your life**

**The ultimate courage is to learn from our losses**