

# **In Your Hour Of Grief...**

**By Jocelyn A. Soriano**

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I walked in the garden of life, caressing soft petals here and there. And lo! After a while they were no more, and my heart bled for each fragrant petal that fell. If every flower withers, never to return to its full blossom, then what good indeed is passing by in the garden of life?

Herein lies my hope: **That for every flower that withers, another one blooms, one that will remain forever fragrant and fresh, never ever to pass away...**

## **About the Author**

**Jocelyn Soriano** is a self-help author, novelist, and poet. She continues to share her many inspirations from God at her blog [www.itakeofftheface.com](http://www.itakeofftheface.com) where she writes poems, prayers and other articles of healing, motivation, faith, love and hope.

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## Poem of Grieving the Loss of a Loved One

Where would you go  
that I cannot follow?  
for how long must I wait  
until we meet again?  
what would I do  
in times that I miss you?  
where would I go  
in times when I long to see you again?  
how must I spend  
the nights without you?  
how do I bear  
each morning that you're not there?  
shall I ever smile again?  
will I ever laugh again?  
will I ever face the world again  
knowing that I'm not alone?  
why must you leave me?  
why must I cry these tears  
when you're not here  
to wipe them all away?  
why must I suffer  
the empty days without my beloved?  
why must I dream  
without you by my side?  
the days shall never be the same again  
I will never be the same again  
without you  
the life of my soul,  
the joy of my heart,  
the light in my eyes,  
the hope of my dreams,  
the comfort of my lonely nights,  
without you my beloved,  
I grieve and cry,  
I grope and stumble in the dark,  
I weep with all my soul  
I desire with all my heart  
I let go of all of me that you took away with you  
I keep all of you that is in me,

and will always remain in me  
wherever I may go

I wait and pray and hope  
I will look forward to each brand new day  
thankful for all that I've had and will always have  
thankful for the sun that shines again  
believing and hanging on  
believing that life will go on  
it can't help but go on  
it shall go on  
and in so going  
there really is no end  
only mornings and evenings  
and life that never ever ends.

## **Grieving The Loss of a Loved One**

When my grandfather died, the first question that crossed my mind was, "Shall we ever as a family, be able to smile again?"

He was a very kind man, a sweet and loving man who also happened to be a retired Captain of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, a proud veteran of the USAFFE in World War II. I loved him - very much, and regarded him as my very own father. He used to carry me up his shoulders when I was but a little girl. I never saw him mad. He was always calm and gentle, but with that certain kind of strength in him that never needed to be boasted about anymore. Maybe this kind of admiration was the source of my childhood dream of being a lady Cadette officer. Well, I didn't realize that dream, but in my heart I knew I've acquired that kind of courage he had, and it sort of stayed with me through the years.

I also admired the kind of love he cherished with my Grandma. Something that lasted for fifty golden years, the 50th year being the year of his demise. I often told myself that theirs was the kind of marriage I fervently prayed to have - simple, sincere, lasting, abounding in love, courage and understanding. The day my Grandpa died, my heart broke, not only for my own grief, but for the grief of seeing such a blessed marriage come to a sudden end right before my eyes.

How indeed are we going to go about our lives after his passing? How do we spend our late evenings without his stories? How do we celebrate Christmas without his jolly smile?

The seat he occupied at dinner will remain vacant thereafter. The sight of him and Grandma embracing each other after a petty quarrel will be nothing more but a sweet memory to look back to.

The funny thing was, I never really considered him old. He had always been strong and healthy and happy. I thought he'd always be there, for me, for my Grandma, for everyone who has ever gotten to know the wonderful person he is. But I guess death is like that. It takes away from you in an instant the people you've cherished for a whole lifetime. Just like that. As simple as that. And you are suddenly left with two things: anger for having



been deprived of your beloved for no reason at all; and emptiness, a vacuum that gnaws right at your heart where all the joyful moments once had been.

And how will it be for people who have lost not only their fathers, but mothers, children, both parents, lifetime partners who spent their lives through thick and thin, who dreamt together and journeyed together and found meaning in each other's lives?

How are we to begin grieving for them? Where could we ever find the tears to weep, tears that will pour down and cry in behalf of our torn and shattered hearts?

## **1. Cry**

Find those tears. Try to let them out however painful the process is. Let them out. Let them pour showers that will cleanse away every bit of darkness and bitterness from your heart.

Shy not from crying out aloud. You have every right to be heard, and all the right to be hurt. No one's going to stand in your way even if you wail. Let your cries rise up to the clouds, unto the ears of heaven who can understand what sorrows mortal men go through in this valley of tears.

Cry for the pain of parting. Cry for the sad mornings that will greet you without your lover's arms. Cry for the words that shall remain unspoken and unheard. Cry for the places you will never be able to walk together anymore. Cry for the dreams that will remain as dreams. Cry for the memories that will remain as memories. Cry for the hand that can no longer caress you. Cry for those eyes that can no longer see your tears. Cry your heart out. Because the truth is - it hurts, and it really hurts so much!

## **2. Forgive**

There are many things we don't want to admit in times like these; things we believe would only dishonor the memory of our loved one, or things that would dishonor us before their memory. But unless we deal with these things, we would always be burdened by them, by regrets that should have been buried with the passing of our loved ones.

### **a. Forgiving our loved ones**

People are not perfect. No matter how much we love them or no matter how good they are, they may have hurt us at one point or another. They may have judged us and disappointed us. We have to admit how they failed us, and then forgive them with a forgiveness that comes out of the generosity of our hearts. We know that we do not have time anymore, we can no longer wait for them to see their faults and ask our forgiveness. So we forgive them. We let them go with no bitterness in our hearts.

### **b. Forgiving ourselves**

When our loved ones pass away, there is always a feeling of guilt left in us - how we haven't loved them enough, how we could've saved them, how we could've made them happier. But when we come to think of it, how much more could we have really done though? Even if we could've made a difference, could we be able to turn back the hands of time?

Forgive yourself. Admit your faults, go to confession, slap your face hard, observe fasting for a week, shave your head even! But don't punish yourself forever for being unable to make the proper retribution. You can no longer do that. It's not your fault anymore. Blaming yourself could never earn for you the forgiveness you so desire. If you can't be content in praying for forgiveness alone, if you really believe you still have to do something to be forgiven, then do this - love those people still within your reach. Do this, and you'd have earned more than forgiveness; you'd have loved. Love heals. Love forgives.

### **3. Deal with the pain one day at a time**

Grieving for our loved ones who passed away is probably one of the most painful things we'll experience in life. Deal with it one short day at a time. Don't think of the whole 25 or 50 years ahead of you. Just think of today, and of all the support being given you just where you are. It is times like these when we get to know who our true friends are, people willing to extend their hands and their hearts to help see you through. Accept the help given you, and you'll make it today.

### **4. Honor/ treasure their memory**

Many people will suggest to you to move on, which is a fine thing. In the process though, they may also urge you to forget all about the past, and start letting go. Now letting go is not such a bad thing, it could mean giving up all our unrealizable expectations and all of the things we cannot do anymore. But to forget all things completely - to do so would be to start cheating on our true feelings for our beloved who passed away.

We can't just act like we had amnesia all of a sudden. We can't pretend that the things that happened didn't happen, and that the precious moments we've spent with our loved ones don't mean anything to us anymore. Something happened in the past. Souls touched in the past. Lives changed. Hearts were inspired.

Our grief is only amplified with the thought that we are forever parting with every remaining essence of our loved ones. That's what makes our mourning even worse, to believe that we are forever losing that part of our lives that changed us and made us happy. Don't throw it all away. When inspiration comes upon you, they need not leave. They never leave. They inspire us forever.

When my Grandpa died, I thought it was the end of the wonderful love he had with Grandma. But I was wrong. It did not end there. It cannot be ended that way. Up to this moment, I am still a witness on how true love is kept alive in the hearts and minds of those who carry on the radiance of its warmth.

## **5. Think of the legacy they left behind**

I've always thought that when our loved ones go away, they take a part of ourselves with them. It's like a part of us withers away and dies. We feel like an arm or a leg had just been taken away and we can never be whole again. We feel we are lesser people than we used to be. We then wonder why people had to meet at all only to be separated in the end, only to feel broken and incomplete.

But then I've also learned that when people become part of each other's lives, their lives become richer from the whole new world opened before them by one another. They gain a new perspective, they get a deeper understanding of themselves, they learn new skills and hobbies, they discover new places,

they get to love a new song. Each one leaves a mark, a precious legacy, a part of their very selves to the people they love.

Even after their lives together had ended, even after one has gone and passed away, that part they have given to us will remain. Because when people become a part of us, a part of their own souls remain in us, forever enriching us, and we are never the same as before.

My Grandpa had been gone for 16 years now, but the things he left me, the imprint he left in my soul will always be there, guiding me through my journey ahead. Love of country, courage, dignity, love of family - these are the things I will always be thankful for.

## **6. Schedule activities that help vent out your emotions**

You cried, you wept, you wailed. But as you miss your loved one more painfully with the passing of each day, you feel the emotions within you continue to surge, emotions that need to find a proper outlet to let go.

*Schedule those activities with a friend that will encourage you to perform them:*

-Play badminton, let go of all the hurts you feel everytime you hit the shuttlecock. Hit it hard! Hit it as far as you can.

-Run the treadmill. Everytime you feel the urge to escape, walk tirelessly. Walk like you never walked before. Run. Run and release the pain you keep within you.

-Swim, imagine your tears being washed away. Do your most powerful strokes, and glide away from all the expectations the world thrusts upon your shoulders. Just make sure a trusted friend and lifeguard is watching over you, okay?

-Grab a crayon and a sketch pad. Draw the abstract feelings you can't and don't want to decipher at the moment. Draw in hard wild strokes. Then tear the sheet in pieces.

## **7. Replenish your soul**

Once the strong feelings begin to subside, replenish your soul with activities that promote peace, wholeness and a fresh beginning.

-Plant a seed and watch the new plant emerge from the ground from which it was buried.

-Take care of a chick and help it grow into a hen. You can even enjoy the eggs she will lay for you later!

-Watch a sunrise with a trusted buddy. See how darkness transforms into a magnificent rising of a brand new day.

-Travel somewhere you've never been to. Get to know the locals and try to enjoy their way of life.

## **8. Give yourself time to adjust and recover**

It will take time for you to carry on your usual routines each day. Just be patient with yourself. One day survived is one day of battle won. The more days you survive, the more confidence you will gain that you will make it.

If it's really difficult for you, you can try to write letters to your loved one as though you were only miles away.

This will help you cope with the abrupt change of suddenly not being able to talk with your loved one. This will also help keep your life in check as you literally report what you're doing with your life.

## **9. Think of the legacy you wish to leave behind**

The torch has been passed on to you. Your life has been made richer by the legacy you received. What do you do now with what you have? What legacy do you want to leave behind to the people that matter most to you now? Remember that you are now a different person by having been a part of someone's life. Everything you do, any difference that you make in this life is not only because of you, but also because of the one who loved you. When you leave your mark unto this world, you leave a mark formed also by every other person that touched your life.

## **10. Believe that God will see you through**

God knows your grief. He weeps with you. He hopes with you. He cares for you so much that He willingly died for you to conquer death forever and to give you the perfect and eternal life He wants you to enjoy. Things have not ended here. They have only just begun. Take heart! He will see you through. It is Jesus Himself who said, "the girl isn't dead, but sleeping." (Matthew 9:24, WEBBE)

***When my Grandpa died, I used to doubt whether we can still smile again, now I know the answer: WE CAN***

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