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Honoring Grief: The Real Journey

The Sport of Motherhood Newsletter

November 2006

My Real Journey

November is here. Even in California the mornings are frosty, and the blades of grass sparkle with icy dew. This month's TV show has a poignant and very real theme: living with grief, incorporating it in the aftermath of a major loss, and continuing in a new reality where joy and grief exist together. Is that ever possible? My article below discusses some of the main themes of the show.

Our artist for November is Anna Coulter. Click [here](#) to view her work as showcased in the show.

November TV Show "Honoring Grief: The Real Journey" times are as follows: Tuesdays at 3:30 pm, Channel 15 in Mountain View, Los Altos and Cupertino, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday on Channel 30 in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Stanford. [Click here for complete TV schedule.](#)

And last, but not least, we are very pleased to announce a new addition to our team. Joanie King, the founder and editor of Rhyming Tributes, will offer monthly profiles of famous mothers in her inimitable rhyming style. Joanie's poem "Carnival Cheer" is included below.

Our November sponsors are [Claire Made This](#) and [Nancy Cassidy Music](#). Scroll down for special offers only for Sport of Motherhood!

Our monthly column for entrepreneurs "I Love What I Do, But How Do I Make Money?" addresses different aspects of running a business and managing a family. This month's focus is on [protecting your intellectual property and your business idea.](#)

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Honoring Grief: The Real Journey

by Genevieve Hutcheson Butcher



Our November TV Show addresses Grief and Grieving. This is a big topic, but we focus on two aspects of it: how do you live with grief and how do you move on, if you ever do? The panel of guests includes: Carl Yorke and Audrey Jacobs, two bereaved parents; George W. Sr., a Vietnam Veteran; Rev. Sally Brown; and Liz Powell, Director of Kara's Youth and Family Service Program for Grieving Families.

We use Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's 5 Stages of Grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) as a springboard for discussion. These stages are never nice little packages and can happen in a different order, but they offer a way to



My grandmother passed away the last week of summer vacation, and then my family slammed into the first week of school. I had counted on using that week to get prepared, and spend some time with the kids, but life changed. We needed to fly to Texas to say goodbye.

My son was upset one night. "Why did Greatmommy have to die?" I explained that by some people dying, the babies can come. The earth can only sustain so many bodies. If everyone stayed, there would not be room for more. "That makes so much sense Mom," he told me. Then he could go to sleep. What a simple explanation. I had tried so many others, but this one worked for him – at that moment.

Though I had felt a lot of emotions the week of my grandmother's death, I shoved my feelings aside in order to get on top of school matters. I also had an upcoming work event. No time to grieve. Just too busy.

But it did not work out that way. The grief leaked out. I had to leave a cycling class at the YMCA because I was weepy. Then I ran into a friend in the hallway. "What's going on?" she asked. "I'm so sad," I said. "How can I be this sad when I was prepared for her death? She was sick for so long. . ." Just talking about it helped me to be okay with my feelings.

I ran into another friend. She told me that I looked unusually tired. I replied, "I am inundated with school forms, classroom sign-ups. . . and feel behind the ball. And

identify and untangle some of the "clump of extreme feelings" that can occur after a death. Identifying a stage or a feeling can help with the healing. Recognition that anger takes on different forms can help make sense of a world that may not make sense anymore.

What happens when you don't grieve? Much like our soldiers abroad now, George was trained not to grieve while fighting. He had to keep alert and keep focused. So he built up walls around his emotions, which he claims is at the root of his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It took years of professional help to break down the barriers. George said that back then, PTSD was not recognized or understood. Now there is more awareness and available help. George uses meditation tapes and support groups to help him maintain a spiritual connection. Life is full again, and he feels like he has a new purpose.

Rev. Brown, a chaplain who also works in a dual-diagnosis unit, says that people often numb out with alcohol or drugs to postpone grieving and guilt. They can get stuck in what she calls "unresolved grief." Eventually, they have to address their grief because it does not just go away.

Audrey, who miscarried, and Carl, whose son died of cancer, found that journals and support groups helped. National organizations like Compassionate Friends or local organizations like Palo Alto's Kara, offer support for both adults and children. Liz Powell, who represents Kara, suggests that much of the healing is in sharing the experience with others who are also "inside the experience." What is most helpful is just allowing the bereaved person to talk it out and to acknowledge that it is a difficult time. Platitudes such as: "you can always try for another child," or "it must have been meant to be," don't really help despite any good intentions.

According to our guests, each person's grieving journey is unique. There is no "right way" to grieve. Men can grieve differently than women. For example, Carl does not want to be hugged, whereas Audrey does. Liz, whose brother committed suicide, also mentions that it is important to not be afraid of different grieving styles and needs within a bereaved family. Some people may need to talk it out while others want to write it out or not talk about it at all. Some may seek support groups, professional help or self-help books, while others may not. Some may want to plant a rosebush or plant in honor of the loved one -- something to nurture. Others may get a pet for a good dose of unconditional love. Still others may turn to painting or writing as a creative outlet.

At a certain point, people may find themselves heading towards what Liz calls, "The New Normal." Life will not go back to what it was, but there is a new future that incorporates the loss from the past and a bit of hope. A movie might even sound fun again. At this point, Rev. Brown suggests picking up a recreational activity that peaks interests such as hiking or biking.

This show is really about honoring different ways we can grieve. Sometimes it is hard to straddle the worlds of the living and the grieving, but it can be helpful to hear that others share a similar experience. Everyone deals with loss at some point. Give yourself time and space to feel your feelings when you experience a loss. Slow your pace down.

To see the TV show "Honoring Grief: The Real Journey" [click here](#). For Kara's recommended reading list for bereaved adults and children, [click here](#).

Transferrable Skills

by **Ivan Temes**

"Gosh, what can I do? It's been so long since I had a real job" OR "Gee, I'd like to do something more exciting. I just don't know if I have the experience." Motherhood is full of stages, and just when you feel you have the time and energy to return to the workforce, you begin to second-guess where your life experience might mesh with a rewarding career. Mothers who transition back into the workforce often possess skills which dwarf much of what I see in the workplace. It is often a matter of helping them: identify their own talents; understand the possibilities before them; and develop successful marketing skills.



Kimberly Banks, Director of Human Resources at the Westin and Sheraton Hotels in Palo Alto, says she is looking for three qualities in an applicant: great attitude, customer service orientation, and team player attributes. She adds, "If you can demonstrate those attributes, I will train you in everything else."

Every mom can easily talk about her experience as "a team player who knows how to

my grandmom died last week." "Just last week?" she asked. "You are still grieving." Then she suggested that I slow my schedule down for the whole fall to give myself time to grieve. So I did, and it has helped.

I was aware that I was overwhelmed, but I had not understood that I was still grieving. It's so easy to lose perspective when we are in the middle of a challenging situation. While researching and interviewing for my Grief TV Show, I honored my own grief and lost loved ones. The experience was cathartic.

Our society of high-energy, upbeat and positive people worships life. Death seems so out of place. Grief can be messy. Grief can be awkward. Grief can come at unexpected times; yet grief is a part of healing and an integral part of life. When we let our feelings come up, when we actually sit with them, we engage in the healing process and begin the real journey – where the past informs the present creating a new reality.

Do you have a story or a personal experience that you'd like to share? Write to me at gen@sportofmotherhood.com.

Quick Links

[Watch Our "Honoring Grief" Show](#)

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More Destinations

put forth a positive attitude and be of service to others." Every mom cares. Every mom has become, by necessity, an organizational guru. Each already possesses the major attributes needed. Add the ability to present a confident first impression, and all the ingredients are in the mix. Nothing new to learn except the job necessities.

One mom told me with a forlorn look, "I'm just a homemaker." I quickly discovered she planned and orchestrated parties in Hawaii for her family - upwards of 500 people! Talk about transferable skills-- start with recruiting, training, customer service, event planning . . . and so on. "Just a mom" is "Just a highly-talented event planner."

When Dee Dee Towery rushed up to the Grid Systems booth at a hiring fair 10 years ago, she enthusiastically exclaimed, "High tech. Looks like a great company. However, I don't have the experience." I stuffed her resume in my pocket so no human resource person would rule out Dee Dee for lack of experience. Given her enthusiasm, I offered Dee Dee the customer relations supervisor position, and she helped lead a rapid turnaround which received national press attention. Today, Dee Dee is president of Proactive Business Solutions in Oakland, has her advanced degree from UC Berkeley, and won the Oakland Chamber of Commerce woman-owned business of the year award. Her company is number 40 on the INC magazine top 100 inner city companies in the United States. By the way, Dee Dee did have experience. She just didn't realize her skills were TRANSFERABLE to high tech.

There are really no limits to what you can do. Start with what you enjoy, and you will find many skills which are transferable. Listen to those positive, supportive family members and friends who will convince you to test the many skills and talents which have quietly developed under the challenges of motherhood. Your talents may fit into more industries than you realize.

Ivan Temes is the founder of Leadership and Loyalty, a company dedicated to working with employees and leaders to build confidence, teamwork, and exceptional customer satisfaction. His corporate experience includes directing customer care teams worldwide for corporations such as Levi's International, Apple Computer, JBL, Navigation Technologies and Myteam/Little League. You can visit his website at www.ivantemes.com

I Love What I Do But How Do I Make Money?



Protect It!
by Daniella Russo

At this point you have a pretty good idea of what you will do, who your customers are and how to take your idea to market. Now, you must take steps to protect your intellectual property. It would be a shame to spend time, money and resources, only to find out that someone else beats you to the punch.

This article does not offer legal advice but will suggest some common and pretty basic strategies to protect yourself and your invention. They are simple, doable, and they work.

1. Write It Down. This is especially important if you are documenting an invention, or if you plan to file for a patent. It is extremely important also in cases where you want to establish copyright protection on a name or work of art. Start with your idea, and begin a journal. Document every meeting from the very beginning. A date, a list of attendees, and the topics discussed is all you need.

[Click here to continue reading](#)

Carnival Cheer

by Joanie King, Editor, [Rhyming Tributes](#)

We dropped off our daughter that first day of school.
We waved and blew kisses to our precious jewel.



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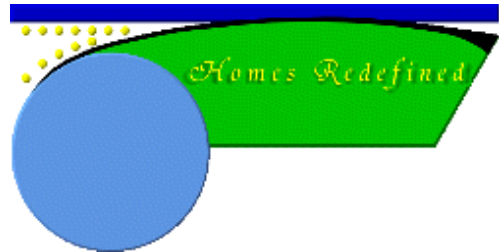


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Kara: Grief Support and Education

Then as I was throwing the van in reverse,
 The Cat in the Hat appeared, waving my purse:
 "You left this behind," said the Cat with a grin
 And sliding the van door, the Cat clambered in.
 "Allow me to welcome you! How wonderful!
 Please choose your jobs for the Fall Carnival!"
 With dizzying speed which you wouldn't believe
 The Cat produced sign-ups from inside a sleeve.
 We got out our pencils, why, wouldn't have you?
 The Cat claimed there really was not much to do!
 Just sew a few dresses and glue a few wands
 Alongside our colleagues, we'd form friendship bonds
 Then bake scrumptious goodies and work at a booth
 And sell raffle tickets- to tell you the truth,
 It did seem to add up to rather a lot!
 "But actually," countered the Cat, "it does not."
 And just when we thought we had given our all
 A sign-up appeared in the sign-up-sheet hall!
 For what kind of work, I cannot rightly say;
 I signed up my husband for Maintenance Day.
 Exhausted and battered, estranged from our child,
 I woke up on Carnival Day reconciled
 To hours of work in the drizzling rain
 "YOU chose a co-op!" my husband complained.
 I got to the school with my dozens of treats
 Dutifully dressed as a large parakeet
 My husband would join me with young what's- her-name--
 For now I had posters to hang in the rain.
 Then suddenly, meekly, the sun struggled out
 The side gate flew open, the crowds gave a shout
 The children poured through as bluegrass filled the air
 Balloons filled the big yard and bottoms filled chairs.
 With screams of delight with each plastic prize won,
 The smiles on the children would outshine the sun!
 My daughter ran up, smeared with chocolate and more
 Clutching a prize and a doll from the store,
 Announced, as she crushed my elaborate costume
 "There's cookies and clown cupcakes in my classroom!
 And Daddy bid money on jewelry for you!
 And look what the funny balloon clown can do!"
 And as she ran off to the third magic show,
 Her big fuzzy Dad-rabbit hopping in tow,
 The friend I had made when we glued jewels to felt
 Brought me a truffle! Before it could melt,
 I gobbled it up and I gave her a squeeze
 And thought there will never be days quite like these.

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