

Laurel House Comfort Care Home



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"THE YEARS TEACH MUCH WHICH THE DAYS
NEVER KNOW. "

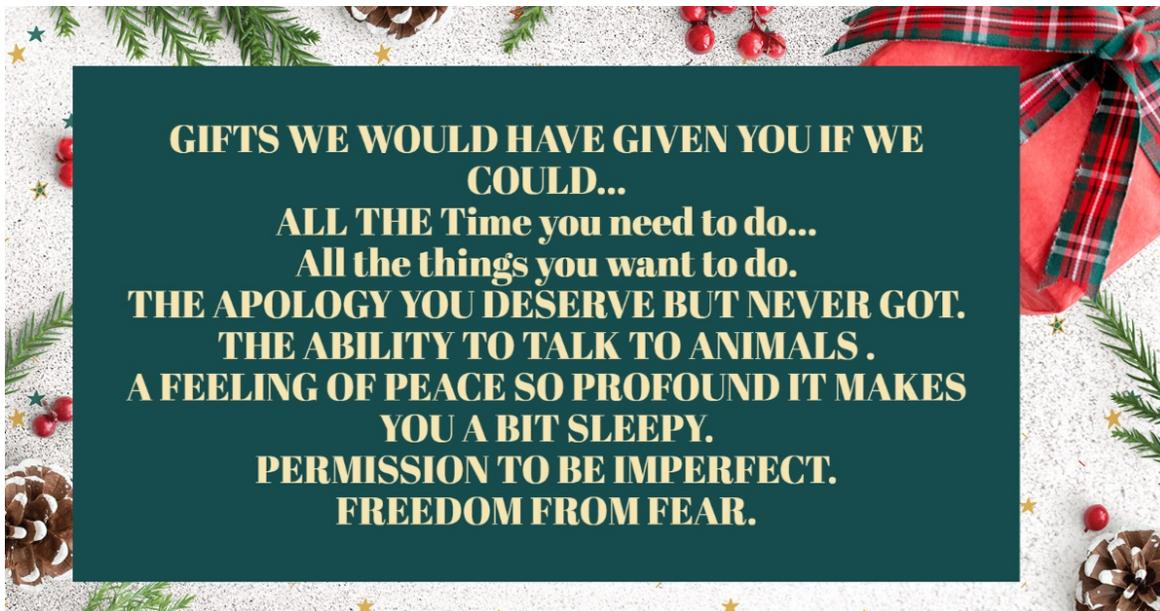
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

A new year usually brings excitement and joy, however when you are grieving it just means more time is passing. I hope this edition of the newsletter brings you happiness and things to look forward to along with some resources.

Be well!

~Laci Graham, Executive Director

Hope you had a Wonderful Holiday Season!





Time for a new beginning... a new start... a fresh look at life... celebrate the year just past... and here we go again...

Notice we didn't say "time to make your new year's resolutions". As well-meaning as they sound, they don't seem to translate into satisfied happenings. How about taking stock of the time ahead as a fresh slate, an opportunity to bring something new and refreshing into our lives and awareness?

LIFE IS ABOUT BECOMING MORE OF WHO WE TRULY ARE, AND LETTING MORE OF WHO WE TRULY AREN'T FALL AWAY.

As we ponder that wonderful phrase, it seems obvious this means taking stock of what we are doing well, encourage it to change and grow, instead of looking only at the negative column of "whoops, there I go again!" Too often we keep a balance sheet on our lives with one column for all the mistakes we made without another listing all the things we did right. If we did that with our finances it would be like recording all our expenses but not our bank deposits. On paper we would look bankrupt!

So looking at our lives, the very least we can do is make both columns or do neither. Give ourselves an honest chance to assess the balance!

We found some refreshing insights into this area, in two poems. One encourages us to see ourselves as who we are, instead of who we are not. The other offers us the celebration of life as we grow older that lets us indulge some of the special moments previously not allowed. There are many other fresh viewpoints on going forward, but we offer these for you to view and take whatever seems right for you.

Do you know who is
Erin Hanson?

Erin Hanson is a 26-year-old poet born the 22nd of June, 1995 in Brisbane, Australia. She rose to fame for her beautiful, insightful

NOT By Erin Hanson

You are not your age,
Nor the size of clothes you wear,
You are not a weight,
Or the colour of your hair.

You are not your name,
Or the dimples in your cheeks,
You are all the books you read,
And all the words you speak,

You are your croaky morning voice,
And the smiles you try to hide,
You're the sweetness in your laughter,
And every tear you've cried,

You're the songs you sing so loudly,
When you know you're all alone,
You're the places that you've been to,
And the one that you call home,

You're the things that you believe in,
And the people that you love,
You're the photos in your bedroom,
And the future you dream of,

You're made of so much beauty,
But it seems that you forgot,
When you decided that you were defined,
By all the things you're not.

poetry.
It all started with a blog, a small dream, and a keen desire for expression. She started a blog when she was age 11 and then pursued more serious participation in the year 2011. Her fame was sealed when she coined the phrase, "What if I fall? Oh but my darling, what if you fly?" from a poem on freedom. That quote is now familiar across the world. Erin is perhaps best known for her Poetry of Self-Acceptance, entitled NOT, which we are sharing with you here today. Her fresh perspective invites a kinder look at life as we know it. For more info on Erin Hanson view her webpage on the internet where more of her memorable poems can be enjoyed.

And as we age, perhaps reframing things.....

Red Hat Society:

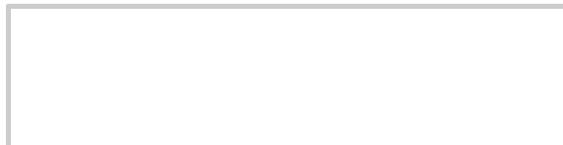
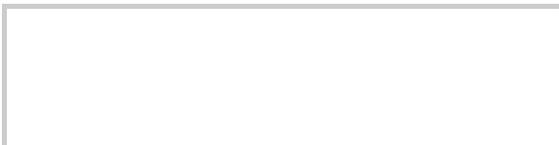
A history of sisterhood and support

The Red Hat Society, one of the premier international women's social organizations in the world, began in Fullerton, Calif. From a single gift of a red hat, it has grown into a symbol for women around the globe as they turn 50 and enter the next phase of their lives.

In November 1997, Red Hat founder Sue Ellen Cooper's gift of a red hat and the poem by Jenny Joseph titled "Warning" grew into something much larger than a club or group; it evolved into a women's movement of sorts consisting of members committed to supporting each other through fun and friendship.

In 1998, the Red Hat Society became an official organization and since that time has spread to millions of women around the globe. Membership grew from two chapters in 1999 to more than 40,000 chapters worldwide within five years.

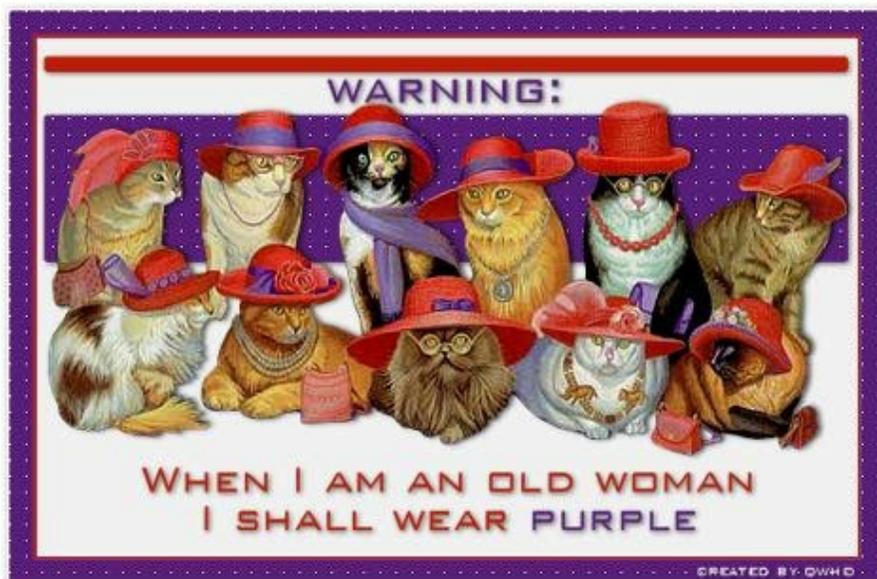
The Red Hat Society has become its own women's movement with a strong emphasis on the positive aspects of life, stressing the importance of friendship and sisterhood, the value of play and a determination to find the good in life everywhere possible. Members promote respect for all and the value of good will and good humor.





WARNING by Jenny Joseph

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.
You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in boxes.
But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.
But maybe I ought to practice a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.
from *Selected Poems* (Bloodaxe, 1992)

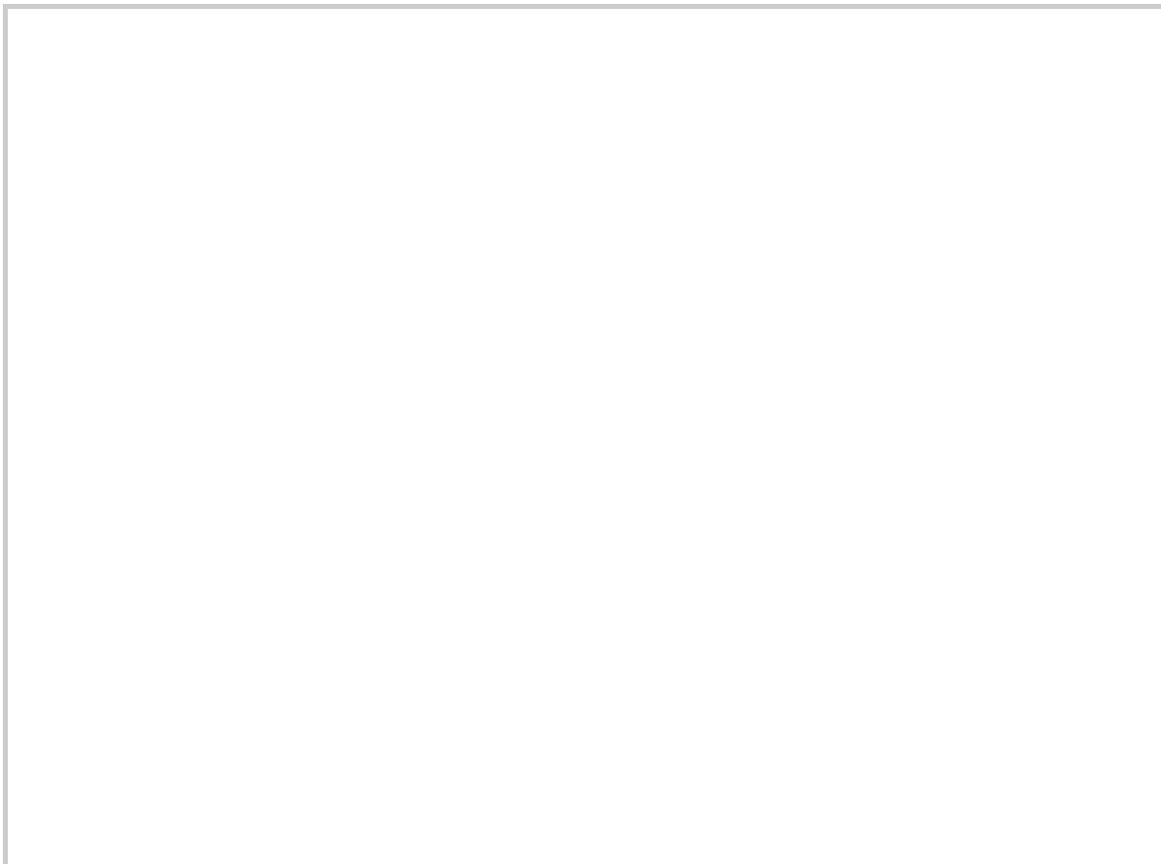
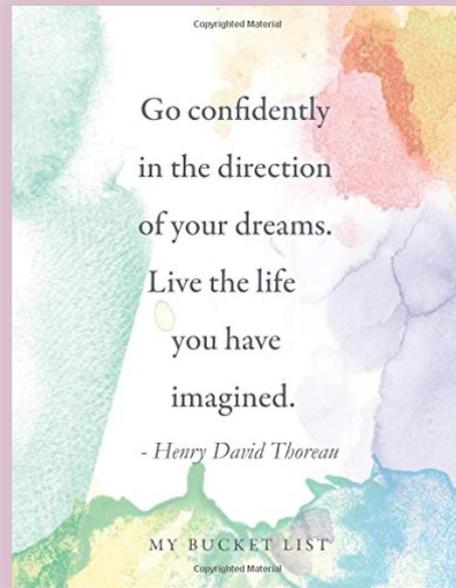
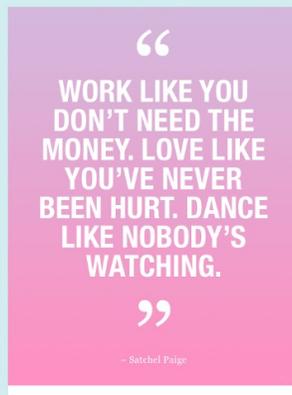


STEPS FOR THE FUTURE

from

WORDS FROM THE PAST

While we are looking to step up to the challenges a new year brings, we can find helpful signposts with words of wisdom from the past. Many of these are found on QUOTABLE CARDS found in greeting card venues. We are taking a sneak peek at some of the notable quotables from their offerings.



The purpose of life
is to live it

to taste experience
to the utmost,

to reach out eagerly
and without fear

for newer and

richer experience

-Eleanor Roosevelt

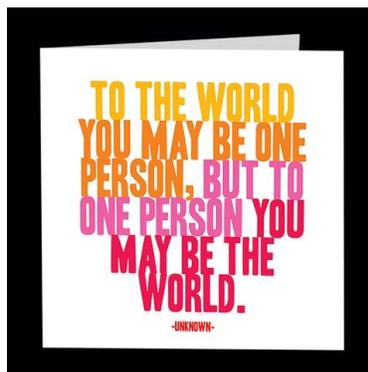
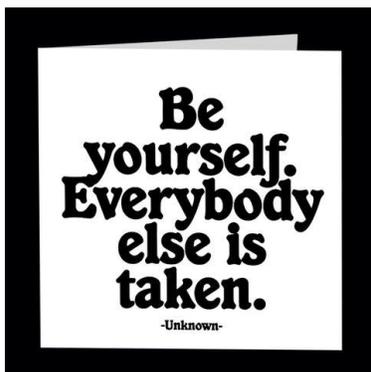
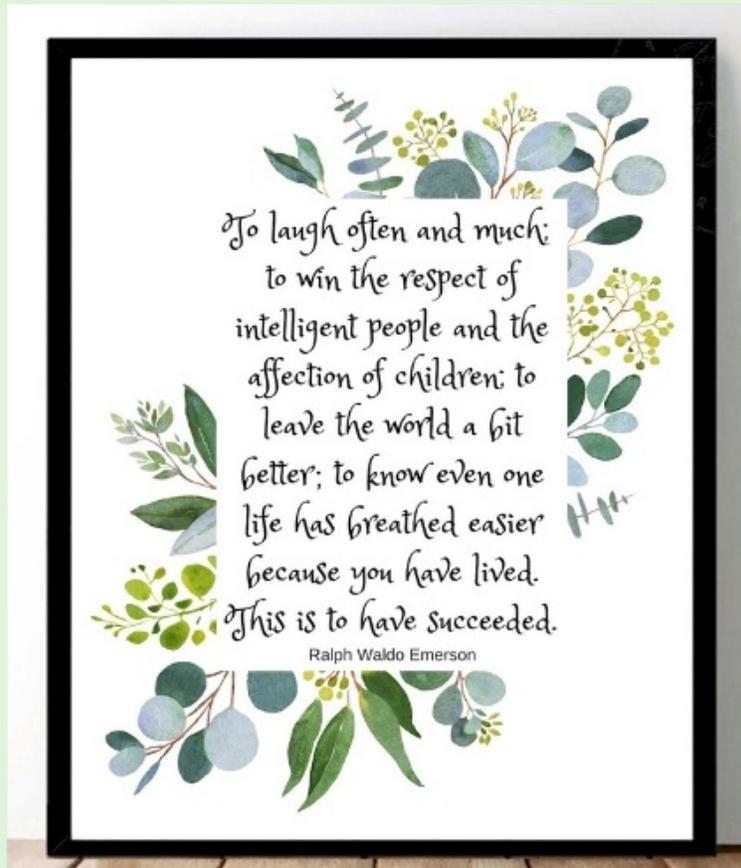
What lies behind us
and what lies before us
are tiny matters...
compared to what lies
within us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

for a long time it seemed to me that
life was about to begin - real life.
but there was always some obstacle
in the way. something to be gotten
through first, some unfinished
business, time still to be served,
a debt to be paid. at last it dawned
on me that these obstacles were my
life. this perspective has helped me
to see there is no way to happiness.
happiness is the way. so treasure
every moment you have and
remember that time waits for no one.

happiness is
a journey,
not a
destination...

-souza



Shared

Moments

Do you have a special moment that brought significant meaning and help in dealing with the loss in your life you are willing to share?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

It has been our plan to include those special moments for readers of Take My Hand.

Don't feel you can write this? No problem. Just email Laci, or phone her at Laurel House and relate your important experience. We will write it up for you to be published in one of our issues once you approve the rendition. You can either choose to be anonymous, or grant permission to use your name....your choice.

Thank you in advance for sharing your special moments with us! We are all in this together as we link hearts and minds to further our healing while honoring the ones we love and the moments that have meant so much.



A few Ways to refocus, relax and unplug in the new year....

Timely Tips

7 BENEFITS OF COLORING FOR ADULTS AND WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE ADULT COLORING CRAZE



Every major news outlet from [CNN](#) to [CBS News](#) is reporting about the adult coloring phenomenon. What once was an activity that kept so many of us entertained as children, is now resurfacing as a trend adults are coming to love. Therapeutic elements parents sought to keep their children calm or entertained before dinner, are now being applied to adults, to help distract them from the daily pressures of life.

That said, here are the top 7 benefits of coloring for adults:

1. Your brain experiences relief by entering a meditative state
2. Stress and anxiety levels have the potential to be lowered
3. Negative thoughts are expelled as you take in positivity
4. Focusing on the present helps you achieve mindfulness
5. Unplugging from technology promotes creation over consumption
6. Coloring can be done by anyone, not just artists or creative types
7. It's a hobby that can be taken with you wherever you go



These same benefits may be achieved in the use of this finger labyrinth as well...

Labyrinth How to Use a Finger Labyrinth:

A Finger Labyrinth is a pathway you can trace with your fingertip. Start at the edge of the Labyrinth and trace with the lines until you reach the center. There's only one path, so you will always reach it.

If the pathway is small, try using something that points like a capped pen, a stylus, or a coffee stir stick.

THEN TAKE A DEEP BREATH, and trace back out to the edge. Repeat this back-and-forth motion as often as you wish.

THE REIMS CATHEDRAL LABYRINTH

THE REIMS CATHEDRAL LABYRINTH

The Reims Cathedral Labyrinth was part of the floor stones in the nave of the cathedral in Reims, France - the traditional coronation place of French kings.

The ancient labyrinth featured the figures of master masons in the corner alcoves and at the center. Medieval pilgrims walked the labyrinth on their knees. The original was lost, and now is replaced by a replica that is projected onto the floor on special occasions.

*A pilgrim walking forth,
Seeks blessings soft and kind.
Traveling venerable roads,
Sparks insights of the mind.*

Ravensdaughter



Good Friends are
like stars...
the Darker the night,
the brighter they
shine.

Can You Ever Really Get Over Losing a Loved One?

By

Brittany Loggins

Published on November 23, 2021

Medically reviewed by

Daniel B. Block, MD

If you have lost a loved one, you've probably already realized that there are so many emotions and feelings that come along with an unexpected or expected loss of a loved one.

No matter where you are in terms of your **grieving process**, it's important to remember that your feelings are valid, and you're not on anyone else's timeline when it comes to healing.

To find out how people work through their grief while still honoring their loss, Verywell Mind interviewed Frank Anderson, MD, a psychotherapist and psychiatrist who specializes in the treatment of trauma.

This article covers how people cope in the short- and long-term aftermaths of loss. It also discusses **how to deal with negative memories** or **feelings of guilt**.

How to Cope in the Immediate Aftermath of Loss

Dr. Anderson explains that, in today's culture, there's often a lot of pressure to move on and heal quickly after a loss. So, he's adamant that the goal shouldn't be to just move on and get over someone.

Remember to Show Yourself Compassion

Healing takes time, and you should **show yourself patience** and grace as you work through your grief at your own pace.

My goal when working with someone who has suffered a loss is to help them hold on to what they need or want to hold on to and to let go of what no longer serves them or needs to be carried.

— FRANK ANDERSON, MD

Allow Yourself to Experience a Range of Emotions

Instead of focusing on distinct phases of grief and trying to rush through them, research actually shows that it can be harmful to stick so staunchly to these preconceived ideas of what the stages will look like, especially for people that don't feel like that has been their experience.

Dr. Anderson reiterates this advice by saying that the goal should be to settle into a peaceful mental place rather than worrying about where you think you're supposed to be.

Anderson describes the fairly common experience of someone dealing with a loss: they receive an overflow of love and support in the immediate aftermath of the loss then experience **feelings of isolation** as everyone else tends to go back to normal.

Remember That Healing Takes Time

While it's easy to fall into feeling like you need to move on, it's OK to take time to grieve. Dr. Anderson reiterates that it takes time to process all of the feelings that accompany a loss, and people should feel comfortable taking as much time as they need.

He notes that he often finds himself reminding clients that it's only been a short period of time when they **express feelings** of wanting to be past their feelings of grief. "The passage of time is important when dealing with grief and loss," he says.

'Time Heals All Wounds:' Is There Any Truth to This?

How to Cope After Time Has Passed

Dr. Anderson discusses some ways in which he helps clients heal after some time has passed following the loss.

Embrace Memories

In general, Anderson encourages people to embrace memories or **dreams** that continually pop up, even if time has passed.

"I find that people who constantly think about the person or repeatedly **replay memories** or scenarios related to their loved one often have parts of them that are trying to keep the memories alive," says Anderson.

By this, he means that the mind is trying to keep the memory of that person alive and well. While this may feel like you can't move past something, it could be that your mind is trying to hold on to the memories that brought you joy.

Anderson also specifies that if your mind is constantly replaying something, it may mean that it's an important memory that could bring you peace as you heal.

Don't Bury Your Feelings

Dr. Anderson explains that he encourages his clients to focus on what they are feeling in the present moment, which can often lead to healing. When people do this successfully, **people will often feel more validated** having truly considered what they are feeling.

Finding Meaning from the Loss

Research has shown that many people arrive at a place of healing after they feel that they have derived meaning and context from their loss. This is especially relevant when people can allow different feelings to exist at once, meaning that they can accept their sadness and yet still hold on to the meaning of the relationship. This can help people get to a place where it's easier to regulate their emotions.

Remember That Negative Memories Are Normal

It can be especially hard to cope with the loss of a loved one if you feel like you **never made peace** with them over something personal. It's also common for people to keep replaying everything that they could have done to provide them with better mental, emotional, or physical support.

While these things are normal, it's understandable if they make healing more difficult.

"**Negative memories** or feelings of guilt are also a normal part of the grieving process," says Dr. Anderson. "I help clients explore the origins of these feelings." Especially when clients are continually re-hashing things that they wish they had done, Dr. Anderson says he works to "validate these parts of my client, letting them know I understand why they would feel this way and gently help them come to **terms with the vulnerability** and true lack of control any of us have over the inevitability of loss in our lives."

Can You Ever Really Move On From the Loss of a Loved One?

While finding meaning after a loss is often mentioned, it can be hard to know exactly what that means.

To help figure this out, researchers followed people after the loss of loved ones and checked in with them immediately after, one year, 13-months, and 18-

months after their losses.

For their study, they chose to define meaning as the ability to make sense of the event itself and find a benefit in the experience. Making sense of the loss was important during the first year, and even resulted in less stress. However, benefit-finding was more important in determining the person's ability to adjust in the long term.

This definitely supports the idea that the ability to derive meaning while still feeling sadness and other emotions can be critical to getting to a place of healing.

What exactly moving on looks like will be different for every individual. It means that you are able to reach a place where you don't think about them every minute of every day, or even that you reach a place wherein you're comforted by running across reminders of the loved one.

The Type of Loss Matters

The ability to heal can also depend on if the loss was anticipated or sudden.

Research has shown that sudden losses can lead to close family members **experiencing PTSD**, and it can be helpful to consider **group therapy**.

Families who have had to face caring for a loved one that was dealing with a long-term illness tend to face more **feelings of helplessness**, primarily tied to their desire to help care for their loved one when they were alive.

A Word From Verywell

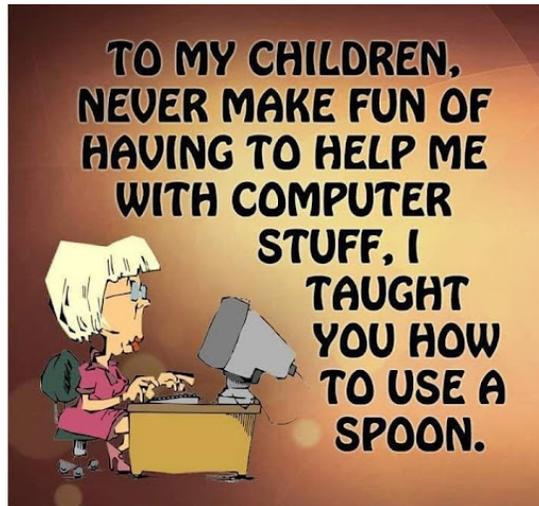
No matter where you are in your healing process, it's **important to prioritize your mental health**. Healing is never a straight line, and it can often feel uncomfortable. Try to avoid comparing your healing journey to anyone else and their **coping strategies**.

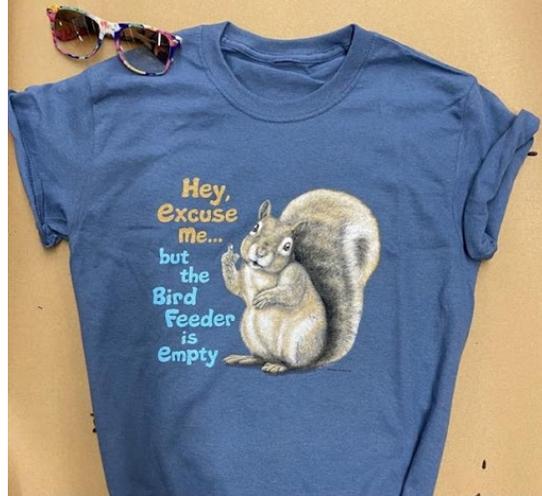
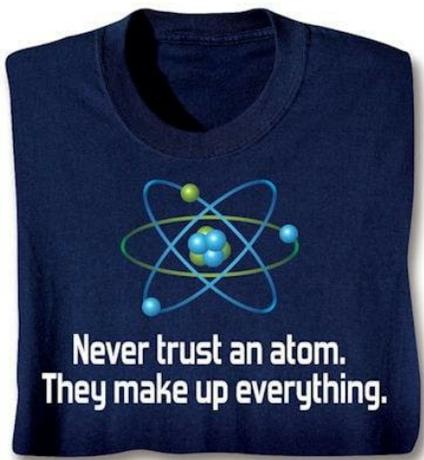
Allow yourself to heal at the pace that you need. And never ever feel guilty about reaching out for help from **mental health professionals** or from your friends and loved ones.

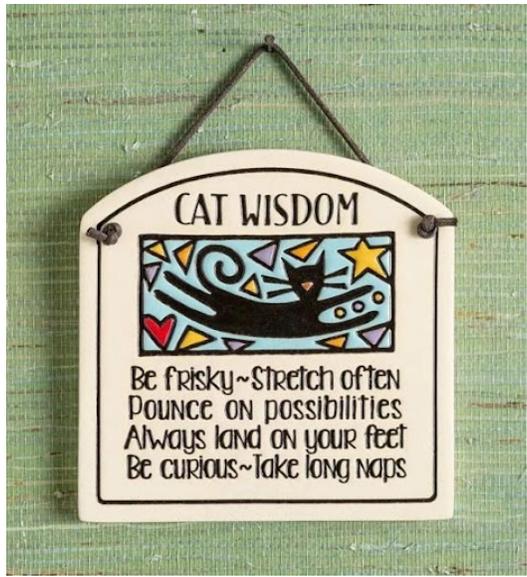
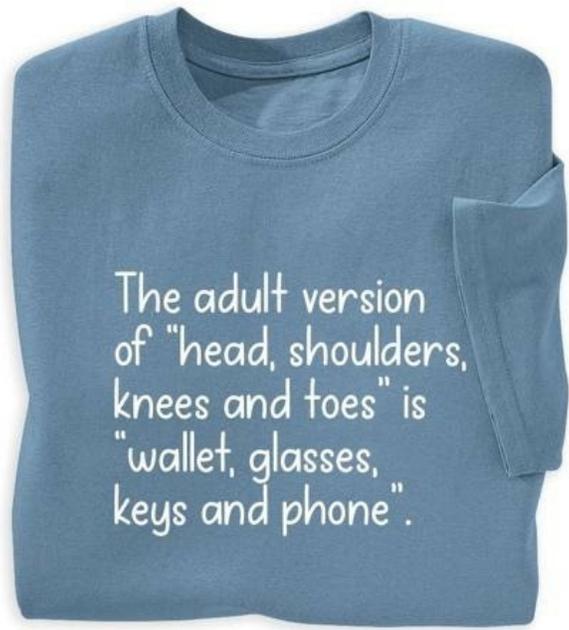
On The Lighter Side....

T SHIRTS TO MAKE YOU SMILE (T Hee Hee).









Leaning into the lighter side of 2022...



*"My new year's resolution is
to vote 'yes' on something."*

DO YOU RELATE TO THIS?

I took my computer to be serviced and have a few adjustments.

The handsome and charming young man, my technician said, "[This is really an](#)

older computer."

I protested, "It's only about 8 or 10 years old!"

"Oh, not this machine, the design. Must be about 30 years old.

Actually it's older than I am."

You better be laughing, as I answered, "My friends are going to love this one!"

I decided to let him get away with this. After all he was handsome, respectful and charming. Besides

we all know older is better.....

Right?.....

Don't we?.....

Don't you think?.....Hello???? I'm not hearing you.

~Anonymous



Blessing



may the sun
bring you new energy by day,
may the moon
softly restore you by night,
may the rain
wash away your worries,
may the breeze
blow new strength into your being,
may you walk
gently through the world and know
its beauty all the days of your life.

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