



Mending Ben's Broken Heart

Like many 11-year-old boys, Ben liked to play video games. He also enjoyed spending time with his older brothers, even though they teased him. And he had a very close relationship with his mother.

But suddenly Ben's world was turned upside down. The first week of his sixth grade year, his mother died unexpectedly. Since his brothers no longer lived at home, Ben felt very alone. It was decided that he would move in with his uncle, which meant leaving everyone and everything familiar and moving to Washington.

Not surprisingly, Ben seemed depressed and hopeless. His uncle was concerned, so he called **GriefWorks**. Staff member Kelli soon met with Ben, who appeared weary and unsure but gradually opened up. Ben also participated in one of **GriefWorks'** seven-week "Grief Talk at School" groups.

Through his time with the group and with Kelli, Ben began to understand what grief can feel like, how children grieve differently than adults, and how families change after someone dies. He also learned tools for working through grief. He soon found it easier to talk about his mother and all that he had endured surrounding her death.

Ben enjoyed sharing stories about his mother—her likes and dislikes, her smile, and how she had taught him to swim. Before Mother's Day, Ben decided to create a memorial. He surrounded a photograph of his mother with special items, including a small bouquet and a clay heart he had made to represent a mother's love.

By the end of the school year, Ben was looking forward to a summer of playing video games and spending time with his uncle. He also had made new friends through "Grief Talk at School." During his last meeting with Kelli, Ben said "I didn't believe you when you said things would get easier, but they did, I feel better, but I still don't miss my mom any less."

Thank you for partnering with **GriefWorks** in helping Ben and countless others mend their broken hearts and re-landscape their lives in the absence of their loved ones.

**To maintain confidentiality, we have not used Ben's real name.*

You're Invited!

Come learn how you can join us in mending hearts and re-landscaping lives through ...

Compassion Partners

- Partners with the Brokenhearted
- Partners with Families
- Partners with Students

at GriefWorks' 4th Annual Benefit Breakfast

Thursday, December 13

7:00 - 8:30 a.m.

Emerald Downs, Auburn

For reservations for this complimentary breakfast - or to volunteer with preparations - please call or e-mail debbie@griefworks.org. And to learn about being a Table Captain or a Corporate Sponsor, e-mail:

James Branch

GriefWorks Executive Director

james@griefworks.org

In lieu of our **Open House Reception**, previously scheduled for September 17th, we will introduce our board, staff members, and volunteers at the breakfast. Please come and get to know these devoted individuals, who are working together to help **GriefWorks** progress to the next level in serving the bereaved. We all look forward to seeing you Thursday December 13th!

It's Not Too Late!

There is still time to sign up for our Fall **Grief Talk** groups, but please hurry! Both groups will meet on Tuesdays, and they are scheduled to begin Sept. 18th, 10:30 a.m. to noon and 6:30 to 8 p.m. We also plan to begin a **Family Night Series** Thursday Nov. 1st, 6:15-8:15 p.m.

For more information see the attached **Programs and Services** schedule. To register, call (253) 333-9420 or (800) 850-9420, or e-mail debbie@griefworks.org

GriefWorks at Auburn Good Ol' Days

A parade, face painting, local music, classic cars, and yes, **GriefWorks!** At the annual "Auburn Good Ol' Days" celebration, volunteers joined staff and board members in hosting a booth to spread the good word about **GriefWorks**. Community members and service providers stopped by to learn about our programs for children, teen, and adults.

If you are interested in joining the fun by volunteering for one of our special events, contact debbie@griefworks.org.

A special thanks to Mike Harbin, Art Gourlay, Bob Baugher, Tracy Rioux, Judy Knowles, Nata Martinez, Gail Jahn, Sara Hildebrand, Jeannie Weldon, and Craig Hudson for their efforts in making this year's booth a success.

(Board member Gail Jahn making things fun at Auburn Good Ol' Days, August 11-12.)





Ask Dr. Bob

Everything you wanted to know about loss but were afraid to ask

Dear Dr. Bob,

Four months ago, during heart surgery, my mother suddenly died. She was only 56. We had her funeral, where I saw her body in the casket. I'm worried because I've really not cried about it, except a little at the funeral. It feels kind of like nothing -- I go about

my daily activities.

I guess you can say I'm not really grieving. I love my mother and want her back, but people around me (my wife especially) are concerned with my reaction, or rather lack of reaction. **Lee**

Dear Lee,

This may be the extent of your grief. One likely possibility, however, is that you are experiencing symptoms of continued shock from your mother's death. When we experience a significant blow to our body, the area affected goes numb. Similarly, a "blow" to our mind can cause our brain to go numb. Consider shock a type of cushion in which your brain attempts to protect itself from overwhelming pain. As the shock begins to wear off, the reality of the pain begins to sink in.

In the case of a death—especially a sudden death, as was the case with your mother—shock is certainly a likely reaction. Sometimes the blow to our brain is so great that shock continues for a long time. You stated that you "go about your daily activities." Perhaps it is because of the lurking harsh reality that you will never see, touch, and hear your mother on earth again. Often the passage of time helps. But sometimes, despite the ensuing pain, doing your own grief work can help reduce the shock.

One way to confront your situation is to take time out of the day to focus on your mother's life: what she means to you, what caring gifts she gave you, and stories of her life. Do this alone and in a safe place, perhaps your bedroom. Music and pictures often provide a context to focus on what you have and what you have lost. Finally, be gentle with yourself. The death of a mother is a life-changing event that requires our own way of grieving in our own time.

Regards, **Dr. Bob**

Bob Baugher, Ph.D., has taught for over 25 years and currently is a psychology professor at Highline Community College, where his classes include Death and Life. He has led numerous community and national bereavement workshops as well as written or co-authored several books, including the newly released "The Crying Handbook." To learn more about or to order his resources, visit <http://www.griefworks.org/>.

Founder's Corner

GriefWorks exists to provide a warm and accepting environment for bereaved people of almost any age.

We're here to help others gain understanding about healing grief work and then to enter into that work with caring support.

Trained staff offer dotted yellow lines for the sometimes steep, twisted, and unpredictable journey through grief. We don't know how long it will take. We do know that it will *feel* like it is taking way too long. And we know that we will travel *together* - staff, trained volunteers, and clients - detours included!

The dotted yellow lines are information about the natural grieving process ... the needs of the bereaved ... the language of grief...the tasks of grief...the "flashing yellow lights" that signal when additional professional help is needed...the difference between "self-absorbed" and "a season of self-caring"...using activities and rituals that nurture healing ... trusting our heart to know what we need ... and much more.

What about those detours? They are inevitable! A broken heart does not exempt us from the normal detours of life, like the car breaking down or the plumbing backing up. Detours are all the more reason to find support for the journey.

Remember, no one needs to travel through grief alone. **GriefWorks** is here to help guide you along the dotted yellow lines. We hope that, ultimately, you will look back on your journey and recognize your own healing. And you'll see that you never got permanently lost or fell off the map! You may even find - as I have - that your journey has evolved into a gratifying main road with exciting horizons.

That is how **GriefWorks** was founded. And, with the help of our partners, I see continued growth and development ahead as we serve the bereaved.

*Mel Erickson, along with Nanette Flynn, founded **GriefWorks** in 1998 as a bereavement resource providing education and support for people grieving a death or seeking to understand the grief process.*

GriefWorks

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About GriefWorks

The mission of **GriefWorks** is to serve as a bereavement resource providing education and support for people grieving a death or seeking to understand the grief process. Since 1998, we have provided healing and hope to more than 9,000 children, teens and adults who experienced a devastating loss.

GriefWorks relies on the generous donations of individuals and organizations. **GriefWorks** is a nonprofit organization, and contributions to **GriefWorks** are tax-deductible. To partner with us financially, please send your tax-deductible donation to **GriefWorks**, P.O. Box 912, Auburn, WA 98071-0912. Thank you!

GriefWorks also depends on volunteer involvement. Do you have a few hours to give each week or each month? Or perhaps you can help on a one-time basis for a large event, such as our upcoming breakfast. To learn more about volunteering your time, please e-mail debbie@griefworks.org.

We appreciate each of you who are supporting our work through your time and donations! Your generosity is making a difference in lives of kids and teens!

