

The Importance of Hope

by [Center for Loss](#) | Dec 21, 2023 | [Articles](#)

by **Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.**

*"Today...
I open my heart's hand to allow...
the touch of hope."
— Julia Cameron*

Someone you love has died. In your heart you have come to know your deepest pain. Your grief has brought challenges that seem beyond your own capacity to survive. Grief creates chaos, and your soul cries out. You naturally experience a sense of helplessness and, at times, you feel the depths of hopelessness. It all feels so incredibly overwhelming. And as you live in this painful place, you come to learn that you must surrender to your grief, sit in your wound, and make space for your lost self.

If your experience is in any way like my own and those of the thousands of mourners I have had the honor to walk with and learn from, you are feeling abandoned and alone right now. You may instinctively be questioning the meaning and purpose of life. You recognize that so many things in your daily life have changed your plans, your dreams, your concerns, and your roles. You may discover yourself searching for a reason to go on living in the face of this loss and asking countless "How?" and "Why" questions.

*"How can this be happening?"
"How am I going to make it through this?"
"Why did this happen now, in this way?"
"Why am I feeling so lost?"*

When we experience a loss—whether it is the death of someone loved, a divorce loss, the loss of a job, or a significant change in health—loss reminds us of how little control we really have over some things about life and living. Naturally, these kinds of losses (among many others) can leave us feeling incredibly powerless, seemingly helpless, and deeply hopeless at times.

When we lose someone we love, it changes us. The person who died was a part of you and part of your life. This death means you must mourn a loss not only outside yourself, but inside yourself as well. At times, overwhelming sadness and loneliness may be constant companions to you on this grief journey. You may feel that when

this person died, part of you died with him or her. And now you are faced with finding some sense of meaning at a time when you may be feeling empty and alone. Your loneliness and emptiness are often present, even in the midst of family and friends. When others try to help by saying, "I know just how you feel," they usually do not. They cannot. They are not walking this walk for you. Your pain, your questions, your doubts, your fears are unique. No one can know exactly how this feels for you.

While your grief is unique, some of the questions you may be asking are universal. The fears, doubts and questions that come when we experience grief have been with us since the beginning of our awareness that loss is part of the cycle of life. Loss truly is an integral part of life. You are asking questions that others before you have raised. Questions that have been raised to God. Questions that have been asked about God. Like others who have been where you are, you may be feeling distant from your God, perhaps even questioning the existence of God. These kinds of questions have been preserved in time because they belong to and are asked by most everyone who experiences the pain of loss.

So, like your fellow travelers on this grief journey, you are faced with sitting in the wound of your grief. When you sit in the wound of your grief, you surrender to it in recognition that the only way to the other side of the pain and hopelessness is through the pain and hopelessness. You acknowledge that you are willing to do the work that mourning requires. Paradoxically, it is in befriending your wound that eventually you will restore your life and reinvest in living.

Loss of your divine spark and the role of hope in your healing

People in grief often come to see me on the sacred grounds of the Center for Loss and Life Transition. When they begin their grief journey, they often start by expressing their sense of hopelessness by saying, "I feel so hopeless," or, "I am not sure I can go on living." Like you, the losses that have touched their lives have naturally muted, if not extinguished, their divine spark. Their divine spark is that internal energy that gives meaning and purpose to life. Your divine spark or life force is the keeper of your mind, your body, and your soul.

I discovered some time ago that a central part of my helping role is to gently and quietly bring Hope to those in grief. Hope that encourages them to discover a renewed divine spark and a desire to reenter life with meaning and purpose. Each and every one of us as humans has a divine spark. We are each the keeper of our own spark or life force. My personal life losses and my role as a caregiver to others

have taught me that hope is the vital ingredient that helps us reignite our divine spark after loss breaks our hearts and touches our souls.

...

When you find you are doubting yourself or your journey, read the words that speak to you as a way of nurturing yourself back toward life and living. These enduring and wise observations from some of the world's greatest hope-filled philosophers will help you to begin reprogramming your attitude and your view of the world around you.

My hope is that you find this little book to be a gentle companion that gives you wisdom and strength for today, tomorrow, and each day that follows.

My prayer for you

May you continue to discover hope—an expectation of a good that is yet to be. May you continue to find new ways to renew your divine spark and to believe that meaning, purpose, and love will come back into your life. No, you did not go in search of this loss. But it has come to you, and you have discovered the importance of sitting in your wound on the pathway to your healing. If you give up, the essence of who you are will die or be muted for the rest of your life. Hope can and will keep this from happening.

May you never give up and may you consciously choose life! May you turn your face to the radiance of joy every day. May you live in the continued awareness that you are being cradled in love by a caring presence that never deserts you. May you keep your heart open wide and receptive to what life brings you, both happy and sad. And may you walk a pathway to living your life fully and on purpose until you die.

Blessings to you as you befriend hope and choose to celebrate life. May your divine spark shine brightly as you share your gifts and your love with the universe.

Companion Press is the publishing arm of The Center for Loss & Life Transition
<https://www.centerforloss.com/2023/12/the-importance-of-hope/>

