

# THE PEACEMAKER CENTER

JULY 2009

## THE PEACEMAKER CENTER

103 Garris Road  
Downingtown, PA 19335

&

426 W. Gay Street  
West Chester, PA 19380

(Hours by appointment)

P. 610-269-2661

F. 610-269-7562

[contact@thepeacemakercenter.org](mailto:contact@thepeacemakercenter.org)



## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Victor Bayo Jegede, President

John Clark, Treasurer

George T. Keyes, Secretary

Judy Reid, Executive Director

Deb Michaud



## OUR MISSION

The mission of The Peacemaker Center is to help people find peace with God, themselves and with others through biblically-based counseling and conflict resolution.

The Peacemaker Center is open to anyone for help with:

- Individual, Group, Family Counseling
- Marital Counseling
- Grief and loss issues
- Depression
- Anger management
- Eating disorders
- Addictions
- Surviving sexual abuse
- Life Coaching
- Financial counseling
- Preparing for marriage
- Conciliation
- Other mental health issues



While I have never personally experienced the depths of grief that many have, I do see the effects all around me... I sit with them in the counseling room.

We often think of grief and loss only in the context of death, but I have seen it in all aspects of life. People experience loss when they lose a job, a relationship, their sense of safety, or even a long held dream. Moreover, the process of grief often stirs up our deepest hurts and our worst thoughts about ourselves and the world around us. It brings up all of those things and then amplifies and connects them, weaving a pattern of hurt through our lives.

When faced with someone who is grieving we trip and stumble in our help or we just run from it. We don't know what to do. We are left to search for words or deeds to somehow fix it, and we feel helpless. But really, the only thing that can help is being present – being near, being silent, being there for those who are traveling this unsure and ever-changing journey. That one day we might be comforted in the same way, just as God has comforted us.

Rob Bell explains that in the ancient Jewish culture the custom was to sit *Shivah* with those who had lost someone. To sit *Shivah* meant going over to the house of those who had lost someone and just sitting with them in silence... not saying anything, just sitting and being present. We see this principle played out in the book of Job. Job's friends came and for seven days they sat with him in silence; however, after those seven days they opened their mouths and started speaking and then their presence turned sour. Isn't just being present the most important thing? We search for words, but there are no words to calm or to rectify grief, a

## IN THE DEPTHS OF GRIEF

BY MEGAN BEACH & BRENDA BOITSON

The experience of grief is universal.

thing that is so deep and multi-faceted.

In the past year I have stood close witness to the depths of grief as my lifelong friend experienced the loss of her husband. I have wrestled with the thoughts, feelings, and unsure ground that accompany this circumstance. At the same time, however, I have been honored to have my feet washed by the tears of one who is navigating the journey of loss. Here are a few words from her perspective:

*"I lost my husband on October 28<sup>th</sup> of last year to an extremely rare cancer called Angiosarcoma. He was just 36, I was 24 at the time, and we had been married less than 2 years. I have no doubt that I married my soul mate; I just didn't know that our forever would be so short.*

*The immediate pain of his loss was anxiety, intense sadness, and numbness. The first few months after his loss, I felt like I was doing pretty well. I was able to travel, connect with friends, move, and even go out and have fun. What I didn't realize was that there was a cloud of numbness protecting me from the deepest pains of grief.*

*It has only been within the past few months that the shield of numbness has left, and now I am exposed to all the elements of grief: anger, bitterness, cynicism, loss of faith, little willpower, and just an overall depressive state.*

*There are a few things along my journey through this intense loss that frustrate me. While grief is an overall emotion, each person has individual ways of dealing with their loss. Many people outside the loss like to give what they think are great one-line phrases of healing. What they do not realize is that many times we just need them to be and honor the quiet.*

[Continued on Page 2]

## ROMANS 12:18

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

[Continued from Page 1]

*No words contain the emotional power that one feels after experiencing such a loss. Words become inadequate, but in a society driven by free speech we often feel the need to fill the voids with conversation.*

*The stigma surrounding loss, despite living in such a communicative society, is surreal. It is because death is not an open conversation that people are ill equipped to deal with those experiencing grief. Grief is misunderstood to those who haven't experienced it immensely. Even to those of us who are in its deepest realms, we are often lost in the emotions that come forth.*

*Grief can steal your soul, but it can also bring about rejuvenation. I have found it has done both, and often, the secondary losses seem to hurt just as much as the immediate loss of my husband. We have no children, no future, no dreams to conquer together. Instead, I am left to forge ahead and re-create life without him, and that is forever a bitter taste.*

*Whatever your loss is, it is your own journey and your own emotions that will take you through. Grief is bound to catch you off guard and paralyze you when you least expect it. Surrounding myself with people who let me be, who let me feel, and who listen intently, has given me strength and courage to battle for a future I hoped would never happen."*

By Megan Beach  
&  
Brenda Boitson



Megan Beach

### OUR NEEDS:

We are still in need of the following items:

- Bibles to be given away
- Books to be used as resources
- Children's books, DVDs, and small toy figurines to complement our play therapy room

The Peacemaker Center is offering **Guitar Music Therapy** this summer for children and adolescents. Research has shown that music helps children improve in concentration, memorization, self-esteem, & social skills. Contact the Center today for more info.



We are currently teaching a series on **Friendship** at Calvary Fellowship Church from July 12th through August 30th in room 118 at 9:00am every Sunday. Anyone is welcome to join us. Please contact us if you would like us to teach a series at your church.



## KIDS CORNER



### Helping Kids Deal With Loss

By Helen Ercolino

When a loved one dies, it can be difficult to know how to help kids cope with the loss, especially if you are working through your own grief.

How much kids can understand about death depends largely on their age, life experience, and personality. Here are a few important points to remember:

- Be honest with your child and encourage questions.
- Create an atmosphere of comfort and openness.
- Be clear that there is no one right or wrong way to feel.

Children age 6 or younger view the world in literal terms, so explain the death in basic concrete terms. For example, if the loved one was ill or elderly, you might explain that the person's body wasn't working anymore and the doctors couldn't fix it. Children in this age range may not understand that all people and living things eventually die, that it's final, and that they won't come back. You may need to calmly reiterate that the person has died and can't come back.

Older children, ages 6 to 10, begin to grasp the finality of death. Though they may think that by behaving, making a wish, or praying, their loved one won't die. Often children this age personify death and think of it as the "boogeyman" or a ghost or skeleton. It is best to give them simple, accurate, clear, and honest explanations of what happened.

As kids mature into their teens, their understanding about death evolves and they may ask questions about mortality and vulnerability. For example, if a friend dies in a car accident, your teen might become reluctant to get behind the wheel or ride in a car. It is best to respond by empathizing about how frightening and sad this accident was. It is also a good time to remind your teen about ways to stay safe and healthy, like wearing their seatbelt and never getting into a car with a driver who has been drinking.

Parents sometimes worry about letting their kids witness their own grief, pain, and tears about a death. Don't – allowing your child to see your pain shows that crying is a natural reaction to emotional pain and loss. It can also make kids more comfortable sharing their feelings.

Most importantly, the loss of a loved one can provide an opportunity for parents to demonstrate through their words and actions that because death is part of human reality, grief is a normal and expected emotion. Jesus Himself demonstrated grief at the death of His friend Lazarus (John 11: 18-36). Grief cannot be willed away, instead we must learn to live through it by leaning on the compassion of a loving God—a God who is described as "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT  
[THEPEACEMAKERCENTER.ORG](http://THEPEACEMAKERCENTER.ORG)

