



From Your  
Grief Center  
Library

*The Year of  
Magical  
Thinking* by  
Joan Didion

*Dream New  
Dreams:  
Reimagining  
My Life after  
Loss* by Jai  
Pausch

*H is for Hawk*  
by Helen  
McDonald

## “Sharing Each Other’s Stories”

Before Thanksgiving we held our annual Hope for the Holiday’s Workshop. It is a time that the bereaved gather and share some of their fears, hopes and dreams, not only for the upcoming holiday but for the upcoming year which will be without the person they have lost.

We have the widows and widowers. One shared that they were not sure when it would be time to move their spouse’s close out of the closet. Having the clothes in the closet provided comfort and a warm reminder of her spouse. Another was wondering how long other widows would be wearing their wedding band. If it were to be taken off would that in some way mean they did not still care about the deceased. Another spoke up that his spouse wanted for him to find someone else following her death. She had talked about this possibility during her lengthy illness.

We have the orphans. These individuals, regardless of age are faced with the reality that they no longer have a parent living, they are now orphans. The mother who made the best Christmas cookies each year and iced them a certain way. Or the individual’s father who, although they live miles apart physically, would make a weekly call to catch up. Now the very thought of that weekly call was painful and the “orphan” was longing to hear his/her parents voice.

Then the young mothers and fathers, whose children died much too soon, some before birth, some shortly after or at a very young age.

The “how could this happen” was a similar refrain. Christmas without the child that had been long planned would not be Christmas. A Christmas where the children left behind would be anticipating Santa’s gifts, while the parents are anticipating how they will get through the holidays. One couple wanted to share pictures of their child, holding back tears as the pictures were shared with the group.

The group talked about how to keep their person’s memories alive with the telling of stories, the keeping of family traditions and the making of new traditions. Writing notes to the deceased, hanging up a stocking or making an ornament for the tree. The ideas flowed freely along with tears and yes, laughter.

As we closed our workshop we talked about Hope. Those of us who provide grief support for our hospice families and our community do so because we believe in “Hope” for those who have experienced the death of a family member or friend.

So as you go through the holidays and into a new year may you find the “HOPE” of a memory filled future where you will continue to live and grow. Integrating memories and love of the special person you have lost.

Peace,

Cristie Ginther, Bereavement and  
Spiritual Care Coordinator

## The Grief Center

**01/10/2017**  
Six week  
Grief Class  
Begins –  
Registration  
required

~  
**Grief  
Support  
Group**

1<sup>st</sup> Monday of  
Month  
Springdale  
5:30 – 7:00  
pm

~  
**Grief  
Support  
Group**

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday  
of Month  
Bentonville  
5:30 – 7:00  
pm

**Grief  
Support  
After the  
Death of a  
Child**

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday  
of Month  
Springdale  
5:30 – 7:00  
pm





Circle of Life  
in the News

<https://www.facebook.com/nwacircleoflifehospice>

<http://www.nwahomepage.com/community/doing-good/doing-good-circle-of-life-hospice>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdL2fPRfSsg>

## **“Always Winter, but Never Christmas”**

Many years ago I watched “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” with my wife and sons. One line sticks in my memory as a description of Narnia under control of the White Witch: “always winter, but never Christmas.” This feels to me like “Yuk” because I’m not a fan of bitter cold and dreary skies without even so much as a day of joy. This feels to me like a season of grief at its deepest – always winter but never Christmas. Though grief may feel cold and dreary, it’s not always winter in Narnia or in our world.

As children in the story journey to meet Aslan they meet a wonderful character, Father Christmas, who gives them gifts. The snow begins to melt and they see signs of spring. Grief is like this. Grief involves a journey. Even in the midst of grief’s winter we meet some wonderful characters who give us helpful gifts. Though the winter may be long the snow does melt and spring does come. We find hope, eventually, and power to live, overcome and help others. Thankfully, it’s not ALWAYS winter.

Audie Long, Chaplain

Education  
Save the Date

3/13-15/17  
Healthcare  
Chaplaincy

4/27/17  
When Grief  
Is  
Complicated  
Webinar

