

count YOUR blessings

For generations we have been told to 'count your blessings' to help us focus on the good things in life rather than the negative.

That may be a good exercise during this pandemic or anytime we are feeling down.

Optimal Hospice Bereavement/Spiritual Counselor David Berg offers these suggestions to help you count your blessings this week:

- Find something that makes you happy.
- Get something to give to someone else to make them smile.
- Find one thing that you love to smell.
- Make a list of three things you are grateful for each day for the next three days.
- Find something that you are thankful for in nature.
- Find something that is useful for you.



Fulfilling our mission through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since 1979 the Optimal Hospice Foundation has been committed to our mission to ensure hospice care and other compassionate programs are available for families facing a life-limiting illness. Programs include outreach and education, hospice care funding for the uninsured and bereavement support, including an annual Kids Camp for children who have experienced the loss of a love one.

During these unprecedented times our commitment has not waived. Through the COVID-19 pandemic the Foundation has continued to partner with Optimal Hospice Care staff to provide support to our patients and families while following all Department of Public Health guidelines and Stay at Home orders. **With these guidelines and orders in mind the Board of Directors took a hard look at our Kids Camp Program and has made the very difficult decision to cancel our camps for 2020.**

While our camps are cancelled, we will continue to provide grief support and resources for all families who need our help. All children who have been referred for 2020 or attended in 2019 will be contacted with information on resources that are available through Optimal Hospice Care Bereavement Teams and the Foundation. In addition, resources will be posted on our website and Facebook page throughout the

summer. We realize the impact this will have, however, the health and wellness of our campers and counselors has to be our number one priority.

As all of our counselors and camp staff have said since hearing the news, "Kids Camp will be back bigger and better in 2021."

The Foundation is currently evaluating our activities and fundraisers for the remainder of the year and hope we can find ways to make them available.

As you can imagine the pandemic has affected the Foundation financially as several fundraising events held by other organizations to support the Foundation have been cancelled, as well as our own Garden Wine Tasting event. If you are able, the Foundation would appreciate any financial assistance you can provide. Donations can be made via our website www.optimalhospicefoundation.com, mailing to your local Foundation office or by calling the office (numbers are on the back of this newsletter).

The Foundation will continue to fulfill our mission in our communities. If you need assistance, please reach out – let us know how we can help.

Please stay safe and strong. Together we will get through these trying times.

Warm Regards,
Cherie Shoemake, Optimal Hospice Foundation Director



Standing together to make our way through loss and uncertainty

By James Farrell, Optimal Hospice Care Bereavement Counselor

I'm not sure what you had planned for 2020, but I can honestly say that I did not see it going like it has. These past few months have brought into our lives a lot of change and uncertainty as the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's important to stay informed, but with so many media outlets at our fingertips, this can push us towards information overload. Will things ever go back to normal?!

It can be upsetting.

With all that is happening, I want to share two types of loss that may be affecting each of us.

The first is "Secondary Loss" which refers to the losses that accompany a major loss. As an example, you lose a job, and with it, financial security. This can apply to each of us as we find ourselves in a situation that none of us anticipated.

Collectively we lost the normalcy of the world around us, and this causes so

many other secondary losses for each of us. You may have lost your job, your routine, your favorite pastime and so on. Some losses are bigger than others, but nonetheless each is a loss and many little losses can pile up and weigh us down.

The second type, "Ambiguous Loss" happens when you're not entirely sure what your loss is. It is different than the grief you have experienced with the death of your loved one. This loss may not be as tangible or rooted to the physical.

We are all experiencing ambiguous loss at a time like this, when we don't know when a sense of normalcy will return or feel that life as we knew it is

slowly fading away — similar to the polaroid picture that Marty McFly had in the movie "Back To The Future."

Spoiler alert: Marty's fading picture is restored. We too will have a new normal when this passes.

While working with those that are grieving, I've seen that two seemingly opposite things can be true at once. You can feel guilt, pain, hope and gratitude all at the same time. It's not wallowing or self-

centered to grieve the loss of things like weddings, proms, graduations, sports seasons, parties, religious observance, funerals, togetherness, support and connection. These things are an extension of our individual values like family, friends, intimacy, parenting, spirituality, career and community. Each of these things connect to who you are.

If you show compassion towards your struggles, you may be more likely to show compassion towards others. So rather than minimizing your pain and anxiety because "Hey, we're all suffering here. It could be worse," let's come together (from 6 feet away) to make our way through this in unity.

Things are beyond upsetting right now.

Let's face the struggles. Let's hold each other up. Let's grow stronger together.

Please know that our Bereavement Teams continue to be here for you. Though the means in which our support is available may look different, our commitment to continue to provide compassionate care is still as strong as ever.

HERE ARE A FEW ONLINE RESOURCES YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL

- whatsyourgrief.com
- griefsupportonline.com
- www.mygriefangels.org
- www.griefincommon.com
- grief.com



OPTIMAL
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Garden Wine Tasting

The Foundation Garden Wine Tasting planning committee has made the difficult decision to cancel our 2020 event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are extremely grateful to all the sponsors, donors, vendors and attendees that have supported us the past five years. There is no question this is a time of uncertainty, but we feel confident that by sticking together and supporting one another we'll emerge from this stronger than before.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our 2021 event,
Amanda Miller, Event Chairperson

GOLF IN THE SUN & UNDER THE STARS TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Stockdale Country Club | Bakersfield | 3:30 p.m.

- Play 9 Holes in the Sun
- Play 9 Holes Under the Stars with Glow Balls
- Enjoy Dinner & Prize Drawings
- \$150 Entry Fee

To register a team at optimalhospicefoundation.com.

For sponsorship opportunities, call (661) 716-8000.

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Golf in the Sun & Under the Stars

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Event date/details subject to change. Updates will be posted on our website and Facebook page.
Sponsorship & Registration Forms available at OptimalHospiceFoundation.com

Reflection on the COVID-19 Pandemic: *Mourning what we are missing*

By David Berg, Optimal Hospice Care Bereavement/Spiritual Counselor

“We are all dealing with the collective loss of the world we knew,” explained grief expert David Kessler.

The interruption of our normal routines and day to day rhythms of life rival the sadness and uneasiness that we all feel. Not only are we grieving the lives of those who have died from COVID-19 and our patients, we are also mourning the loss of the normal: seeing our co-workers, being with friends and the routines that we took for granted.

Grief is the pain that comes with loss. It is deep. It affects us physically and mentally, and it can feel overwhelming. Grief comes after the death of a special person, but it also comes during other losses: the loss of a job, a role in life, a home, divorce and the everyday routines we knew before the pandemic. We are experiencing losses we never anticipated: weddings, meetings, travel plans, school events ... all canceled because of the virus. Grief is now the face of an uncertain future, which we are powerless to control.

This stressful time is uniquely challenging. Failing to see the additional stress that comes with the pandemic runs the risk of blaming yourself about something that is out of your control. These are stressful times, but there are coping strategies:

- Acknowledge the grief.
- Stay connected to others. Make time for phone calls and video chats.
- Minimize the time you spend watching the news. Remember it's good to stay informed but don't create anxiety by overdoing it.

I have found the following poem a good reminder of what life is like.

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
They may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
Meet them at the door laughing and
invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

—Jellaludin Rumi

Thank You for Your Support

The following individuals and organizations generously contributed to Optimal Hospice Foundation from July through December 2019. On behalf of the patients and families we serve, thank you for your support.

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SAVE THE DATE!
CAR SHOW
Saturday,
October 24, 2020

The Bakersfield RV Resort/
Crest Bar & Grill
5025 Wible Road, Bakersfield

Event date/details subject to change. Updates will be posted on our website and Facebook page.

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Support groups available through Optimal Hospice Care

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