



**Groff-High-Eckenroth**  
**Funeral Home, Inc.**

145 West Main Street, New Holland, PA 17557  
717-354-0444 • R. Fred Groff, III, Supervisor

[www.groffeckenroth.com](http://www.groffeckenroth.com)

FALL 2009

# H.O.P.E.

Helping Overcome and Provide Encouragement

## Dear Friends,

What's your gratitude level?

Some people have a very low gratitude level. No matter how blessed they are, they never seem to express much appreciation. Their cup is often half empty rather than half full.

Other people have a very high gratitude quotient. No matter how heavy their burdens are, they always seem to find reasons to express joy, appreciation, and delight in life. Their cup is always half full, never half empty.

An inspiring example of someone with a high gratitude quotient was the Japanese writer of haiku poems, Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828). His life is one long litany of pain and hardship, with one affliction following another. Here's a compressed account of his painful life:

- At two his mother died.
- His stepmother arrived to "whip him 100 times a day."
- He nursed his father through a typhoid epidemic only to see him die.
- After years of solitude and poverty he fell in love and married at 51.
- His first son died after one month.
- A second son died within a month of his birth.
- Finally, he was delighted with the birth of daughter – Sato. With pride he watched her grow and then, at one year of age, she contracted smallpox and died.
- In the years which followed, another son died and Issa suffered paralysis.
- While giving birth to a fourth son, his wife

died and, because of medical malpractice from a nurse, the infant boy died as well.

- Later, Issa married again but separated within weeks.
- He married a third time but a fire destroyed the couple's modest home. Issa and his wife were plunged into poverty and forced to live in a storehouse with no windows.
- His wife bore him a daughter who was healthy and lived into adulthood but Issa died months before the girl's birth. He never saw one of his children grow up.

Incredibly and in spite of near continual pain and hardship, Issa kept writing simple poems reflecting profound joy, gratitude and pleasure in the life around him. One of the last poems he wrote reflects his boundless appreciation of life:

*Gratitude for gifts —  
Even the snow on my bedspread  
a present from the Pure Land.*

Here's the lesson which can be gleaned from Kobayashi Issa for all who grieve a loss—*gratitude and well-being are inextricably linked together.*

Women and men who routinely and regularly practice gratitude discover that they are in control of their destiny. In spite of whatever negatives tumble upon them and into their lives, through gratitude, they are able to remain self-accepting, enjoy personal growth, experience purpose in life and revel in life's smallest pleasures.

What's your gratitude level?



## SIX BEST THINGS TO SAY WHEN THERE HAS BEEN A LOSS

1. I am sorry for your loss.
2. If you would like to talk I will always be available.
3. You are in my thoughts and prayers.
4. This must be very painful.
5. Your feelings are normal.
6. Are there things I can do for you?

## THE FOUR TASKS OF MOURNING

Dr. William Worden, professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School identifies these four “tasks” or goals of a successful bereavement.

### 1. Accept the reality of the loss.

Though it sounds ridiculously obvious that a mourner should face the fact that a loved one has died, it’s not always as simple as it appears. “when someone dies, even if the death is expected, there is always a sense that it hasn’t happened,” notes Dr. Worden. Thus the first task of grieving “is to come full face with the reality that the person is dead, that the person is gone and will not return.”

### 2. Experience the pain of grief.

It isn’t normal to seek out pain. We expend a lot of energy avoiding pain. Yet, the pain of loss cannot be avoided and must be experienced in order for it to be ended. Dr. Worden cites an example of pain avoidance in bereavement: “Some people who do not understand the necessity of experiencing the pain of grief try to find a geographic cure. They travel from place to place and try to find some relief from their emotions, as opposed to allowing themselves to indulge the pain – to feel it and to know that one day it will pass.”

### 3. Adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing.

This means learning to live with the reality that a loved one is not longer present, no longer part of the relationship. It also means developing new skills and taking on responsibilities and roles which the deceased performed.

### 4. Withdraw emotional energy and reinvest it in another relationship.

It does not dishonor the deceased loved one to fall in love again with another person. In fact, it is a sign of grief recovery and emotional health that a bereaved person can reinvest themselves in a new relationship. Dr. Worden says that griever may need assistance or “permission” from family and friends to do this. He notes that the remarriage rate for widows, for example, is very low – around 25 percent while those who are divorced have a remarriage rate of 75 percent.

## Widow at 36...Lessons Learned from Grief

Kate Fallon was 36 when her husband, Scott, died when his motorcycle skidded on gravel causing him to careen into a mountainside. Devastated by the loss of “the love of my life” Ms. Fallon was left a young widow and the single parent of 2 children. Here are some of her bereavement insights.

- *“Grief is like war,” she recalls. “You can’t understand it unless you’ve experienced it, unless you’ve sat alone in your foxhole and wondered whether you’ll be alive in the morning.”*
- *There is anger and anxiety. Ms. Fallon says she was filled with “sadness and rage” at times. Her feelings were directed “at God, at Scott, at the man who sold my husband his first motorcycle, at the highway workers who didn’t clean up the gravel.” Along with anger were moments of anxiety — “Will my kids and I get through this? Am I destined to be alone?”*
- *There is the generosity of family and friends. She was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support she and her children received. “There have been countless meals delivered and offers to babysit. Dozens of people traveled hours to be with us. Last but not least, a circle of girlfriends remained by my side, saving me with their love and confidence in my ability to heal.”*
- *Holidays and other special days are challenging. Ms. Fallon tells of “surviving” her first Thanksgiving and Christmas without her husband. As a New Year’s resolution she resolved to “walk fearlessly” into her new life, one without Scott. She went out on her first date. “It was uneventful but I felt powerful doing it.” Ms. Fallon “sprinted” through Valentine’s Day and Father’s Day.*
- *There were many lessons in self-reliance. Without Scott, she had to do many of the things he would have done. “For the first time I jump-started the battery on the truck and lit our furnace. When I had a tree cut down, the man asked if my husband wanted it for firewood. I stood straight and said “I’m a widow.” The words stuck in my throat, yet I said it, without drama or tears. I told him to chop it; I’d stack it myself.”*
- *Physical exercise is important. To better deal with the stress of grief, she began jogging and hired a personal trainer “who’s worth his weight in Prozac.”*

## HELPING WHEN A CO-WORKER HAS LOST A FAMILY MEMBER

1. Go to the funeral or visitation if possible.
2. Send a card, flowers or memorial, perhaps together with other colleagues.
3. Keep in touch while the employee is away from work.
4. Use the name of the person who died. Often griever feel others are afraid to mention the name of their loved one. It is okay to talk about the person and use his or her name even if doing so causes the griever to shed tears.
5. Be caring. Even if you feel some discomfort and are uncertain what to say or how to act, continue to be kind. Ask yourself, “How would I want people to respond if I had a loss?” Respond that way to your colleague.

