

THE *Encourager*

DAVE DRAVECKY'S OUTREACH OF HOPE

Vol. 6, No. 1 Winter 2000



Growing Through

Grief

by Dave Dravecky

All people suffer loss. Being alive means suffering loss.

GERALD SITTSER

When cancer invades our lives, we need to learn how to face and grieve our losses. I'm not referring only to the loss of life that some cancer patients and their families face. I am referring to the whole gamut of losses—the loss of financial security, the loss of leisure time, the loss of dignity, the loss of career, the loss of relationships—the list could go on and on.

Loss is an inevitable part of life with cancer, and the grieving process—as difficult and painful as it is—is the means by which we can grow into a place of acceptance and healing.

When I looked in the mirror following the amputation of my arm and shoulder, I was no longer the man I used to be. It was very hard for me to accept that. As strong as I was, as much as I acknowledged that God was in control of my life, the reality was, I was no longer playing the game I loved. I had lost my arm. I had lost my career. I had lost the means by which I supported my family. I struggled through a tremendous identity crisis.

Like it or not, my life had come to an abrupt stop. I was hit head-on with the reality of my loss, and I grieved. I didn't shed many tears, that wasn't my way of grieving. But I

felt the pain of my losses. I felt deep sadness and hurt. And I mourned what I had lost as I struggled to face reality and redefine my identity.

For me, grieving involved learning to talk about the pain I was experiencing. The more detailed I was in expressing my pain and suffering in relationship to my losses, the easier it was for me to cope. Although grieving helped me deal with my losses, it still didn't take away the pain. But grieving did take me to a different place. It eventually brought me to a place of healing, to a place where joy became a part of my life again.

There came a time, for example, when I could transition from the sadness and hurt of not being able to play baseball to once again enjoying the incredible memories I have. I became able to recognize joy in the midst of missing something I love very much. Instead of focusing on the sadness, pain, and hurt, I can sit in a ball park today and remember that I once stood on the pitcher's mound. I can relive some of the wonderful things that happened when I pitched in the All-Star game and World Series. Yes, there is still some hurt when I think of those things because the loss is still there, it is something I miss, but the joy of the memories overpowers the sadness.

That's the hidden gift in the process of grieving—being able to transition to that place where even though it still hurts, the memories also bring joy. So we give you this issue of *The Encourager* not to tell you how to grieve, but to acknowledge your grief and to come alongside and encourage you on this difficult journey.

Grief may well be the most intimate and sacred ground on our life's journey. None of us can define the grieving process for another person. We can't prescribe a time line for grief. We can't say how long it should take to mourn. We can't set standards for how another person expresses grief. We can't say that someone isn't grieving "properly." But we can come alongside those who grieve and say, "I can't imagine the depth of your pain, but I want to help and hope that I can be what you need me to be as you go through it."

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every
activity under heaven . . .
a time to weep and a time
to laugh, a time to mourn
and a time to dance.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1,4

The Truth About

Grief

Grief is a bit like the elephant in the living room that no one will talk about. We'll tiptoe around it, politely look the other way, act as if nothing is amiss, but none of that changes the fact that it's there, that it's big, and that we don't know what to do with it.

Yet the Bible is very clear that grieving is part of life. The book of Ecclesiastes, which speaks to the meaning life says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Yes, it even says there is "a time to weep" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4). During His life on earth, Jesus spoke about mourning (Matthew 5:4) and wept as He considered a great loss (John 11:35).

So if we must live with the elephant of grief in the living room, what do we need to know about it? How do we go about measuring and observing that elephant so we know what to do with it? We enlisted the help of several grief counselors and compiled the following list of truths about grief. We hope that these observations will shed some light on this most difficult yet inevitable part of being human.

- ◆ Grief is the normal human response to loss—not just the loss of a loved one, but the loss of unfulfilled dreams, broken relationships, failure, and change.
- ◆ It is impossible to truly grieve and look good.
- ◆ Don't suppress the pain you feel; it will only resurface later. Experience it, feel it, and resist the temptation to "stuff" it.
- ◆ You don't "get over" grief; you get through it.
- ◆ People will say stupid things. Count on it.
- ◆ Although it is unpleasant, you may resent those with "normal" lives. Such resentment is common.
- ◆ Try not to make major decisions or changes when you're grieving. Grief leaves emotions too raw and judgment too clouded to make good decisions.

Jesus wept.

JOHN 11:35

- ◆ Allow time, *lots of it*, to heal. If possible, work part time and limit outside activities and commitments.
- ◆ Grieving is not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of integrity. Grief means you are being honest about the feelings in your heart.
- ◆ Talk about your loss instead of trying to protect your friends and family by your silence.
- ◆ If a friend tells you to "snap out of it," find another friend.
- ◆ Grieving is hard work. Take care of yourself through a good diet and exercise.
- ◆ Seek out people who understand what you are experiencing. Perhaps join a grief support group or see a grief counselor.
- ◆ No two people grieve alike. Everyone needs the freedom to grieve in his or her unique way.
- ◆ Grief is random; you never know when or where an emotion will surface.
- ◆ There is no substitute for tears. Some grief is expressed only through our tears.
- ◆ Grief may come in waves; some are small, some are like tsunamis. No wonder we speak of "drowning in our sorrow!"
- ◆ It's okay to set aside specific times and places to feel and express grief.
- ◆ The feelings of rage, fear, abandonment, anxiety, and guilt are frequent companions of grief.
- ◆ Grief can rob us of our passion for life, work, love, and relationships.
- ◆ Instead of articulating what they feel, as adults do, grieving children often act out their feelings.
- ◆ It's okay to tell family and friends what you want them to do to help you grieve.
- ◆ No matter how you feel, talk with God. Even if you are angry, tell God. He's big enough to handle your pain and your questions.
- ◆ The pain of grief isn't fatal—it just feels like it is.

Top Ten Grief Etiquette Bloopers

Take a good look at this list and add it to your "not for those who are grieving" vocabulary.

10. I know just how you feel.
9. When are you going back to work?
8. You should be over this by now.
7. It's time for you to move on.
6. You have so many other things for which to be thankful.
5. You have, or will have, other children.
4. Be strong!
3. Time heals all wounds.
2. You'll get over this.
1. It was God's will.

Resource: Bill Moritz, "10 Things That You Should Know to Help Someone in Grief."

From the Outside Looking In –

Accepting a Friend's Grief



Grief is perhaps the most deeply personal and mystifying of all human emotions. Some of us seem to express our grief easily, while others struggle intensely to express it at all. Sometimes grief manifests itself as an explosion, but at other times it is nearly invisible—tucked away, safely hidden from view. Grief can appear out of nowhere and, like an unwelcome guest, linger on center stage—prompting feelings of uneasiness and discomfort. And for the person on the outside looking in, the person who desires to support a grieving friend or loved one, the world of grief can be a bewildering landscape. It is not easy to accompany a grieving person through such varied and unfamiliar territory.

Yet when those we love grieve, we long to offer whatever comfort we can. The difficulty is, few of us know how to comfort. We live in a society of impatient, optimistic quick fixes, and offering true comfort involves more than checking off a list of dos and don'ts. It requires a simple but deep commitment to accept the grieving person "as is" on his or her journey through grief.

Acceptance says, "I don't have the answers, but I'm here. I can't change your situation, but I want to walk with you as you go through it." Acceptance allows the grieving person the freedom to express sorrow, anger, or to be silent. Acceptance doesn't try to "fix" losses that can't be fixed. Acceptance doesn't demand to understand or to agree with the route one takes through the landscape of grief. Acceptance doesn't judge or offer clichés. Acceptance simply provides a wounded heart a safe place to mourn.

The following reminders can help those on the outside of grief to walk in grace as they provide comfort to those who are grieving:

- ◆ **There is no proper way to grieve.** Like our fingerprints, every person's

emotional response to loss is unique. We dishonor our friends and loved ones when we place expectations on their grief experience or compare their experience to that of another person.

- ◆ **A grieving person needs human companionship.** Part of the pain of grieving is a feeling of emptiness deep inside. It comes from the realization that something or someone is missing from life. While that loss can't be replaced, the physical presence of a person who cares serves as a warm reminder to the grieving person that he or she is not alone. There is no substitute for human companionship.

*Praise be
to the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion
and the God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our
troubles, so that we can
comfort those in any trouble
with the comfort we ourselves
have received from God.*

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

- ◆ **Resist the urge to "fix it."** It is painful to witness another person's suffering, and our human sympathy leads us to want to relieve it. But a "fix it" approach to grief doesn't fix anything; it only denies the pain. It may also communicate that we want our grieving friend to "hurry up and get better" so that our own pain will diminish.
- ◆ **Never minimize a person's grief.** There is no way to quantify another person's grief. There is no legitimate way to put another person's loss into perspective

by pointing out what might have happened, what didn't happen, or by exploring the worst-case scenario. Such efforts don't minimize the loss, they trivialize it!

- ◆ **Listen, listen, listen.** Part of the grieving process involves exploring all facets of the loss. Those who are grieving need to feel their loss in all of its horror and agony, and they need to talk about what they are feeling. A true friend will stand by and honor those feelings by listening with ears, eyes, and heart.
- ◆ **It's okay to talk about the loss.** People often avoid talking about a loss with a grieving person because they are afraid it will cause more pain. But the truth is, people who are grieving are already thinking about their loss. When others name that loss, they affirm the value of the loss and give the grieving person permission to talk about it.
- ◆ **Grieving is exhausting.** Dealing with grief depletes a person's spiritual, emotional, and physical energy. So a grieving person may not have the energy or clarity of mind to complete routine tasks, or may suddenly fail to follow through with commitments. During these times, it's important for friends to adjust their expectations and offer to help with tasks that are particularly burdensome.
- ◆ **Pray without ceasing.** The pain of grief can lead us to feel separated from God, to feel that He doesn't understand or care about our pain, or even to become so angry that we don't want to talk to Him. A true friend can accept where a grieving person is and pray specifically for his or her needs. A friend can ask God for wisdom and grace to bring comfort to those who grieve.

Help for Those Who Grieve

Grief is one of the most complex and misunderstood of all human emotions. While we have attempted through this issue of *The Encourager* to shed some light on the grief experience, those who are grieving can find additional comfort and encouragement in the following selected resources available through the Outreach of Hope.

A Grace Disguised, How the Soul Grows Through Loss, Gerald Sittser. An insightful journey through the valley of grief—a must-read for those who walk that path. Softcover, \$12.00.

Don't Take My Grief Away, What to Do When You Lose a Loved One, Doug Manning. A pastor offers practical guidance for handling the emotions and decisions that follow the death of a loved one including family dynamics during stress and personalizing the funeral. Softcover, \$12.00.

Heaven's Not a Crying Place, Teaching Your Child About Funerals, Death, and the Life Beyond, Joey O'Conner. Practical advice for parents for talking with their children about death and heaven. Softcover, \$12.00.

Let Me Grieve But Not Forever, A Journey from the Darkness of Sudden Loss into the Light of Healing Love, Verdell Davis. A personal journey through grief that offers a legacy of hope to others. Hardcover, \$12.00.

When Life Is Changed Forever, By the Death of Someone Near, Rick Taylor. An honest exploration of God's love for those who have experienced the complicated emotions that accompany the death of a loved one, particularly the death of a child. Softcover, \$8.00.

To order, please specify the title in the "Special Order" section of the response envelope.

Grief Denied—

You Can Run But You Cannot Hide

by Jan Dravecky

*We do not want you
to be ignorant about those
who fall asleep, or to grieve
like the rest of men,
who have no hope.*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13

"Jan, don't cry, you know your mother is in heaven. The Bible tells us that we don't grieve as people who have no hope. Come on Jan, you need to uphold your Christian witness."

Despite the overwhelming losses I experienced during the years surrounding Dave's cancer battle, these were my marching orders, given to me by well-intentioned friends and family. No one gave me permission to grieve the deaths of my mother, and later, my father. No one recognized the need to grieve the losses Dave and I suffered during his cancer battle. Instead, people corrected me and encouraged me not to grieve.

I wanted to be a good Christian, to do the right thing. So I listened to what I was being told and decided to be "strong." I stuffed my pain and went on with life. It worked—for about eight years. Then my world crashed in and I collapsed from the strain of severe clinical depression. As I climbed out of that deep valley, I learned things I never knew about grief.

I learned that any kind of loss in our lives needs to be grieved. It doesn't matter how long ago the loss happened, or how insignificant others consider the loss to be. We can stuff the pain of a loss for years, but eventually that pain will manifest itself through depression, bitterness, or anger. When I stuffed my pain, it didn't go anywhere. It led to depression deep within me. In fact, the stuffing of my pain—trying to be strong—was probably the main cause of my depression.

I also learned how important it is to encourage one another to deal with and grow through the pain of our losses. Before I understood what I now know about grief, I would try to cheer up people who were

mourning. But I have learned that I can't take away another person's pain. The only way to heal from the pain of losses suffered is to go through the pain. There's no way around it. We can stuff it. We can dodge it, but eventually we will have to face it. So we need to give ourselves and others permission to grieve.

It was a revelation to me when my counselor told me that "grieving is a normal and necessary part of moving out of depression." Then he continued, "There will come a time, Jan, when you are going to have to go back and grieve."

I wasn't prepared to grieve at all. By that time my pain was so deep inside I didn't feel like crying. I didn't even know how to! I was adamant that I wasn't going to dwell on my pain. "That's fine and dandy for you to tell me to grieve," I told my counselor, "but I don't feel like crying right now. How do I grieve? I've never grieved anything in my life. I've stuffed everything."

"Do you mean to tell me that you never think of your mom and dad or what's happened to Dave and feel sad?" my counselor asked incredulously.

"Well, I feel sad," I answered.

"And then what?" he probed. "What do you do when you feel sad?"

"I just change the subject; I think of something else."

He looked me square in the eye and said, "Jan, the next time you have that feeling of sadness, stop! Stay there. Don't change the subject. Don't leave that place of sadness. Allow yourself to feel whatever feelings arise."

I agreed to try, but I can't say that I went home and miraculously started to feel the pain and grieve the losses I had experienced. It took a while. About month and a half later, I found myself upstairs in the guest room, wrapping Christmas presents for the kids. This activity brought back memories of previous Christmas seasons. One of my favorite Christmas activities had been choosing just the right gift for my



The only way to heal from the pain of losses suffered is to go through the pain. There's no way around it. We can stuff it. We can dodge it, but eventually we will have to face it.

parents. How I looked forward to watching them open their gifts! But never again would I be able to give them another Christmas present.

When that thought came to me, my first instinct was to get the children and cheer myself up. Then I recalled my doctor's voice saying, "Stop!" So I stopped. I simply allowed myself to feel what I was feeling. I started to cry, and I cried for a long time. I didn't just cry, I wailed. I must have cried for at least ten minutes or more before it naturally subsided. Crying felt so good that I wondered why I had avoided it for all those years.

A short time later, I was driving to the cleaners, taking Dave's suits to be altered. We have the left sleeve cut off and have a shoulder built in so the suit fits and doesn't look awkward on his body. I looked over at the suits hanging in the car and thought about what I was doing. I thought not only about the sleeve that was about to be cut off, but about the arm that used to be in that sleeve and the shoulder I used to lean on that was now gone. I felt sad.

At that moment, I could have turned up the radio or tried to think about something else, but I didn't. I allowed myself to feel the sadness of my loss. I had lost Dave's arm, too. With his amputation, I lost the arms that used to hold me, the hand on which he wore his wedding ring, the

hand that held mine when we were dating in high school. As I allowed myself to feel the deep sense of loss and sadness over losing Dave's arm, tears blurred my vision, and I sobbed as I drove down the freeway. I stayed with the sadness until it ran its course, and again I felt the good, strong sense of relief that came from allowing the sadness to flow out with my tears.

It was a new thing for me to learn to face the great sadness I felt inside and to grieve these difficult losses. And grieving them wasn't difficult just for me, it was difficult for Dave as well. He initially tried not to grieve. Instead, he denied his loss by busying himself helping others and looking only on the bright side. So he, too, ended up in depression, which lifted only when he learned to grieve by acknowledging how much he missed baseball and his former lifestyle.

Each one of us has to learn to grieve in our own way. For Dave, grieving involved a systematic process of itemizing each loss, admitting how much it meant to him, and allowing himself to mourn it. He grieved the major losses, such as losing his arm and career, as well as the smaller losses, such as no longer being able to tie his own shoes. For me, I needed to stop covering up my grief. I had lost my parents, a lifestyle, my husband's career. I could no longer just ignore these losses and happily praise God. I needed to give myself permission to feel the real pain of these losses and grieve what had happened.

Through the process of learning to grieve, I have realized that loss is something we carry with us through life. By finally admitting, feeling, and working through my grief, I discovered that the pain eventually becomes less painful even though the loss remains a loss. And 1 Thessalonians 4:13, instead of being a prohibition against grieving, has become a reminder of the hope those who have faith in God have in the midst of grief.

Our grief is not without hope. Our losses may be deep and painful, but they don't have the last word: God does. A day is coming when I will see my parents again, when Dave's arm will be restored, when God will wipe away every tear from my eyes. I know that I will spend eternity with Him in heaven, where pain, loss, and tears do not exist. That is a lot to hope for!

Portions of this article taken from *A Joy I'd Never Known*, by Jan Dravecky with Connie Neal. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

The Beauty of Tears

A good cry is not a sign of weakness or frailty, but can be more satisfying than a candy bar, less expensive than a counseling session and—get this—may lengthen your life and strengthen your character.

Consider the facts about tears, the body's feel-good pill, as reported by Dr. William Frey, author of *Crying: The Mystery of Tears*:

- ◆ Tears carry hormones from the brain that release calming endorphins and flush toxins from the bloodstream.
- ◆ The immediate result? Every body-stabilizing benefit from lowered blood pressure to brain signals that tell sweat glands to relax.
- ◆ The long-term benefit? A lower risk of heart attack and a better grip on emotional management.

Researcher Jeffrey Kottler, author of *The Language of Tears*, observes that people who cry freely show fewer signs of illness, less dementia, and tend to live longer than those who work at confining their emotions, especially their tears. In a similar vein, Dr. Kenneth Bock, who with Nellie Sabin authored *The Road To Immunity: How to Survive and Thrive in a Toxic World*, reminds us that "denying or repressing feelings uses up energy and leads to internal distress."

So go ahead, indulge in the benefits of a good cry now and then.

Adapted from "A Good Cry" by Angela Woodward. Used by permission of *Aspire* magazine ©1998 Guideposts, Carmel, New York 10512.

Embracing the Pain —

A Transforming Journey Into Grief

by *Gerald Sittser*

A terrible accident on a lonely road in Idaho killed three members of Gerald Sittser's family. He shares his journey through the overwhelming grief that followed in his book, *A Grace Disguised*.

Darkness descended on me shortly after the accident, on the day of internment. I chose to bury my mother Grace, my wife Lynda, and my daughter Diana Jane together. That morning I visited the funeral home and stared in disbelief at three open coffins before me. At that moment I felt myself slipping into a black hole of dread and oblivion. I was afloat in space, utterly alone among billions of nameless, distant stars. People seemed to recede from sight until they appeared to be standing far away, on some distant horizon. I had trouble hearing what people were saying, their voices were so faint. Never have I experienced such anguish and emptiness.

Shortly after that I dreamed of a setting sun. I was frantically running west, trying desperately to catch it and remain in its fiery warmth and light. But I was losing the race. The sun was beating me to the horizon and was soon gone. I suddenly found myself in the twilight. Exhausted, I stopped running and glanced with foreboding over my shoulder to the east. I saw a vast darkness closing in on me. I was terrified by that darkness. I wanted to keep running after the sun, though I knew that it was futile, for it had already proven itself faster than I was. So I lost all hope, collapsed to the ground, and fell into despair. I thought at that moment that I would live in darkness forever. I felt absolute terror in my soul.

A few days later, I talked about the dream with a cousin who is a minister and a poet. He mentioned a poem by John Donne that turns on the point that, though

east and west seem farthest removed on a map, they eventually meet on a globe. What therefore appears as opposites—east and west—in time come together, if we follow one or the other long enough and far enough. Later my sister, Diane, told me that the quickest way for anyone to reach the sun and the light of day is not to run west, chasing after the setting sun, but to head east, plunging into the darkness until one comes to the sunrise.

I discovered in that moment that I had the power to choose the direction my life would head, even if the only choice open to me, at least initially, was either to run from the loss or to face it as best I could. Since I knew that darkness was inevitable

*I thought
at that moment
that I would live
in darkness forever.
I felt absolute
terror in my soul.*

and unavoidable, I decided from that point on to walk into the darkness rather than try to outrun it, to let my experience of loss take me on a journey wherever it would lead, and to allow myself to be transformed by my suffering rather than to think I could somehow avoid it. I chose to turn toward the pain, however falteringly, and to yield to the loss, though I had no idea at the time what that would mean.

Giving myself to grief proved to be hard as well as necessary. It happened in both spontaneous and intentional ways. I could not always determine the proper time and setting for tears, which occasionally came at unexpected and inconvenient moments, such as in the middle of a college class I was teaching or during a conversation. I was surprised to see how inoffensive that was to others. If anything, my display of grief invited them to mourn their

own losses, and it made the expression of sorrow a normal and natural occurrence in daily life.

Still, I tried to reserve time and space in my life for solitude so that I could descend into the darkness alone. Late in the evening, well after the children were in bed, proved to be the best time for me. Sometimes I listened to music—mostly requiems, Gregorian chants, and other choral works; and sometimes I wrote in my journal or read good books. But mostly I sat in my rocking chair and stared into space, reliving the accident and remembering the people I lost. I felt anguish in my soul and cried bitter tears.

I wanted to pray but had no idea what to say, as if struck dumb by my own pain. Groans became the only language I could use, if even that, but I believed it was language enough for God to understand. I remember reading what the apostle Paul wrote in the book of Romans—that sometimes, when overcome by suffering, we do not know how to pray. But, Paul said, our dumbness before God is not offensive to Him or indicative of a lack of faith. Instead, it is an invitation for God to draw near and to intercede for us.

This nightly solitude, as painful and demanding as it was, became sacred to me because it allowed time for genuine mourning and intense reflection. It also gave me freedom during the day to invest my energy into teaching and caring for my children. I struggled with exhaustion, as I do now. But somehow I found the strength—God's gift to me, I think—to carry on.

My decision to enter the darkness had far-reaching consequences, both positive and negative. It was the first step I took toward growth, but it was also the first step I took toward pain. I had no idea then how tumultuous my grief would be. I did not

*I discovered
in that moment
that I had the power
to choose the direction
my life would head,
even if the only choice
open to me, at least
initially, was either to
run from the loss
or to face it as
best I could.*

know the depths of suffering to which I would descend. I had no idea how long the darkness would persist.

My decision to face the darkness, even if it led to overwhelming pain, showed me that the experience of loss itself does not have to be the defining moment of our lives. Instead, the defining moment can be our response to the loss. It is not what happens *to* us that matters as much as what happens *in* us. Darkness it is true, had invaded my soul. But then again, so did light.

Condensed from *A Grace Disguised* by Gerald L. Sittser, ©1996. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. Available through Zondervan (800) 727-3480, your local Christian bookstore, or through the Outreach of Hope. To order write, *Grace Disguised*, \$12.00 in the "Special Order" section of the response envelope.

The Sob Story in Numbers

- ◆ Babies wail about 2.5 hours a day.
- ◆ Girls and boys age 12 and younger both cry about 4 times a month.
- ◆ Adult women cry about 5.3 times a month.
- ◆ Adult men weep about 1.4 times a month.
- ◆ Most emotional tears stem from interpersonal/relational matters.
- ◆ Women are more likely to cry when angry.
- ◆ Anger inhibits crying in men.
- ◆ Only 6% of women say they never cry.
- ◆ 45% of men say they never cry.
- ◆ Men and women cry the most between 7 and 10 p.m.

From *Aspire*, February/March 1999.
Used by permission.

The Face of Hope

by Kim Jones

*Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again
and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.*

A PROMISE OF JESUS, JOHN 16:22

This wonderful promise that Jesus made to His disciples shortly before His crucifixion reveals the ultimate hope of every Christian believer: our grief does not last forever. No matter how great our sadness today, there is a joy ahead that cannot be denied. I had the privilege for a moment in time to literally see the difference the hope of Jesus makes in the heart of a grieving person.

As I stood before the packed church in a feeble attempt to capture the essence of my best friend's life, I saw a room awash with purple and red. Because her favorite color was purple, many of her friends wore the rich, royal color in her honor. And because it was her funeral, their faces were red and shiny from streams of tears. As I gazed at the faces looking toward me, I saw something I will never forget, something I had thought was visible only to the human heart. I *saw* the face of hope.

Sprinkled throughout the crowd, hope glowed on the faces of those who believe, those who knew that the funeral of one of God's children is not the end of the relationship they cherish. It is merely a semi-colon in the story line, a poignant separation whose painful memory will one day fade in light of eternity.

Although everyone wore the face of grief, I could have picked out the faces of hope, one by one. Those who had the hope of Christ in their hearts wore that hope like a warm coat on a stormy day. Their shelter of hope didn't take away the storm or lessen its intensity, but it gave them comfort in the midst of it because they knew that one day the storms of life will cease forever.



*I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way;
But left me none the wiser,
For all she had to say.*

*I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me!*

ROBERT BROWNING HAMILTON



Dave Dravecky's
OUTREACH
OF
Hope

13840 Gleneagle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Phone: 719 481-3528

Fax: 719 481-4689

E-mail: info@outreachofhope.org

Internet: www.outreachofhope.org

The Encourager is free, a gift from us to you. Now that you've read it, become an encourager yourself and share this gift with someone you know who needs uplifting. Don't throw the gift away . . . pass it along!

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| President | Dave Dravecky |
| Vice President | Jan Dravecky |
| Editorial Director | Kim Jones |
| Editor | Amanda Sorenson |
| Designer | Beverly Seefeldt |

©2000 Dave Dravecky's Outreach of Hope
All scripture quotations are New International
Version unless otherwise noted.

Our mission is to offer comfort, encouragement, and hope through Jesus Christ to those who suffer from cancer or amputation. We accomplish this mission by offering prayer support and non-medical referral services and resources for cancer patients, amputees, and their families. We also provide support materials for churches, healthcare professionals, and individuals who work with those who are battling cancer.

We grant permission to photocopy any original article in *The Encourager* for use in a local church, hospital, support group, or classroom, provided no more than 500 copies are made and are distributed at no charge. Please note that reprinted articles, quotes, poems, or lyrics require advance permission from the original source.

Outreach of Hope must pay return postage on all forwarded and non-forwardable mail. To keep postage costs down, please notify us when your address changes or if you no longer wish to receive *The Encourager*. Address changes may be noted on the enclosed envelope, or you may call the office. Outreach of Hope has met the financial standards for membership in ECFA (Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability).



Dave Dravecky's
OUTREACH
OF
Hope

13840 Gleneagle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED