

How to Know When It's Time to Move Past Your Grief

When I was 14 years old, my friends were going on a ski trip, but I was unable to join them. The upcoming trip was the main topic of conversation for weeks before they departed. I was terribly sad when they left, knowing they were making memories I'd never be a part of. There was that sick feeling in my stomach that happens to me when I am missing out on something. Oh, how I wanted that feeling to fly away as quickly as possible. When my friends returned, the same thing happened as before they left. They reminisced about all the fun times—and reminisced and reminisced.

An idea came: I picked a date and circled it on a calendar hanging next to my bed. Until that date arrived, I'd allow myself to feel the sadness and pain. Once the circled date came, I would move past those feelings. There was no science or method to choosing the particular date. I prayed and then selected a date on the calendar that felt right. Instead of masking the pain, I gave myself the freedom to fully feel the sadness during that time. Like many people, I often try to suppress the sadness I feel. We try to make the hurt go away by rushing through the healing process. Shoving the emotions down so they won't surface is common among the best of people.

The experience of missing “a trip of a lifetime” with my friends was simply learning ground, a preparation for significantly more difficult experiences facing me later in my life. I might have lost the fun of skiing and fellowship, but I gained much more than I lost. Ahead were to come:

- Three painful miscarriages
- Heavy empathetic emotions watching my beloved Terry go through emotional and physical pain during a battle with cancer at age 21.

- The loss of my dad (my best friend) to pancreatic cancer right after I got married.

What I learned from the ski trip incident was time doesn't necessarily heal all wounds ... completely. But I did find out raw, can't-catch-my-breath-pain feelings will pass. We won't necessarily be able to stop the storm, but we can live with the hope that we *will* survive it and it will pass.

This pain is just a chapter in our story, not the whole book. We may not forget the chapter, but we will move past it. Sometimes all we have at our disposal is the knowledge the "hurricane" will not last forever, every storm has an ending, the sun will absolutely shine time.

Your method of moving forward may not be circling a date on the calendar as I did, but we *can* decide not to bury the feelings that arise during a storm, or after a loss, or even in the middle of heartache. We can all rest in the knowledge that no matter what chapter of life we are in, no matter the "emotional nausea" we are experiencing, this too shall pass; this too shall considerably lessen, considerably weaken with time. It always does.

When my dad passed away, my emotions were raw. I ached deep down in the pit of my stomach and in the center of my heart. This life on earth will surely pass away in but a moment. What a reunion I will have with my dad once again.

I remember my dad using the phrase "This too shall pass" when I faced fears. Taking a few minutes to turn to my Father in heaven and concentrating on my dear earthly father's words allows me to balance my fear with reality. You can use the phrase "This too shall pass" daily as well; it will help keep life in perspective.

✖ *Adapted from The Kindness Effect by Jill Donovan, copyright 2018, published by Charisma House. This book shows what happens when you give generously to others, pursue your dreams*

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Prayer Power for the Week of April 29, 2018

This week, thank the Lord for His great kindness and generosity to us all. Ask Him to teach you how to give of yourself and your abundance to others. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, more laborers for the harvest field and your spiritual leaders. Remember the president and those in authority with him who make decisions affecting us and the world. Pray for those affected by disasters, crime and terror when you pray for our military and families. Read: Luke 6:38, 12:48.