

# Eagan woman offers help for dealing with grief and loss

**BY SUE WEBBER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER**

In previous years, Faye Hefele found a niche by becoming involved with a church retreat ministry.

But in the last few years, she's found a new calling. She speaks to groups about her experiences with grief and loss.

"I set my mission 15 years ago to support, help and encourage other people," Hefele said.

"Most of my losses were 15 years ago or more, but I speak from experience," said Hefele, whose father took his own life, and who has a friend whose son committed suicide. "Talking about it is helpful for me.

"I've written from both perspectives. I've been able to come through it, and I've learned how to deal with myself. Journaling works for me."

She is a writer, too, and finds that to be very therapeutic, Hefele said. "Sometimes I just put

pen to paper and write," she said. She has a gift for poetry, too.

Most of Hefele's audiences are made up of people 30 years of age and up, with a concentration of folks in their 40s and 50s, she said.

"Older people come because they've lost a spouse," she said. "As they become older, people may lose a spouse or a child, or they may have a serious illness."

She advises people who have experienced loss to acknowledge that loss,

grieve, and find professional help through counseling, ministry, and even good friends. She has worked with the South Suburban

Grief and Loss Coalition.

"I advise people to go to scripture, to a pastor and to prayer," she said.

She said she's done "tons and tons" of research online and through books to find helpful resources. "A google search can get you to good resources, but not everything you find there is helpful," she said.

"As I've experienced it, I have found that certain things can help others, too," she said.

Creative outlets are important for people

working through a loss, according to Hefele. She recommends adult coloring books, and painting as two avenues for expressing feelings.



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"They're good outlets," she said. "They take your mind off your loss and help you concentrate in a different way. You just need to find what works for you. You need to believe you can get through it."

If people become too immersed in their grief and too far down, it becomes harder for them to pull up, she said. "You need to take it a day or one minute at a time," she said.

Forgiveness becomes a crucial part of healing, Hefele said. "I learned to forgive my dad," she said.

Hefele gained much of her speaking experience from being a member of Toastmasters for 25 years. She has a college degree in accounting and an MBA degree from the University of St. Thomas.

When she retired, she was working as a business analyst for Land O' Lakes in financial and information systems.

"As I retired, I wanted to find

ways to give back and give to others on their journey of life," she said.

She works as a volunteer tutor, is on the board of RAAC (Rosemount Area Arts Council), a member of Second Act Players (a Rosemount theater group for people 50+) and has worked in community theater and stand-up comedy.

A native of Richfield, Hefele is a 28-year resident of Eagan. She has three children and six grandchildren.

She is the author of two books: "Reflections on the Journey: Thoughts and Prayers on Life" in 2014, and "Reflections on the Journey 2: Living the Rosary" in 2016.

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