

“What I Learned From Living With Loss”
Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Gunther Dohse, Speaker
June 24, 2007

In reflecting on the talk I gave this date, I feel that the text of a manuscript does not carry the same meaning as my voice. For instance, I read three poems. Anyone who has listened to the recitation of a poem knows that it is not the same as reading it from a book. I believe that my talk is available on tape at the Quimper Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship.

Gunther Dohse

[Ed. note: To receive a cassette tape of the service, please contact the Fellowship. Also: Gunther will e-mail a print version of his sermon upon request. You may contact him by e-mail at gunther@olympus.net. Below is a print summary of the main points of Gunther’s sermon.]

“What I Learned From Living With Loss”

I learned that loss is universal, but I felt mine as my unique grief.

I learned I could not prepare for my feelings of loss, as I would prepare for an earthquake or study a "How To Manual" as in the popular Dummies series. I could not read or write a "Grieving for Dummies."

I learned that anger is the underside of love; — it expresses the value I attach to my losses.

I learned that my grieving response could be disproportional to the present situation, because past memories triggered past losses.

I learned that grieving was stressful, that stress would lead to depression. Depression affected my immune system and repeatedly made me sick.

I learned that when I felt hopeless, it was because I realized that I could not control what was happening.

I learned that losses could damage my ability to trust.

I learned that my grief needed a witness.

I learned it was difficult for me to see beyond my loss to recognize the riches I had left.

I had difficulties accepting Marcus Aurelius' insight that, "**L**oss is nothing else but change, and change is Nature's delight."

I learned that I could choose to rise from the pains of loss and treasure the most precious gift I have - life itself.

Eventually, I learned that life is more than loss.

I learned that my losses made me more compassionate and gave me the strength to share and be helpful to others.