

**LIVE**

# Losing a parent never easy

**QUESTION:**

Ever since I lost my mom, the world hasn't seemed right to me. She was 89, so why can't I accept it? Everyone's parents die sooner or later.

**Answer:**

It's commonly believed that adults should be able to accept the death of their parents fairly easily — especially if the parent was elderly and if their death was expected, as in the case of illness. People figure that it's the natural course of things for parents to die before their children, and that if those children are grown-ups, they should be grown up enough not to need their parents.

However, these people simply have it wrong. The degree of grief you feel for your mother has nothing to do with how independent or mature you are; instead, it has everything to do with the kind of relationship you had with her.

For one thing, your mother knew your history from day one, and this isn't true of a spouse or a longtime friend, or even of a sibling. She knew things about you that no one else knew; moreover, she may have been the only person in the world who truly cared whether your winter coat was warm enough or knew when you needed comforting.



It may be that your mother's phone number was at the top of the list of numbers programmed into your phone. Perhaps you consulted her even about small things, like how long the power could be off in your fridge before everything went bad. You may find yourself wanting again and again to call her number, only to realize once more that she is really gone. You may even have the impulse to call and tell her how awful you feel about her being gone — and this might not seem illogical until later.

Some people regard their mother or father as their best friend. If this was your case, you might even have felt you didn't need other close friends until now. It can be baffling to figure out how to forge new friendships, especially while

you are grieving, as you may not feel like having a lot of social contact.

If you were your mother's caregiver during her illness, there will also be a big vacuum if a lot of your time was devoted to giving her comfort and companionship. Those activities likely gave your life meaning, so that now your sense of purpose has disappeared along with the parent who kept it alive. It may take quite some time to find other activities that are equally meaningful.

If you are male, you may receive even less understanding from the general public. Men in particular are expected to keep their emotions to a minimum and just carry on. It is often regarded as unmanly for males to feel deep sorrow or pain. Your mother may have actually been a step-mother, and people may not grasp that she was exactly like a mother to you.

When it comes to issues like loss, grief and illness, people's imaginations become quite limited; because imagining your pain might cause painful feelings for them, they aren't able to reach for (much less achieve) real empathy.

People who try to rush

*See Take page 17*

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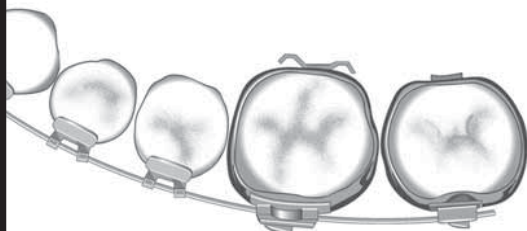
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# Going along for the glide



**Supercharged**  
Dave Norona



photo submitted

**COLUMNIST Dave Norona glides effortlessly along a cross-country ski trail at Cypress Mountain.**

THE sun's rays shine through the giant trees of the Cypress Mountain cross-country ski area as Kim and I grab our equipment and make our way onto the 19 kilometres of awesome cross-country trails.

A few mornings a week, this is our daily routine where we can enjoy each other's company while gliding effortlessly through the undulating terrain.

Cross-country skiing is still one of my favorite sports and it is the ultimate way to stay fit through the winter months. This season has been incredible with a huge amount of snow and clear sunny skies, which ensure a fast track and incredible views from the many vistas throughout the area.

Weekday mornings are our favourite as we seem to have the area all to ourselves, especially when we make our way to the upper trails around Triangle Lake. This is the perfect area to bask in the sun's rays while overlooking the city.

Skate skiing has become huge over the last few years with many athletes using it to cross train in the winter months instead of trying to run and

ride down in the city through the many snowstorms and rainy weather.

However, you do not have to be a top athlete to enjoy the majestic area of Cypress' cross-country skiing area. They have great lesson packages that will have you skate skiing or classic skiing in just a few lessons.

The adult learn to skate package is the ultimate with five evening lessons including trail passes, all the equipment and top-notch instructors all for \$369. And as a bonus, you will also receive a Starlite Nitetimer Pass which will enable you to ski free for the rest of the season from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Info: [www.cypress-mountain.com](http://www.cypress-mountain.com).

There are also many other great packages including kids programs and, if skate skiing seems too fast, you can also enjoy the wicked snowshoeing trails that snake their way through the cross-country area. The trails are all marked and take you through old growth forests littered with frozen lakes and reveal some of the old classic ski jumps from many years ago. Snowshoe rentals are also available from the base area if you do not have your own. You

can finish up your adventure, like we do, with a warm hot chocolate at Hollyburn Lodge.

If you try cross-country skiing and find yourself hooked and in need of equipment then there are many shops that can help you choose the best equipment for you. Deep Cove Outdoors and Sigge's Sport Villa are two amazing shops and they both offer great skate and classic ski packages.

When looking for gear, choose either skate or classic equipment. Combination gear that will do both is a good idea but does not do either sport well. Spend the most money on good boots as these are the most important piece of gear to keep you warm and stable on your skis. Salomon makes the best boots. A good mid-range ski and carbon pole will allow you to be fast and furious without breaking the bank. Again, a good shop will give you a few options and allow you to change it up to make it perfect for you.

*Adventurer Dave Norona hopes to see you out on the slopes of Cypress' cross-country skiing area this winter. His morning escapes are supported by Advil, PowerBar and Seymour Bean.*

# Take all the time you need to heal

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you in your grieving process either have not experienced a major loss yet, or have not had the same quality of relationship with a parent as you have. From these people, you might sometimes get comments like, "I would think you'd be doing better by now," or, "She wouldn't have wanted you to be so sad." It's important not to let such comments prevent you from claiming the time you need for your grieving. After all, through your sorrow, you are honouring a

parent you loved profoundly — and your tears are a last tribute to that parent's influence in your life.

*Eve Abrams, M.A., R.C.C., works as a counsellor at Family Services of the North Shore in loss and grief services. She does one-to-one bereavement counselling, facilitates the adult grief support circle through Lions Gate Hospital and also works in FSNS' Stopping the Violence Program. Questions? [ontbecouch@familyservices.bc.ca](mailto:ontbecouch@familyservices.bc.ca) or 604-988-5281.*



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