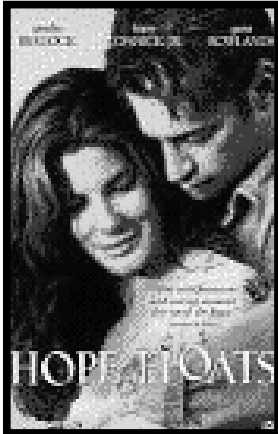


HOPE

My first viewing of the movie, *Hope Floats* occurred during some post-divorce counseling called Navigating the Family. In this movie, a woman played by Sandra Bullock is going through a difficult period following divorce – she is grieving over the loss of her marriage and of love. During this difficult period, she returns to her hometown to live with her mother. She also has a young daughter that is suffering some separation anxiety from the father and, in reaction, is on less than good terms with the mother, Sandra Bullock.



“Hope floats” because Sandra is able to endure grieving by learning to accept that certain matters are beyond her control and that, no matter how much she thought she tried or indeed did try, the marriage could not be saved by her alone. With time, her healing arises through the stages of grief:

1. Denial - unable to come to terms or to realize the loss
2. Anger – asking the question “why did this happen to me” and finding someone or something to blame
3. Bargaining – wanting for the person, place, or thing to return or come back
4. Depression – sudden extreme feelings of loss, hopelessness, and frustration
5. Acceptance – treasure your memories and am able to move on with your life

On reaching acceptance, Sandra is able to resume her life under the radical changes resulting from separation and divorce. For some people who experience grief over divorce or other loss, the first four steps may perpetuate in a cycle without transition to acceptance, healing, and good health. In this cycle, the individual can retain one or more of the symptoms and remain less than healthy.

How does “hope float” or remain alive in us? How do we manage grief? Well, I know that the stages described above take time, and sometimes a lot of time. Since grief represents pain, the desire is to overcome grief as quickly as possible – but time remains a certain factor that allows us to fully process each stage and emerge, preferably, as a better person. I also know that prayer, both our own and that of others, is important – after all, *faith is being sure of what is hope for and certain of what we do not see*. The Bible contains numerous references to hope but, in general, our faith or belief in God’s promises is the predecessor for hope. When we begin to realize that nothing in this world is certain except God’s promises, then we truly can acknowledge that hope does float.

In a **WORD**