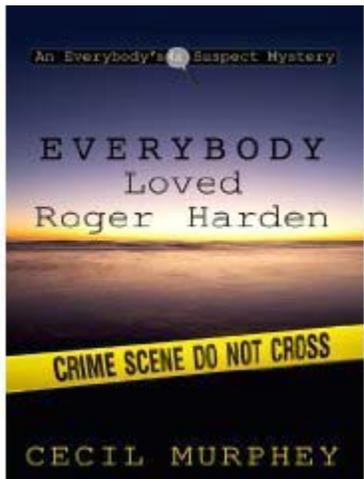




"What's going on that makes me feel the way I do right now?"



Everybody Loved Roger Harden is now in large print.

The Reality of Feelings

If it hadn't been for Shirley, I would have deleted the first chapters of a manuscript. "It's worthless," I said. "No one wants to read this junk."

I honestly felt that way; Shirley persuaded me that the writing was "not that bad." (She really said I was good.) I saved it, sent it to my editor with a copy to Twila. Later that day, Twila emailed, "You really have some powerful things to say."

Is that so? The chapters didn't feel powerful to me. They felt mundane and simplistic.

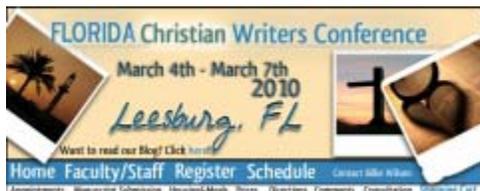
I tell this true account because that experience reminded me of something valuable. I had listened to my feelings and this time they were wrong.

When I'm upbeat and read my writing or review speeches I've made, or anything else I've done, I usually give myself a passing grade. But when I go through a few dark days, nothing I do feels good enough. No matter what I write, or what I say to an audience or a Sunday school class, I leave thinking, I wasn't very good, and I hope I'll be better next time.

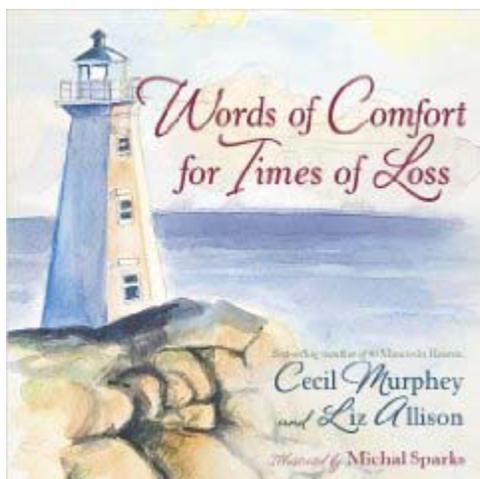
Of course it also works the other way. A few times I've felt I'd done something well and it was only adequate; however, that part hasn't troubled me. My anguish has centered on negative emotions about something that others look at with some objectivity and say, "This is good."

The one way I've figured to deal with this is to say one sentence to myself (and sometimes repeat it several times): "My negative feelings are emotions; my negative feelings are not reality."

I may feel bad about something I've done, but that doesn't make it bad. Too often I confused the emotion with reality.



Cec and Twila will hang out in Florida at this writers conference March 3-5.



Purchase this book from Twila for \$11 and receive a free hardcover copy of *Heaven Is Real* (a \$22 value).



For great writing tips, check out Cec's blog.

I've recently gone beyond that sentence. I pause and ask myself, "What's going on that makes me feel the way I do right now?" (I talk aloud to myself.) In the incident I mentioned above, I was able to connect it with a bad experience earlier that week. Because I felt bad over something else, the experience upset my emotional balance for several days.

So I remind myself that because I feel a particular way doesn't make it true. Instead it tells me how I feel about something.

Personal News

Some of you may have heard about my wife, Shirley. Her doctors tell her that she has 40 percent use of her kidneys and they have put her on a strict diet—which is much different from the way we eat. And she has to drink water—a lot of water—every day.

My mystery (the first of a series of three) called [Everybody Loved Roger Harden](#) is now in a large-print edition.

Twila and I will be at the [Florida Christian Writers Conference](#) March 3-5.

I'll speak to a senior's group in Decatur, GA on March 8 and a week later to a group in Atlanta.

March 18-21 I'll be in my hometown of Davenport, IA. I'm scheduled for a radio interview the first thing. After that, I'll speak to a Bible study group and a Celebrate Recovery group. I'll teach a writing seminar at the Midwest Writing Center Saturday afternoon, and I'm the speaker for their literary banquet that night. On Sunday morning I'll teach two different Sunday school classes at a Lutheran church in Moline, IL.

The Twila Zone—Words from my assistant, Twila Belk

I've asked Cec and Liz Allison, his co-author of [Words of Comfort for Times of Loss](#), to compile a list of tips on how to comfort and encourage those who grieve. And they listened! The result is an excellent FREE resource I can offer to you. You may make copies to use in your churches, ministries, organizations, groups, and anywhere that's appropriate. If you're a funeral director, chaplain, or you work with groups such as Stephen Ministries, consider sharing this helpful resource with friends and families of the grieving. To download the document, click on [Practical Tips to Comfort and](#)



Twila decided to take a break from her bonbons to pop up and say hi.

[Encourage Those Who Grieve.](#)

Many of you took advantage of my special deal with *Words of Comfort for Times of Loss* last month. I've decided to offer it again. Here's the scoop: If you purchase a copy of Cec's newest gift book, *Words of Comfort for Times of Loss*, for \$11 from me, I will give you a free hardback copy of *Heaven Is Real* (a \$22 value). (The offer is good while supplies last.) You might want to consider donating these books to your church library, a grief support group, or giving them to a grieving friend. If interested, contact me at twila@gottatellsomebody.com or 563-332-1622.

The deadline for submissions to *The Christmas Spirit*, Cec's next Christmas book, is May 1. Do you have a true story that emphasizes the spirit of the Christmas season? Visit www.christmasspiritbook.com for guidelines and submission details.

If you want to learn the craft of writing or enhance your skills, and if you're looking for a warm and welcoming writers conference that makes you feel like you're one of the family, consider attending the Quad-Cities Christian Writers Conference in Eldridge, Iowa, April 9-10. (www.qccwc.com) I'd love to meet you and encourage you on your writing journey.

For great writing tips, check out Cec's blog: www.cecmurpheyswritertowriter.blogspot.com.