

Country News & Notes

Tune into the latest word on your favorite country-music stars

TAKE TWO MERLE HAGGARD SONGS AND CALL ME IN THE morning." That's the unorthodox professional advice dispensed by Denver psychologist and radio personality Larry Huston. His radio show, *Country Mourning*, aims to help people work through grief associated with the loss of a loved one. His primary tool? Country music, naturally.

If your dog's been run over, your lover has left you, or your best friend has died, don't sing the blues, counsels Huston. Instead, cry along to the mournful lyrics of Garth Brooks, Reba McEntire,

Kenny Rogers, Merle Haggard, and other popular country/Western artists.

"Country music holds the seeds of healing," Huston says. "To heal hurt, you have to move toward pain, not away from it."

That means confronting your fears, a difficult task for which the lyrics of countless country tunes can lend comfort. "When a country-music lover hears the inviting voice of Patsy Cline sing *Crazy*, or Hank Williams twang *She's Long Gone Lonesome Blues*," says Huston, "the listener is reassured that he or she is not alone in this world."

The next step toward feeling better is letting it all out. "Mourning, expressing grief, is essential to healing," Huston continues. "Country music has been proven to be among the best of the arts at expressing the emotions of broken hearts."

To those critics who might think Huston's methods could bring a person down a bit too much, the psychologist replies that country music doesn't just hit the grief buttons: "There are jukeboxes full of country music that uphold love, fidelity, honesty, going to Grandma's for Thanksgiving, and just plain doing good and feeling good."

—Anne Lang

