



# sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter



THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

**Tina Morkides**

SUMMER 2021

Volume 13, Issue 4

## Welcome *from the Editor*

Happy Summer everyone!

As this newsletter goes to print we are still **not** meeting at our usual location; the Exeter Community Library. Our community has certainly begun to get back to some kind of normalcy with vaccinations and restrictions becoming less in many venues. I sincerely hope that we will be meeting in the library soon.

Since the last issue I have been pleasantly surprised by your kindness expressed in person as well as through email concerning the publication of my book; *Miss Your FOREVER*. So many of you have reached out and shared thoughts and feelings. It's nice to hear and know that my own words and feelings being expressed is helping others cope with their own grief journey. Thank you. Stay tuned for the Fall edition of this newsletter. There may be an announcement you won't want to miss.

As the season changes so does our focus and priorities within our lives. We're on the back side of this year and if there are things that we wanted to get better at and haven't got there yet, now is the time to re-focus and take charge of improving ourselves. I often reach out to websites and even some spiritual and philosophical books to provide the necessary energy and drive to help myself.

**sudSSpirit** was founded in 2008 to help provide a place of comfort, compassion, and hope for those that have experienced a sudden unexpected death of their spouse or significant other. Meetings are held monthly in Reading, PA and Bennington, VT. All meetings are Free and No registration is required. Additional information is within this newsletter. **sudSSpirit** stands for "*Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph*"

If this is the first time you have heard about us and are in need of some help through our support group chapters, please see page three in the right margin for additional information about our chapters. We also have a list of other resources on page two in the left margin that may be helpful to you. This newsletter is available to anyone or any agency, support group, church,

funeral home, or organization anywhere FREE of charge via regular mail or email so if you know of someone that can benefit from these pages, please share this with them and have them contact us with their email or address information and we will make sure that they become part of our mailing list for future publications. You may also contact the editor/founder directly at **717-866-2401** or [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com) and [dmurgido@gmail.com](mailto:dmurgido@gmail.com). We also have a facebook page.

***Miss Your FOREVER, Reflections After the Death of a Spouse. On sale now from wherever books are sold or directly from me in person \$16.95 or through the mail \$20 including S&H. Phone and email contact listed above.***

Thank you to those that have been long time supporters of our group and thanks to all of those that we have helped along the way for believing in yourself and us to help you in your time of grief. ***Together We Can Help Each Other Heal.***



## Book Review - Editor **Widow to Widow**

*by Genevieve Davis Ginsburg*

This book is a very practical guide that is primarily divided into four parts. Ginsburg takes the reader through the shock, guilt, the blues, and the rebuilding of the widow's life after this personal tragedy. The author comments on relationships, family, friends, and dating.

Ginsburg looks at going from widowhood to selfhood with self exploration of your new identity concerning work, volunteering, and having fun again. She explains how one of the toughest parts of this journey is being uncoupled and making your life your own.

This reviewer felt that her references, while limited in the book, to the widower missed the mark in some ways. It may have been better to not mention them at all and stay focused on the widow's concerns. Some of the comments and advice for the widow also seemed dated and more applicable to those widows that were more senior and from another time past.

The book concludes with a resource section and a Widow's Survival Checklist.

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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*Due to COVID-19 and any restrictions in place please email or call contact phone numbers listed to confirm time and place of meeting. In the event a meeting place can not be established, a virtual meeting will take place via zoom.*

## Resources

- Editor

GRMHA (Greater Reading  
Mental Health Alliance)  
www.grmha.org  
610-775-3000

St Joseph's Spiritual Care  
www.thefutureofhealthcare.org  
610-378-2297

Compassionate Care Hospice  
1-800-777-5109

Family Guidance Center  
www.familyguidancecenter.com  
610-374-4963

Heartland Home Health Care  
and Hospice  
610-373-6898 or 888-800-0224

Circle of Life Coalition  
www.circleoflifecoalition.org

www.griefshare.org

Diakon Family Life Services  
www.diakon.org/fls/NPLoss.asp  
610-682-1337

Bennington Area VNA & Hospice  
www.bavnah.org  
802-442-5502

Bayada Hospice Services  
www.bayada.com  
855-696-2072  
610-367-1608

Pathways Center for Grief & Loss  
www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org  
800-924-7610

Spiritrust Lutheran Home Care &  
Hospice  
800-840-9081



## So Many Lives within a Lifetime

by Dominic Murgido

*You only Live once. In my previous Life. Such is Life. Life happens. Life is like a novel. It's filled with suspense. You have no idea what is going to happen until you turn the page.*

The other day I was with with a few friends and one of them made reference to the way something was handled where he had worked before and he prefaced it with these words; "In my previous life, we did it this way". Everyone knew the reference point being of a past time, past employer, or past career. It made me think that we all have those moments in life that are like a totally different life than where we are right now. And those previous moments constitute many lives that we experienced.

*Life is what you make it. Life goes on. Life doesn't stop for anybody. Let me live my Life. Death is not the opposite of Life, but a part of it. Life is a gift.*

So thinking of it that way, how many lives will we have in a lifetime?

If I share my own list I guess my first "life" was the life I had growing up with parents and a sibling, friends in the neighborhood to friends at school till high school graduation. My second "life" happened when I went to college and for those four years with new friends and experiences I grew as an adult, met the girl of my dreams and fell in love. Life number three is when I got married to the girl I met in life number two. My third "life" ended with her death therefore starting a fourth "life", a life without her.

*Life will break you. This Life's hard. Life is about not knowing. Life is pain, highness. Enjoy your Life. Accept what Life offers you. It's your Life.*

### Quarterly Quote

- Editor

**"Your grief, your loss, is a piece to the puzzle of your life. It is not your whole life. It is a significant piece, yes, but take time to notice all the pieces in the puzzle. Your life is bigger than your loss. All the pieces are important."**

*Hope & Healing for Transcending Loss*

-Ashley Davis Bush



There are also sub-lives within lives that enhance our beings and character like when or if we became a Father or Mother, an Aunt or Uncle, Grandparent? Changing jobs or relocating or starting a hobby can be a sub-life within a life. My teaching experience was part of my third and fourth life therefore being part of two lives. Opening a business was a sub-life for me as was entering a new career in social services. Retirement is a sub-life for many of us.

*Life flashes before your eyes. Life is for the living. Live the Life of your dreams. One of Life's lessons is always moving on. It's okay to look back to see how far you've come but keep moving forward.*

None of us have just one life if you look at it this way and our life doesn't end when we lose our spouse or significant other. Of course, none of us that have would ever be convinced of that when it first happened, myself included. That's where the healing process of time comes in. Time that provides us with wisdom and rationality.

*Don't take Life too seriously. Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Our Life is what our thoughts make it. Life is funny. Things change, people change, but you will always be you.*

Whatever numbered life we're on, we're living a life with purpose, kindness, appreciation, compassion, and understanding. We've become wiser, experienced, friendlier, and forgiving. We find ways to cope, believe, have faith and hope. And we move forward knowing how richer all of our lives have become from spending the time we had with the one we loved.

*Everyone you meet is a part of your journey, but not all of them are meant to stay in your Life. Some people are just passing through to bring you gifts; either they're blessings or lessons.*

### An Entry From My Journal

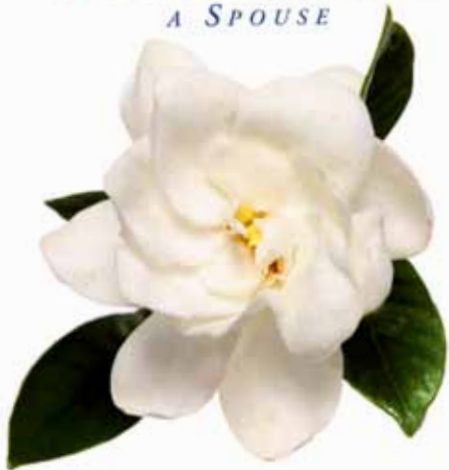
"I would give up everything, promise anything, be accountable to anyone to have my life back the way it once was."

-Editor



*Miss Your*  
**FOREVER**

REFLECTIONS  
AFTER THE DEATH OF  
A SPOUSE



DOMINIC MURGIDO

***Now Available***

 **iTunes**

**amazon**

**BARNES & NOBLE**  
BOOKSELLERS


***Author***

**Dominic Murgido**

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***Miss Your FOREVER: Reflections After the Death of a Spouse***  
from Christian Faith Publishing author Dominic Murgido  
is a powerful examination and emotional testament  
of grief under the most respectful terms inviting  
readers into the greatest source of pain  
one can imagine, the unknown realm of grief.

Dominic's new book is an inspiring, at times heartbreaking,  
narrative through reflections and entries from his personal  
journal as he becomes a compassionate grief advocate  
while taking you on a path of discovery and renewal.



I AM BOTH THE PERSON  
WHO I USED TO BE,  
A PERSON WITH  
A SET OF MEMORIES  
FROM BEFORE,  
AND A NEW PERSON,  
ONE WHO SEES AND EXPERIENCES  
THE WORLD FUNDAMENTALLY  
DIFFERENTLY.

I AM BOTH THE SAME AND  
RADICALLY ALTERED.  
THE WORLD IS BOTH AS IT ALWAYS WAS  
AND FOREVER CHANGED.

WHAT'S YOUR GRIEF,  
GRIEVING WHO I USED TO BE

@WHATSYOURGRIEF  
WHATSYOURGRIEF.COM





## Grieving when you are an Introvert

By Kathryn Van Auken, Contributor



The process of mourning and grieving is hard for everyone, but there are elements of the losing a loved one that can feel especially difficult when you're an introvert. As an introvert myself, when I was mourning the death of my parents, so many of the traditional parts of the mourning process felt very invasive to me. For instance, people coming over to my house after the funeral. I had just been taking care of ailing parents and planning a funeral and now I have to have people over? I know that everyone meant well, but having people in my home, some of them I barely knew, felt very unsettling. And then came the inevitable questions, are you going to sell the house, are going to move and what are going to do now?

Being an introvert used to mean being labeled as shy, but today's definitions have thankfully broadened. Introversion now includes other characteristics like how introvert recharge while being alone or with just a couple of close friends, preferring a less sensory environment and being more deliberate in decision making. The mourning process, however, can include lots of people visiting your home, strange environments like a hospital or funeral home, lack of privacy, social gatherings and lots of decisions just as a start. Not a great environment for any introvert even under the best of circumstances. When you already feel terrible about losing a loved one, being thrust into a high-sensory, intense social situation can seem almost impossible to navigate.

I offer these tips to my fellow introverted grievers as you navigate the grief process while still honoring your feelings.

### Accept that you are an introvert

Thanks to Susan Cain's book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, there is so much more information out in the world about what it means to truly be an introvert and more acceptance for introverts. There is nothing wrong with you; it is just how you prefer to live in the world. Pushing yourself and forcing yourself to do things will only make you feel worse.

### Know your limits

While many of the activities surrounding the loss of a loved one may seem mandatory, don't forget you get to decide the best way for you to honor your loved one and your grief. When your days seem oversaturated with obligations and people, carve out time and space for yourself. Volunteer to run errands so you can get out of a crowded house and take a quiet drive, take the time to write something to be included in the program instead of speaking at the service and use social media or CaringBridge to keep friends and family updated instead of contacting everyone individually. By honoring your introversion, you will be able to heal yourself and honor your loved one in a way that feels true to you.

### Find a group

Joining a group may seem like the exactly wrong thing to tell an introvert, but as introverts, we appreciate people that are talking about real things, not small talk. That is what a grief support group can provide. Of course, you will want some time and space on your own to express your feelings, but you will also need to learn that you are not alone in your suffering. There are others out there that understand what you're going through. Grief groups offer a "me, too" dimension that can be hard to find in your current social circle. Whether you find a group on Facebook or an in-person grief support group, being with a small group of fellow grievers can be very healing. It may take a few attempts to find the right group for you, but you can find some nourishing relationships there.

Grief is going to visit us all, and we all process it differently, regardless of our personality traits. At the beginning of the grief process when the loss is new, it may seem that extroverts have an easier time since they can thrive in social environments and take action when quick decisions need to be made, but once the traditional mourning activities start to fade, that is when the environment is more conducive to introverts. The crowds and the questions dissipate and you'll have the space and time to be more circumspect. It's important for extroverts and introverts to support and accept each other through the whole process because it is hard for everyone. We are all doing the best we can.

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### sudSSpirit Bereavement Support Group

meets monthly in the  
following locations:

#### Berks Chapter

Reading, PA.

4<sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month  
6 PM

Exeter Community Library

4569 Prestwick Drive

Reading, PA 19606

610-406-9431

#### Bennington Chapter

Bennington, VT

4<sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month  
6 PM

Bennington Free Library

101 Silver Street

Bennington, VT 05201

802-442-9051

Due to COVID-19,  
please email or call  
contacts below to  
confirm time and  
place of meeting.  
If a meeting can not  
be held, we will meet  
virtually via zoom.

For additional  
information,  
Please check our  
facebook page or email:

[sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com)

-Berks, Pennsylvania

[sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com)

-Bennington, VT

or phone:

**717- 866- 2401**

-Berks, Pennsylvania

**802- 441- 5562**

-Bennington, VT

- Editor



## Staying In Touch *by Ellen Perry Berkeley*

I've begun writing this column on the anniversary of the day that my beloved husband died. The day he left this earth was in 2009, 12 years ago.

Are we still in touch? You bet! When I watch the news on TV, I can almost hear Roy's response to the major stories. He loved the news, whichever way the stories went -- he had worked for two newspapers in NYC, he wrote an excellent non-fiction book (A SPY'S LONDON, still in print in England), and he loved history, which undoubtedly gave him a one-up on "Jeopardy!" where he won enough money as a contestant to let us build our house in Vermont in the early 1970s.

I should mention that he read the *ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA* when he was about 10 years old and out of school for months with chicken pox, measles, and whooping cough. He not only read every entry in those volumes, he remembered what they said. I'll always be impressed by this.

Later in his life, he responded very warmly to me, whether I was reporting to him on something nice, or giving him details on something difficult. We were close.

But the other day, when I was re-reading what I wrote soon after he died -- *ROY GELLEN BERKELEY: HIS LIFE* (which reached 53 pages, single-spaced) -- I came upon a number of things that I might not have recalled a decade later. They were things that would have stayed with me just after he died, but not for long afterward if I hadn't written them down. Writing about these has kept me in touch with him -- his thoughts, his passions, his jokes.

Thinking about "being in touch" and "staying in touch" I must say that one of my biggest losses, in losing Roy, is that I don't have someone close to me whom I can gently touch at any possible moment. Dominic has just written about this, but it is on my mind, too. And I'm sure on yours, too.

Like me, Roy was committed to touching. Getting up from the dining table to get something from the fridge, he would touch my back. Putting mail on the table, he would touch my shoulder. Opening the door to the Mud Room, he would touch my arm. I did the same. I don't know who started it, but we both loved it. Never any flinching. Never any request to stop doing it.

It was always just a touch -- not a grab, or a stab. And always done with the certainty that we both loved it, and although we never spoke about its meaning, and its importance, we knew that it told us we were special to each other.

I don't have this ease at touching and being touched with anyone now, not even with women I'm close to. I guess this kind of touching is for people who are married, and have a close connection with each other. As with additional things I now miss, I feel lucky to have had this, even though I don't have it now.

But why don't we have it now? Several friends have told me that they, too, would like to touch and be touched. Can we just start a touching procedure, where we touch someone, get touched back, and feel good about it? We shouldn't need an OK from anyone except the person being touched. With no objection from that person, we'll soon be more "in touch" with any number of other persons.

And we'll immediately feel closer to them -- anyone and everyone. If there's any negative reaction, we can explain that the person has just received a kind of hug and a sort of reaching out. And that person should give this touch to someone else. We'll soon be in touch with the world. And during this dismal time of the covid-19 quarantine, who would be against that?

## A Sudden Truth: Living After the Death of Your Spouse *by Carl Mathis*

Losing a spouse is perhaps one of the most emotionally grueling experiences an adult can go through in their lifetime. The deafening emptiness of your home without your partner, the realization of dependency on your spouse, and the loss of everything that you once shared with -- companionship, a friend, a person to turn to for advice -- these are hard pills to swallow. For women, especially mothers, this is an unbelievably difficult change in their lives. Being suddenly left to raise the children alone and having to be the sole breadwinner for her now incomplete family is a hurdle many cannot fathom.

However, as you grieve, realize that this time in your life will not be forever. Things can be done to improve your life and to move you forward out of your grief. Allow yourself time to grieve and mourn the loss of your loved one, but once the tears start to become less, acknowledge the fact that it is time to move forward. According to "Life is What You Make It", a book by Carl Mathis, this devastating tragedy can be the key and gateway to rebuilding an entirely new life, though it may not seem like so in the beginning. The power of positive thinking can do wonders in helping you to get out of your hole and can push you forward to begin your brand new life alone. Here are some ways to get you off the ground:

**1. Understand that the pain will not easily go away.** Do not be frustrated or fall into a deeper depression if you feel as if your grief is taking a long time. The loss of a spouse is a heavy burden and it will take time before you start to feel normal again. Think positively and know that this time will pass as well and eventually, you will feel better about life.

**2. Acknowledge the power of choice.** Do not feel guilty about realizing that you want to begin your new life. This means your time of grief is over. Think of the good things to come.

**3. Do not think that you are forgetting your spouse.** Just because your pain is slowly fading and you are starting to feel better, it doesn't mean you are forgetting your spouse. Believe that they would have wanted you to be happy and fulfilled even when they are gone.

**4. Channel your love and affection in other ways.** Think positively and realize that you still have a lot of love to give. If you are looking for someone to care for, focus more attention on the children, or get a pet to take you through those solitary rough moments. Pets are great joy bringers, delivering comfort and happiness with just their mere presence. Not only that, believe that you can still find love, and that this is not the end of life for you as we know it.

**5. Realize that death is just the beginning.** Death is inevitable and by thinking positively, you'll see what the good side of death is. It isn't the end of life, but a mere beginning.

Employ some positive thinking to help get you through your situation. See the brighter side of things and not just what's depressing and heartbreaking. There's always a flipside and that is what you must realize.

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