



sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter



THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Debbie Bilinski
Michele Yerger

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Welcome *from the Editor*

Happy New Year!

New Year, New Chances, New Beginnings.
New Year's Resolutions to make new memories
and not be afraid to take risks.

As this publication begins its *twelfth* year, I would like to recognize and thank those that are an important part of the development and look; **our printer**. Although as editor I write and provide content, I do not do the actual set up and printing of the copies you hold in your hand or read as an attachment. **Kwik Quality Press** www.kwikquality.com located in Lebanon, PA is our printer. Doug Suereth and his staff have been instrumental in maintaining and improving the appearance of our newsletter with the quality stock used and his attention to detail with layout, color, and design to make it just right. Kwik Quality Press and I share the same interest in producing a high quality newsletter that informs, inspires, and encourages the reader to have hope and faith during their grief journey.

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 anywhere regardless of their specific loss 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. We also have a

facebook page should you want to check that out.

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 need. ***Together We Can Help Each Other Heal.***

A Pathway to Healing and Hope

by John Kreiser

There's nothing like a life well-shared
With someone that you love
That special one beyond compare
A gift from high above
But, even in the best of lives
Things sometimes go awry
And when that tragic day arrives
You're left alone to cry
'Though many offer sympathy
Kind words as gentle rain
They lack the proper empathy
To comprehend your pain
An unexpected loss of spouse
Disastrous and unique
Casts dismal gloom upon your house
And leaves you feeling bleak
sudSSpirit's ready to relieve
Your overburdened heart
By offering a place to grieve
And make you feel a part
Of something larger than yourself
Where others share your grief
For having lost a spouse themselves
They too, desire relief
We share in one another's loss
Inviting deep reflection
True understanding comes across
Creating a connection
Recalling those no longer here
Expressing full emotion
Both laughter and unbridled tears
Apply a healing lotion
sudSSpirit is a place to find
A forward path to grow
By nurturing your peace of mind
It helps you to let go
Of much of what is weighing down
Your broken heart and soul
As we move onward, breaking ground
Advancing towards the goal
Of life beyond the one we knew
Before that somber day
Enabling us to start anew
And help us on our way.

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Dominic Murgido - Editor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome

A Pathway to Healing
and Hope

Quarterly Quote

Another First Many
Years Later

I Remember When

An Entry From My
Journal

Can Our Grieving
Ever End?

Book Review

Grief Recovery
Resolutions for a
New Year

How Long Does it
Take to Start Healing?

Thoughts to Ponder

Quarterly Quote

- Editor

"Grief can change your outlook. You don't ever forget the shock, the sadness, and the pain. But I do not believe that grief changes you. Grief, if you let it, will reveal who you are. It can reveal depths that you did not know you had. The startling weight of grief can burst any bubble of complacency in how you live your life, and help you to live up to the values you espouse"

-Prince William,
Duke of Cambridge



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



Another First Many Years Later by Dominic Murgido

It is often communicated from a variety of sources that the first year after losing a loved one it is difficult in that there are many "firsts" that will take place without them being there with you, for you. In most cases that is true; however, the firsts *don't stop* after that year. Please don't be fooled by this.

Your life changes because life as you knew it changed. You may be going through things now alone for the first time. Perhaps the second or third year you will decide to relocate to a more manageable apartment or home. You may decide to change insurance companies, cable companies, phone services and you will now be making those decisions alone. Maybe you never did the finances and now you are overwhelmed with paying bills and budgeting. It's not easy.

Decisions about your pets are made now by you. You may be at a point of needing a newer car and you've never done that before ...alone. The lawn mower stops working or you are clueless how to start it or get it serviced. Many online sites and accounts are password protected and that is something that has to be dealt with as well.

Fortunately, some of us have good support from family and friends to help guide us and provide feedback about our choices in whatever decision is before us. But ultimately it is on you.

It's been over a decade since my wife Sue died. I would have thought I conquered "all" the firsts at this point in my journey of life without her. Not true. This past year I had to go through two outpatient procedures that required me to be driven to and from the site. One of them, I never had done before but it was just as much a trigger of emotions knowing my wife wasn't the one to be there. The other was a repeat procedure that I recalled my wife being the one that was there for me. That flashback affected me more. Two firsts within a year, many years after her death.

I am blessed and fortunate that my sister and brother-in-law were there for me during those times. I am grateful for their time, compassion, and caring attitude to make me as comfortable as they can during those moments. I struggled with these incidents being "*another first*", but what choice did I have?

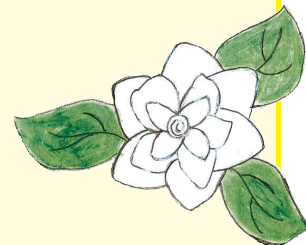
So my message to you is that all those firsts in life without your spouse or significant other can come along despite the time frame of your grief journey. Only you have the power of acceptance; acceptance of what life is now for you and believing that you can get through whatever the future holds for you.

I Remember When

by Dominic Murgido

I Remember When...

- ...We first met at college
- ...We walked in the snow together
- ...We had fun every Halloween
- ...We got engaged and then married
- ...We enjoyed movies together
- ...We had fun traveling and exploring
- ...We sat by the fireplace
- ...We had our daughter and were so happy
- ...We moved many times for my job
- ...We made each other gifts for Christmas
- ...We celebrated our Anniversaries
- ...We picked apples together
- ...We attended plays together
- ...We bought our first home
- ...We painted a room together
- ...We soaked in our hot tub together
- ...We had dinner out
- ...We bought our first new car
- ...We took long drives to new malls
- ...We first got HAL as our dog
- ...We went on picnics in state parks
- ...We kayaked on a lake
- ...We rode bikes
- ...We worked out at home together
- ...We comforted each other in times of need
- ...We encouraged each other to go for it
- ...We smiled at the college graduation of our daughter
- ...We enjoyed our last Fall season together
- ...We celebrated her last Birthday
- ...We kissed for the last time
- ...We were so happy to be with one another
- ...We once were...and I will never forget her



An Entry From My Journal

"All my life without her is a task – one that is always a challenge for me and each step deserves a reflection of where I've been, how far I've come, and where I have yet to be."

-Editor





Can Our Grieving Ever End? *by Ellen Perry Berkeley*

Is my grieving over? There are days when I'm almost unaware of being a widow. No sadness. No loneliness. And days when someone else's grieving seems almost weird. Various photos of Roy are in several places in my cottage, always smiling, and there's much of him that's still with me. This is, of course, the cottage he never knew - - I moved into it in 2010, a year after he died. It's now just over a decade since he died in 2009. But he is still here with me.

My grieving has certainly changed. But could it actually be over? No, I must admit. An odd moment will bring me the sharp sadness that I thought had ended some years ago. Seeing a couple look really happy together, for instance. Seeing them smile at each other repeatedly. Seeing them touch each other tenderly. I miss that. I miss Roy. I miss his wonderful mind, always active. I miss his loving ways, always smiling at me, and often telling me that he simply adored me (his word).

These sad moments are rare, and Roy had a lot to do with this, I'm sure. In those last two months of his life, after we learned devastatingly that his salivary-gland cancer had gone to his bones, he used those two months to give me strength - - to build on the strength we knew I had, and to add strength where we weren't altogether sure what I had. He told me it would take a while but I'd soon be laughing with friends, attending anything in town, getting back to my work, enjoying life.

I couldn't believe him at the time, but he was right. And I have thanked him for this at least a thousand times. I have also done what I promised him I'd do. I've worn the ring that I bought in New Mexico (when I was there for two weeks conducting a writing workshop for architecture students). The ring is beautiful - - turquoise in a silver setting. But it is important to me beyond its appearance because of the Native American who created it. His name: Ted Goodluck. Roy thought I'd continue to smile every time I looked at the ring. I do.

My Dad was also so helpful. He was no longer with us - - he died in 1984, at the age of 82 - - but in the years I was growing up he was enormously important in my life. And his teachings have stayed with me. My father came from a very poor (and very determined) family - - his parents were immigrants from Eastern Europe in the late 19th Century - - and my Dad, also poor and determined, put himself through architecture school at Columbia University and worked in the building boom of the 1920s. Then

came the Depression. "Things happen," was my Dad's view, "and we fight back." Fighting back fiercely, however, wasn't how he managed those years; Instead, somehow, he kept his spirits up.

Roy, too, was in good spirits even when he knew he was dying. This was his seventh cancer, 49 years after his first cancer, he was proud to note. We often reviewed our happy memories from our 43 years together, during those final two months of his life. He was helping me to be grateful for what we'd had, not to be angry for what more we now wouldn't have. Helping us both, I believe.

What can we do if we don't have people in our lives who've given us this encouragement? I suppose we can pretend that they've been with us, encouraging us to manage our grief well - - to grieve honestly, and then to turn without apology to our new life. We are brave. We are strong. And we do not wish to weep every day for the next 10, 20, 30 years. Grieving needn't last forever. We should know, however, that it may never quite leave us, even when we think it's "over."



Book Review - *Editor* **The Art & Power of Acceptance: Your Guide to Inner Peace** *by Ashley Davis Bush LICSW*

The author once again writes with such honesty and directly to the reader about what works to help one become better at accepting themselves as well as life situations around them. I have read most of the author's previous books and each one provides me with new insight into how to deal with life issues and be able to handle things and come out a winner.

The book is tastefully designed and provides the reader with a renewed interest just in turning page to page. The content is more important but it is nice that it is displayed on colorful background with select designs.

Acceptance leads to possibility which leads to freedom from anger and resentment and emotional turmoil. The author speaks of self care and how we don't seem to provide ourselves with that as much as we should. Acceptance leads us to be in charge of the outcome and not be controlled by being stuck in a place we don't want to be. **Highly recommended.**

sudSSpirit Bereavement Support Group

meets monthly in the
following locations:

Berks Chapter

Reading, PA.

4th Wed. of the month
6 PM

Exeter Community Library
4569 Prestwick Drive
Reading, PA 19606
610-406-9431

Bennington Chapter

Bennington, VT

4th Tues. of the month
6 PM

Bennington Free Library
101 Silver Street
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-9051

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

sudsspirit@gmail.com
-Berks, Pennsylvania

sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com
-Bennington, VT

or phone:

717-866-2401
-Berks, Pennsylvania

802-441-5562
-Bennington, VT

- Editor



Grief Recovery Resolutions for a New Year

By: Victor M. Parachin

Each day, I will . . .

Remember to live in the present. The past is gone; the future is uncertain. All I have is today and I will make the most of it.

Open my heart asking the Universe or a Higher Power to help me heal.

Remind myself that every day is a healing day.

Do the best I can for my own good.

Do the best I can for the good of others.

Count my blessings, remembering that my cup is always half full and never half empty.

Avoid setting unreasonable, perfectionist goals for myself.

Nurture my spirit through prayer, meditation, worship and inspirational readings.

Take care of my physical self by eating nutritious, balanced meals and by engaging in physical exercise.

Believe that "help" is not a four-letter word; that asking for assistance with various is-sues is both mature and wise.

Choose to respond positively and creatively to problems which come my way.

Seek out all resources to find relief for my sorrow.

Not indulge in guilt and regrets because they don't change anything.

Maintain hope believing that the light always dispels the deepest darkness.

Trust that the pain will pass and peace will come.

Get the support I need.

Forgive others for being human and fallible.

Find role models to inspire me on my journey through bereavement.

Be kind, compassionate and generous toward others.

Practice patience with myself because healing and recovery take time

Grow from this experience.

Allow myself to feel good again.

Reprinted with permission: HOPELine Newsletter, January, 2019



How Long Does it Take to Start Healing?

When we're grieving, time can seem to drag very slowly. But with time, we can also feel a sense of relief. The most popular question that people ask when they first visit Grieving.com is "When will it get easier?" We recently asked members of our Facebook page (Facebook.com/mygriefsupport) "How long did it take before you realized that your every waking moment was not consumed with memories, thoughts, and feelings of your lost loved one? How did that make you feel?" Here are some of their responses.

"It was so gradual," said Pam. "Seven months was the first time I was able to 'catch my breath' and experience a moment of joy, free from grief. It happened again around nine months — for a few moments, and then it became more frequent. I am at 27 months now, and I am forever grieving but not forever miserable because of it!"

Renee had a similar experience. "It took me about two years," she said. "At first I felt a lot of guilt. Slowly I realized that I wasn't forgetting her, but I was allowing myself to start living again. I still think of her each and every day, although some days I think of her way more than others."

For Jessica, "It was right around three years for me. Dealing with a newborn helped, but I still think of her every day, still grieve every day. The day she died is the first thing I think of every morning. I think my brain still partly hopes it's a dream!"

According to Karen, "It's been 13 months. And one day last week, I was driving my son to school and realized I hadn't yet thought of my angel son in the one hour I'd been awake."

"The acute pain went on for the first few months," said Sarah. "Twenty years on for my Mom, 14 for my Dad, 17 for my daughter — I still think of them all the while, but with a smile, instead of a tear. The pain is still there, but not so sore. You never recover from grief, but I felt no guilt when I did start to feel a bit better...as that is what *they* would have wanted, and it best honored their memory."

If you'd like to contribute your own thoughts or encouraging words about this or any other grieving related topic, please visit our Grieving.com forums and Facebook.com/mygriefsupport

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Thoughts to Ponder - Editor

"Slow down and enjoy life. It's not only the scenery you miss by going too fast - you also miss the sense of where you're going and why"

-Eddie Cantor

"The nicest thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time"

-Anonymous

"Tradition does not mean that the living are dead: it means that the dead are living"

-Harold Macmillan

