



sudS Spirit
Quarterly Newsletter

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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Pete Keiser

Tom Wrightstone

Susan Murgido

Welcome *from the Editor*

The Fall season is upon us. As the leaves change color and fall to the ground, so can our moods. In front of us are many holidays celebrated by family and friends and for those of us that are trying to cope with the loss of a spouse or a loved one, these times can be difficult. It is recommended that you seek support from family and friends during this season or even attend a bereavement support group nearby. It can't hurt.

The **sudSSpirit** Quarterly Newsletter is a companion to the bereavement support group of the same name that meets monthly in Reading, PA and Etters, PA. **sudSSpirit** stands for "Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph" It was founded in 2008 to help provide a place of comfort, compassion, and hope for those that have experienced a sudden unexpected death or their spouse or significant other.

In this issue some guidelines on "How to get through the holidays" is shared. A beautiful poem "Wishing you Near" is presented as well as how grief affects us when we lose a friend. The editor comments on his discovery of Journaling and shares thoughts to ponder, an entry from my journal, a book review, quarterly quote, resources, mission statement, and links.

Any bereavement support group is there to help you in your time of need as you process the loss of a loved one. We encourage you to seek out and become part of one. Don't give up until you find one that you are comfortable with and you feel that it is helping you cope.

If you would like a brochure with more information about our Reading, PA group, please call 484-336-5097. Email kaizan2@gmail.com. If you would like information about our Etters, PA group, please call 717-938-1928 (ext 241) Email lmurry2@comcast.net.

My Discovery of Journaling *By Dominic Murgido*

If someone told me five years ago, that I would journal some day, I would have looked at them like they were crazy. "Journaling" was something that did not appeal to me. Maybe it took a life changing situation, like the sudden unexpected death of my wife, for my opinion to change on this topic.

Within days of my wife's passing, I found myself jotting down thoughts, fears, emotions, anger, regret, and confusion on 3 x 5 index cards. Each day I would complete two or three cards with expressions of pain, frustration, and loneliness.

It is so common for those of us that have experienced the loss of a loved one to have feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. I found journaling to be a great release of my sadness and depression that I was experiencing with the knowledge that I was now without my wife. It also helped me with the struggle of so many unanswered questions concerning the rest of my life.

This daily ritual continued and by the end of the first year, I completed about 250 cards. I received a journal of blank lined pages from someone as a gift. It was at that time I realized I was "journaling" and did not even realize it through my unrefined methods of utilizing simple 3 x5 index cards.

Sometimes I would write a single word or only a few words to express my feelings. Other times I

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Dominic Murgido - Editor

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Quarterly Quote

*"Be reverent before
the dawning day.*

*Do not think
of what will be*

*in a year,
or in ten years.*

Think of today.

- Romain Rolland

Together we can help each other heal.

Resources

MHARBC (Mental Health Assn of Reading and Berks County)
www.mharbc.org 610-775-3000

Berks Counseling Center
www.berksc.org 610-373-4281

Caron Counseling Services
1-800-678-2332

Berks Visiting Nurses
www.berksvna.org 610-378-0481

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

Reading Hospital
www.readinghospital.org 610-988-8070

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

Pinnacle Health Hospice
800-222-5236

Circle of Life Coalition
www.circleoflifecoalition.org
610-372-3638

www.griefshare.org



My Discovery of Journaling (continued)

wrote incomplete sentences. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling did not matter when I wrote my thoughts and feelings. The content of what I was writing is what mattered. Depending on the time of year or the relevancy to a special date, there are many thoughts to reflect upon and write about. I date the entries and sometimes note the weather or a significant news item that is happening along with my thoughts. I reflect on things and how different it is without my wife being with me. I often comment on *“how she would say this or ask that”* if she were physically here with me or *“how much I miss that about her”*.

My writings are not all sad; they also contain happy thoughts, memories, and even questions. There is something about writing down a question that makes it easier to deliberate the answer. And if you do not answer the question, it will be asked again on another day as you continue to write your thoughts. Eventually you will answer it or resolve the conflict somehow.

I write daily, usually at the end of the day. I pick this time for the silence of the night and in a way as a ritualistic approach to going to bed alone, something that I am not used to doing. I find comfort in that time of day, pondering my thoughts and reducing my experiences to writing. I realize that putting my thoughts on paper allows me to vent, gives me a sense of peace, and provides me with an unofficial progress report at the same time.

Writings can be as simple as random thoughts jotted down that can become priceless months or years later as you process your experiences and feelings. I wrote for about a year and a half before I even thought about looking back at some of what I had already written in the past. I have never read all that I have written nor do I go back regularly, just on occasion.

When you return to the past writings that you created, it allows you to see where you were and compare that to where you are now so that you can further understand where you are going. I read things that I wrote that I couldn't believe. It's amazing how you can believe in something at one time, and have another viewpoint on the same thing a month or so later. I also read some parts that made me cry all over again or smile at my humility. This process of writing can bring tears. There is nothing healthier than a good cry as you grieve your loved one.

Whatever works for you is what you do. Some people are more comfortable with a keyboard when expressing thoughts as an electronic “journal” on a computer. I began on index cards and expanded to an organized bound book form.

I continue to write with a pen on lined pages in a more traditional journal format. This form is best for me because it can be taken anywhere and be able to write anyplace. I find that when we think of things or experience an emotion as it relates to our bereavement, it is important to recognize it and jot it down. It may help us later or might mean something in the future as we continue to work through our grief journey.

When my wife died, my life and how I view the world had changed. This new world of mine is without her. I try to use my time of sorrow in order to grow as a new person through the journaling process. Journaling is for your benefit and you can choose to keep it private to you. I encourage you to start and recognize how it can help you as it does for me.

Progress is something we all like to see in ourselves, especially in our own time of need. Our time of need combined with our grief experiences will yield with time. Be patient and allow yourself to heal.



I was “Just a Friend” *by Pat Ward*

Death touches every person, not just once in a lifetime, but many times. Our grandparents, parents, spouses, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, children...and our friends...die. We cannot escape the pain of loss. It is a major mistake to even attempt to deny the feelings of emptiness and hurt we feel when someone we have loved is gone.

It can be more difficult when the loss is “only” a friend. The pain is every bit as real, and can be even more than we might feel for a relative. Friends know each other in different ways than they are known by their families. They share special times together, cherished times. A friendship is not like a family relationship. Families tend to have several members; a friendship involves only two people. When a friend dies, the bond is forever altered and the support that families give each other is not there. When you go to your friend’s wake, your role is to comfort, more than to claim the comfort you need just as desperately. You can even fool yourself into believing that you have no right to grieve. Don’t believe it!

My friend was killed in a van accident a year ago. It’s been said in one popular song that we never see people, really see them, until they go away. The truth of those words became clear to me when Joe died. I did not know how much a part of me Joe was. I had no idea how much I would miss him and how much I loved my friend until it was too late. Death really changes things. All the words you wanted to say, the hugs you planned to give, the hours you hoped you would spend in each other’s company, have suddenly vanished. Memories are all that is left; the regrets can be overwhelming. Joe’s last words to me were to tell me that he’d be back in the area. Well, he was right, but neither of us expected, he’d come back the way he did! We couldn’t have known that a phase of our friendship was over, or that the way we parted the last time we met would be the memory that would have to last us forever. Time ran out!

Is there a lesson to be learned from this? YES! The lesson is really quite simple, yet surprisingly hard to learn.. It’s meaning came alive to me as I struggled through the pain of knowing and accepting Joe’s death.

What I say to anyone who feels love for someone today is this-tell the person NOW! Don’t wait! You can’t hug a person who is in a coffin. You can’t hold hands with a tombstone. You can’t celebrate your friendship and love for others in a cemetery. Give the gifts of friendship and love while they can be appreciated. Flowers only make you feel better at the wake. Give them now generously. Show signs of your love again and again. The one thing you can be sure of is that the time you are given to be with those who touch your life and those you love will be too short. You never know when the last word, the last hug, the last day will come. If you share your love now, there can be no regrets later about what you should have done. As it has been said many times, if there is any good you can do or kindness you can show, DO IT NOW! You (or the ones you care for) may never pass this way again!

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Wishing You Near

by Nick Alcantara

To realize
That time is so dear
When you are no
Longer here

I cling to memories,
Sweet memories
That bring you near

If only
I could touch you again
Without bringing back the pain
Feeling your presence
That you are not really
Very far away
That would bring us back
The aura and magic
Of being again
Together

I know you are
Just a whisper away

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**sudSSpirit
Bereavement
Support Group -
Berks Chapter meets
monthly on the
4th Monday at
6:15 pm at Exeter
Community Library,
Reading, PA.
For information
call 484-336-5097
or Email
kaisan2@gmail.com**



**sudSSpirit
Bereavement Support
Group - Cumberland/
York Chapter meets
monthly on the 2nd
Thursday at 7 pm at
Fishing Creek Salem
United Methodist
Church, Etters, PA.
For information
call 717-938-1928
(ext 241) or Email
lmurry2@comcast.net**



Book Review - Editor

Widower, When Men Are Left Alone

by Scott Campbell
and Phyllis R. Silverman

An examination of the grief process as men experience it is revealed in this interesting book. The authors provide first-hand accounts from widowers then analyzes the experiences and offer suggestions concerning getting through the bereavement process. The book is not just for men only; women will see themselves in many of the stories presented.

I found this book very helpful for me and was able to recognize and acknowledge many of the feelings that were shared. I strongly recommend this book that will provide needed validation for any of us that continue to go through this bereavement journey.

Our Mission

sudSSpirit wants to provide you with a supplemental group experience in addition to professional therapy and/or counseling sessions that are currently happening in the lives of those interested.

sudSSpirit does not take the place of professional guidance and we encourage you to seek therapy as required.

sudSSpirit wants to provide a comfortable setting with a sense of community among those in attendance. People should feel free to communicate and share feelings as it pertains to their journey through the grieving process.

sudSSpirit wants those in attendance to realize that they are not alone with this problem and the group is available to provide infinite support.



How to Get Through the Holidays



- There is no right or wrong way to handle the day or season. Some may wish to follow family traditions, while others may choose to change.
- Set limitations. Realize that it isn't going to be easy. Do the things that are special or important to you. Do the best that you can.
- What you choose to do the first year, you don't have to do the next.
- Our greatest comfort during this time may be doing something for others.
- Keep in mind the feelings of your children or other family members during the holiday season.
- You may find hope in remembering favorite moments and funny stories about your loved one.
- If you are feeling pressured to participate in more than you can handle, "Just say No". You don't have to explain a "No". Be kind, but be firm.
- Don't deny yourself the gift of healing tears.
- Acknowledge your grief and be patient with yourself.
- Light a candle in memory of your loved one.
- Look at the gifts of your loved one's life.
- There is a comforting discovery by many who have said that the day was not as bad as they anticipated it to be.

Links

- www.groww.org (on line grief recovery with helpful information)
- www.griefshare.org (a nationwide grief support group network with local ties to meetings)
- www.memory-of.com (a way to celebrate your loved one's life and legacy)
- www.healthboards.com (a place to ask questions, review boards of topics being discussed to gain on line support)
- www.memorybearsinc.com (a unique way to remember your loved one or anything)

Thoughts to Ponder

"While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates"
- James Boswell

"We are healed of a suffering only by experiencing it to the full"
- Marcel Proust

"Weeping is perhaps the most human and universal of all relief measures"
- Dr. Karl Menninger



An Entry From My Journal

"I felt an incredible sense of presence with me today, can't really explain it but it was a warmth that made me feel good about life and how I am handling it without my loved one."

-Editor

