



sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter

FALL 2015

Volume 8, Issue 1

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

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Angel of My Dreams

by John Kreiser

She visited my dreams last night
I begged for her to stay
We laughed and talked like nothing's wrong
But then she went away
I didn't have to search for her
She showed up willingly
And even though it was a dream
It meant the world to me
So often I have longed for her
With aching in my heart
I never seem to comprehend
The reason we're apart
Then on some rare occasion when
I'm in my deepest slumber
A mystical connection will
Unite us unencumbered
By all that had transpired
Within the life we shared
And once again, we two are one
Our laughter fills the air
My mind is full of memories
These thoughts will last forever
Of days gone by, when she and I
Spent countless hours together
When you have someone in your life
That means the world to you
You think that things will always be
But sometimes, that's not true
She visited my dreams last night
I wished for her to stay
I'm thankful for the time we had
Before she went away

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Welcome from the Editor

Thank you for reading this issue of the **sudSSpirit** Quarterly Newsletter. We hope that you take something with you from what you find on these pages and pass along to others in need. As Fall approaches so do the holidays along with anxiety and stress. We included an article about coping with the holiday season in this issue and will also distribute handouts concerning coping advice at our November and December meetings.

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, Etters, PA, Dover, PA, Lebanon, 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 five chapters. We also have a list of other resources on page two in the left margin that may be helpful to you. A Facebook page is also available, please find and Like us on Facebook. 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.

In this issue: You will always find the Quarterly Quote, Thoughts to Ponder, A Real Entry from my own Personal Journal along the way, a Book Review of a past reading of mine, and a poem. But that's not all. Our editor contributes an article entitled "I miss the Mother of my Daughter". Other articles appearing in this issue include "Don't Let Their Anger Make You Angry" and "Dealing with Grief during the Holiday Season."

Special Note: We would like to welcome Kel Hatt as the facilitator of our Lebanon Chapter which will also be having a location change beginning in October. He has been a regular attendee of the Lebanon and Berks chapters of **sudSSpirit**. The Lebanon chapter will now be meeting at the Richland Community Library in Richland, PA. The group meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 6 PM.

Wishing all of you comfort and peace as we greet the Fall that brings us to another season of hope and faith.

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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Quarterly Quote

- Editor

"Sorrow has taught me to be happy. I know this seems to be a contradiction, but live long enough and you'll discover that life is often its own best oxymoron"

-Ana Veciana-Suarez



Resources

- Editor

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

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

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

Lutheran Home Care & Hospice
www.lutheranhomecare.org
610-320-7979



I Miss the Mother of My Daughter

by Dominic Murgido

Those of you that have lost your wife, husband, or significant other and have children know what I am expressing here. From a two parent/ guardian household to one trying to cope and looking for answers.

Life continues without them with you alone as the "parent" or "guardian" or "responsible adult person that can be asked questions"

Each person's situation is very different and is depended on the age of the children at the time of the death and I am sure we can all agree there is no "right" age or "right" time for this kind of tragedy to become part of our world and have us try to deal with "what now?"

On a personal note, so many life transitions and changes have occurred since my wife's death; my own as well as my daughter. My daughter was 23 when her Mom died. Six months away from getting her Master's degree and beginning a career. And there was no Mom to be proud of her. Her first move into an apartment. Her first real job out of college. And there was no Mom to be proud of her. Her second move to another state and another job. Her pursuit of more education. And there was no Mom to be proud of her. Her falling in love with someone to be part of her life. Her engagement,



Book Review - Editor

Grief Expressed: When a Mate Dies

by Marta Felber

This book is a straight forward survival guide for anyone who has lost a spouse. Felber describes proactive steps for individuals to work through their grief. Felber drew from her counseling background for self-healing after the death of her husband, and is all too familiar with the feelings that can linger during this time.

While the book provides encouragement and compassion, you will play an important role in working through your own issues. Each chapter focuses on the most difficult issues surrounding the loss of a spouse. In this way, feelings are channeled into a positive and cathartic direction.

While books on similar topics often emphasize a reactive mindset, Felber strongly believes in taking positive and specific steps to dealing with loss. The book is empowering and optimistic from somebody who knows what she is writing about.

marriage, and becoming a Mother herself to a beautiful little boy. And there was no Mom to be proud of her.

I have difficulty knowing how empty my daughter's life must be knowing that her Mother stopped being a physical part of her life at such a young age and as she continues with new challenges and milestones, it hurts me that I can't be the Mom for her. Her Mom would know exactly what to say and do in any situation involving our daughter. Fathers usually listen to the Mom and are grateful that someone is more in touch with their daughter than they can ever be.

I love my daughter and would do anything I can to help her along in life with her family but I can't be the Mom and it really puts me in distress at times.

Many of you have dealt with this situation and feelings of isolation from your children because the other parent or person is not there to balance the couple that you once were. If your children are young, it becomes even harder to cope with trying to find the words to answer the questions they are asking and then dealing with everything involved in being a single parent or guardian. It's not easy. It is what it is. We do our best.

I am proud of my daughter who is now 33. I know she knows I am here for her for anything but I am not the Mother that would be more comfortable for her to talk with, laugh with, seek advice from, shop with, have lunch with. I am the Father who has faith and hope that every day, her Mother is watching over her, guiding her and loving her spiritually as she lives her life with her family.

I am sure my daughter misses her Mother and I know *I miss the Mother of my Daughter.*



Thoughts to Ponder

- Editor

"Regret is an appalling waste of energy. You can't build on it. It is only for wallowing in" *-Katherine Mansfield*

"Weeping is perhaps the most human and universal of all relief measures"

-Dr. Karl Menninger

"Sometimes we don't realize how losses affect our lives many years later or how they altered our future outlook on life in general"

-Dominic Murgido





Dealing with Grief During the Holiday Season *by Amy Goyer*

Grieving the loss of a loved one is a deep and difficult challenge at any time. But the holiday season can magnify your sense of loss and mourning. Family gatherings and seasonal events can be painful reminders of the absence of a loved one. At the same time, they can also be comforting rituals where you spend time with family and friends, focusing on good memories and trying to recapture your sense of joy. If you are *mourning* a loss of a loved one this year, here are some important things to keep in mind.

1. ONLY DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT. It's up to you to decide which activities, traditions or events you can handle. Don't feel obligated to participate in anything that doesn't feel doable. Grieving takes time. You are very vulnerable right now, so all you need to do is get through the day or week or season — in a healthy way. Try not to think much beyond that.

2. ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS — WHATEVER THEY MIGHT BE. Everyone takes his or her own path in grief and mourning. Some may try to avoid sad feelings; others will be bathed in tears. Some feel bad that they aren't up for enjoying a holiday; others feel guilt because they are feeling joy. However you feel, accept it. And accept the inevitable ups and downs: You may feel peaceful one moment and gut-wrenchingly sad the next. Try to stay in tune with your own highest truth and you will know how to get through the holiday without judging yourself or others.

3. CALL ON YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. Talk with loved ones about your emotions. Be honest about how you'd like to do things this year — if you want to talk about those who have passed, then do so, and let others know it's OK. Take a buddy to events for support and create an "escape plan" together in case you need to bow out quickly. Read books about getting through the holidays after loss, and seek out support groups, lectures or faith-community events. Seek professional support from a therapist. Stay in touch with others who are grieving via online groups and connections with friends.

4. FOCUS ON THE KIDS. Many holidays place special attention on children, and it often helps to focus on their needs. Realize that your choices around getting through the holidays may affect the children in your family. If you withdraw, they may not understand why you don't want to join family festivities. Perhaps you can participate in the family rituals or gatherings that are most important to the kids, and excuse yourself when you reach your limit.

5. PLAN AHEAD. Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the actual holiday. Create comforting activities in the weeks approaching a holiday so that you have something to look forward to rather than building up a dread of the pain the holiday could bring. New activities might be easier, but familiar traditions might be comforting as well — do what feels best for you. Surrounding yourself with positivity can be very helpful.

6. SCALE BACK. If the thought of many holiday activities feels painful, overwhelming or inappropriate

this year, cutting back may help. For example, you might opt for minimal decorations at home and take a break from sending holiday greetings, or try e-greetings instead of the more time-consuming task of mailing greeting cards. You could limit holiday parties to small gatherings with your closest friends and family. Do whatever feels safe and comfortable to you. Create realistic expectations for yourself and others, but above all be gentle with yourself.

7. GIVE. It's amazing how in times of grief, sometimes the biggest comfort is to give to others. We often feel paralyzed by the sheer emotion — sadness, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness. In times of loss, we often want to do something that will make a difference. Consider these options:

- If you've lost a loved one, gift-giving at holiday times may be a challenge. Shopping for gifts and seeing the perfect gift for someone you know you will never be able to give a gift to again can be devastating. Shopping online may be a better option for you.
- You might purchase something that symbolizes the person or time before your loss and donate it to a needy family. Or make a donation in a loved one's name to a charity or cause he or she cherished.
- Negative circumstances may surround the loss you have experienced, and it's so easy to fall into a focus on the sadness, horror or anger. Try channeling your energies in positive ways to create good in the world, rather than perpetuate the negative. Volunteer to help people in some way that is related to that which has caused such anguish. Give of your time and talents or make a donation to a related charity.

8. ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED ON. When we are grieving a loss of someone very close to us, it can be helpful to participate in a related holiday ritual in his or her memory. Some ideas: lighting candles for them, talking about them, buying children's toys or books to donate in their name, dedicating a service to them, planting a tree, making a card or writing a letter, displaying their picture or placing an item of theirs among holiday decorations.

9. DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT. Acknowledge that things have changed; indeed, the holiday will not be the same as it was ever again. Accepting this will help manage expectations. Plan new activities, especially the first year after the loss. Go to a new location for family celebrations, change the menu or go out to eat, volunteer, invite friends over, attend the theater, travel ... create new memories. Many families return to their usual routines and rituals after the first year, but some enjoy incorporating their new experiences permanently.

10. SKIP IT. If you feel that it will be too much for you and you'd like to simply opt out of participation in a holiday, let family and friends know. But plan alternative comforting activities for yourself and let someone know what you will be doing. It's a good idea to make sure someone checks in with you on that day.

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Bereavement Support Group
currently meets monthly in
five locations:

Berks Chapter, Reading, PA.
4th Wed. of the month 6 PM
Exeter Library

Cumberland Chapter,
Etters, PA.
2nd Thurs. of the month 7 PM
Fishing Creek
Salem U.M. Church

York Chapter,
Dover, PA.
2nd Mon. of the month 6 PM
Dover Area Community
Library

Bennington Chapter,
Bennington, VT
4th Tues. of the month 6 PM
Bennington Library

Lebanon Chapter,
Richland, PA
3rd Tues. of the month 6 PM
Richland Community Library

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

sudsspirit@gmail.com

- Reading, Lebanon
and York, PA

lmurray2@comcast.net

- Etters, PA

sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com

- Bennington, VT

or phone:

717-866-2401 - Reading,
Lebanon and York, PA

717-938-1928 (ext 241)
- Etters, PA

802-441-5562

- Bennington, VT

- Editor



Don't Let Their Anger Make You Angry *by Ellen Perry Berkeley*

As we struggle with our bereavement, we welcome the love that comes from many relatives and friends. This love is often given to us in far richer form than ever before. But some people, both relatives and friends, give us quite the opposite. Anger. In the form of arguments, accusations, attacks.

This anger can appear in various ways. Often as repeated questions: Why didn't you ever tell X what you experienced as a child? OR: Why aren't you tidying more quickly the clothing that Y wore? Or: Now that Z is living with you, why aren't you trying to get our parent into a better life?

Such questions are usually from an outsider – someone without the wisdom that an insider, more connected to the situation, might have. You, an insider, know exactly why you never talked to X about what was happening years ago. You know precisely why it's so hard to distribute the clothing that Y held dear. You know intimately why every effort you've made toward Z has fallen on your parent's deaf ears (and incidentally,



your parent isn't deaf).

Let's consider why this anger is happening, and what we can do about it.

I'm not a shrink. But I do know something of what's bugging these individuals. They're just plain angry. At themselves, for not having done better with the person who has died. At you, for having had a relationship with the deceased that was happier than anything they ever had. And at life, for taking someone so early – and "early" suddenly applies to anyone dying before the age of 98.

Anger, let's remember, is one of the major stages of grief. And whether this anger comes from sadness, loneliness, despair, discontent, regret, envy, or anything else, it is surely anger that's behind these attacks.

This anger, however, shouldn't be directed at you. You don't owe these people any sort of apology, or explanation, or reparation. You've behaved decently.

You've behaved with restraint, with care, with love. So perhaps you can try to respond in that same caring way, to someone whose anger is raging wild. In a calm voice: "I'm sorry you feel this way, but perhaps your anger today has more to do with your feelings than with my actions." This may, of course, produce even more anger. That you aren't listening. That again it's all your fault.

Or perhaps you can try the following response: "We all feel a certain anger. Would you like to say what's behind the anger I'm hearing from you today?" This, too, may not reach the person. Be prepared to have your words ignored.

Listen to any opinions that may be offered, but don't get angry yourself.

You may discover that you have little impact on the behavior of these people. But how about what their anger does to you?

Maybe you can simply acknowledge that a death may produce weird reactions among the living. If you understand that someone's reaction is just "weird," this can help you to accept the person's inappropriate behavior, without getting angry yourself.

Give your best energy, instead, to your new chores. They will require your best attention – resolving your thoughts from decades ago, disposing of your spouse's things, having your parent move in with you, and (not a chore, but a significant undertaking) moving into your new life.

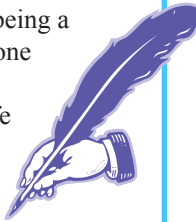
Be as kind as possible to these relatives and friends who are suffering in ways they don't begin to understand. Keep calm. Be glad for all that you had with the person who died. Be sorry that you can't ask the advice of your beloved on this unexpected response from people you both knew well. Be relieved that you're not cluttering your own memories with anger.

Perhaps, too, you can keep these angry people from destroying their memories. Direct your love, not your anger, to those whose outbursts are so uncomfortable to you all. Your loving acceptance of others, in fact, will help you in your own grieving.

An Entry From My Journal

"After many years of being a widower, I still feel alone and empty when new "firsts" occur in my life no matter how trivial they are."

-Editor



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.

