

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



sudS Spirit
Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Jim McCord
Kathy (Abel) Kreiser
Ron Smith
Donald John Hartman Sr.
Joanna Lalli

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Welcome *from the Editor*

It didn't seem that long ago when we were all hoping for an early Spring after this past Winter season. As seasons change so do our feelings and emotions as we move onward coping with the loss of our loved ones and trying to make sense out of this new world we are now dealt with.

This **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 April, 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.

This Spring Edition of our newsletter marks our third year of operation to those in the greater Reading, PA area and our first year of operation to those in the New Cumberland /York, PA area. It is the editor's intention to start a third chapter in the Bennington, VT area.

In this issue, Judy Solis writes candidly about "Grief Experienced". Jennifer Janiszewski provides us with "I Do Believe" while we also can read about an interesting story about a "Tear Jar". The editor reflects on feelings that he has experienced in "Stop asking Why" and we also included another segment of some "Myths of Grief". This issue also includes our regular features; book review, thoughts to ponder, quarterly quote, an entry from my journal, and resources. An additional resource for bereavement support groups has been added for those in the Bennington, VT area.

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.

sudSSpirit is here to help you throughout your grief journey and our meetings will never end. Our structure is designed to provide continuous monthly meetings. We want to be there for you to provide the support and validation that you need to move forward with your life.

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 a brochure with more information about our Etters, PA group, please call 717-938-1928 (ext 241) Email lmurry2@comcast.net. If you would like a brochure with more information about our group that is forming in the Bennington , VT area, please call 802-440-8100 or Email sudsspirit@gmail.com.

Stop Asking Why *by Dominic Murgido*

Those of us that have lost a loved one are familiar with the sudden unexplainable feelings of sadness and loneliness that we can feel in an instant, out of the blue, without any kind of warning or preparedness that **it** is about to happen. And it doesn't matter where we are or what we are doing, **it** is present and affecting us and **it** is all so real.

These occurrences happen very often in the beginning of the grief journey and with them happening so close to the loss, we could un-

derstand that it is happening and really don't question why. It continues throughout the first year, and as most of us can attest to, friends, co-workers, relatives, all say the same thing; "it takes a good year to get over **it**".

I am sure you shuttered at those words as I have. Most of those that never have been through a loss such as ours have no clue and a year is **not** the marker that any of us should

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Dominic Murgido - Editor

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Quarterly Quote

- Editor

*"The greatest good
you can do for
another is not just
share your riches,
but reveal to them
their own"*

- Benjamin Disraeli

Together we can help each other heal

Resources

- Editor

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

Berks Counseling Center
www.berkscc.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

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

VNA & Hospice of Southwestern Vermont Health Care
www.svhealthcare.org
802-442-5502



Stop Asking Why

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think that we will be healed like turning on a light switch. It's not that easy.

The second and third year comes and these occurrences continue however they come less and the duration of the sadness is shorter. During this time we will start to question our own healing process and wonder if something is "wrong" with us. What we are experiencing is ok and there is nothing wrong with us.

Time moves on and we carry on in our lives missing our loved one but realizing that we have to move forward in order to heal and get better with our lives. And then those feelings of sadness come again to us and this time we are concerned and also question why. We will take time to analyze why. We may lose sleep over why. We may get sick over why. We will spend many hours if not days wondering why, but there are no answers to this question.

It still happens to me. It just did recently out of the blue, no warning, in an instant. I was spiraling down into sadness and loneliness right after having a pleasant evening at home watching a good movie. It came and went and by the next morning, I was ok again.

I stopped asking why. There are no answers to these occurrences. I started accepting the fact that this will happen on occasion and that it is ok. It is part of the big picture of the grief journey that I am on. It does not come as often anymore and it may eventually stop coming altogether. But I don't know and I am not going to worry about it one way or the other. Acceptance should become part of your vocabulary. Be patient with yourself and certainly don't expect more than what you can handle at the present time.

Grief Experienced

by Judy Solis

Grief. Not a word I have ever thought too much about. I've used it quite often as in: "Good grief, will you stop that?" "Why must you give me grief about (fill in the blank); and other cliché uses of the word. I never gave the word much thought at all, much less the meaning. That is, until Grief introduced

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I Do Believe

by Jennifer Janiszewski

***There is nothing I can do,
to make him come back
There are no words I can say,
that can replace the words
you long to hear***

***There are no answers I can give,
that will satisfy your questions
There is not another soul I can
introduce you to***

***that will ever replace his
And, there is no love I can offer that
will ever replace the love you shared***

***I can not promise your broken heart
will ever be complete***

***I will not say it could have been worse
I will not deny it was a tragedy***

***I will not lie and tell you
he will come back***

He never really left

***I do promise he hears you
when you speak***

***I will say he loves you
no matter the distance***

***I will not deny he is in a better place
And, I will not lie; he is waiting to
greet you someday***

***He is every step you take
He is in everything you do
He is the air you breathe
He is every beat of your heart***

***"He is like the wind. You can not see
him...but you will always feel him"***

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bereavement-poems-articles.com





Grief Experienced *(continued from page 2)*

himself to me personally on January 17, 2000. The start of a new century. A chance for monumental changes in my life.

Boy what a true statement that was. On January 17, 2000, I lost the love of my life in an automobile accident. I had spoken to him at 4:30 on that Sunday afternoon and by 4:30 a.m. on Monday he had left my life forever. He was 45 years old.

Dealing with this tragedy in itself is quite enough to last me a lifetime, but dealing with the people who are dealing with my grief is like trying to communicate with something from another universe. It would be very interesting to see, if I took the time to really research it, at what point in our history grieving the loss of someone you loved became taboo. I strongly recall in "Gone with the Wind", Scarlet was greatly put out because she was expected to wear black and grieve for a year.

My experience has been, being generous, that after about a month I was supposed to just be "over it" and be getting on with my life as usual. What makes the situation worse is that Brian and I were not married. We had only been together for about two years. Our relationship was a troubled one and we struggled to understand each other. He was the one for me though; I knew it in my heart. Soul mates, true love, whatever phrases you choose to use, I loved him with all my heart.

The people who I would expect to know me best, love me most, and support me no matter what have been, by far, the worst. My family and my friends look at me now as if I've grown two heads and have a tail. I can literally see their faces pale and their eyes roll when I mention his name. I can read it on their faces, "Oh no, here she goes again."

My own mother, who experienced the same type of loss when she was about my age, tells me to stop using my grief as an excuse to avoid reality and get over it. Get over it. Like all I lost was something as simple as losing a spare car key. Oh well no big deal. You can fall in love again some day. You are young; you will have other chances. You should be happy for him: he is in a better place now. We can never understand God's plan. Etc, and blah, blah, blah.

ENOUGH!!!! Now granted I have had more than just a few moments of insanity. I have had more than one grief- induced breakdown in a public place. I have had a very strong and barely controlled urge for the last few months to punch just about anyone in the nose for just about any reason. I have locked myself in my room for an entire weekend and done nothing but lie on the bed, feel sorry for myself and cry.

But you know what? That is OK. It is part of GRIEVING!!! But I only found out it was OK

to feel the things I am feeling by joining an on-line support group. Only in this environment have I been able to find the love and support I so desperately need. Only here can I talk about Brian and the things I lost and the things I feel, and am totally and completely understood. It's strange to me how complete strangers are the only ones you can turn to in your greatest time of emotional need. Only in this group have I found a means for healing.

Sadder still is that I know I was one of these "grief police" before this happened to me. I know I was guilty of uttering those simple phrases we all think are caring and meant to comfort. Let me tell you all right now from personal experience, THEY DON'T. All those things become thoughtless and hurtful to the grieving person.

The best thing to do is just say "I'm so very sorry" and offer a hug. Don't offer your time, support, or an ear if you really don't truly think you can follow through. Don't compare our loss to the loss of your Great Aunt Tilley or your favorite dog, Ralph. Don't even try to compare it to the loss of a parent or close friend or someone you knew who lost their mate. It's like comparing apples and elephants.

All loss is hard; all loss has an impact on us in some way; but the loss of a mate is an indescribable personal hell. I can only imagine what losing a child would do to a person and my heart breaks for people who have suffered that unimaginable tragedy. And a word of advice to all of you out there "who don't want to get married because it might ruin the relationship". You better get some things in writing because no matter how much you think the family loves you, or how many years you spent with your mate, you will only be the "boyfriend" or the "girlfriend" when it comes to what belongs to whom and who gets to decide what happens to the person who has died.

During this whole awful year I have not only lost the person I thought I would spend my life with, but I have lost all his friends and family. I have lost most of my friends too. Maybe some of them just don't know what to say to me. Maybe they think I have some kind of curse and if they are my friend they will be susceptible to the same kind of tragedy. You can't worry about saying things that will make us cry. We cry all the time anyway. How could we not cry? Say their names, share some memories, remember something about that person that made you laugh. It hurts, but it doesn't hurt as bad as trying to get through the days while everyone around you is trying to pretend that person never existed because they don't want to "upset you."

...I wish you peace.

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*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
kaizan2@gmail.com.*



*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*



*Bennington, VT Chap-
ter is in the process of
being established. It
is our hope and inten-
tion to have our first
meeting soon. For
information call 802-
440-8100 or Email
sudspirit@gmail.com*



Book Review - Editor

The Day My Life Changed Forever

by Ginny Fralick Rumsey

This Pennsylvania author provides her own perspective on the loss of her husband. She takes you through her first year and what she experienced and felt through the various stages of her own grief journey. The sudden unexpected death of her spouse turned her world upside down. Rumsey acknowledges the misery, paranoia, and resentment that she felt and also speaks of spirituality that she has experienced. Her book comforts you to feel that you are not alone with your grief journey.

For more information:
www.tatepublishing.com.

Thoughts to Ponder - Editor

“Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year”

- Percy Bysshe Shelley

“No one really understands the grief or joy of another”

- Franz Schubert

“Grief teaches the steadiest minds to waver”

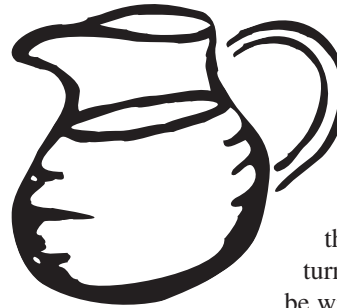
- Sophocles



The Legend of the Tear Jar by Pleasant White, Ph.D.

In the dry climate of ancient Greece, water was prized above all. Giving up water from one's own body, when crying tears for the dead, was considered a sacrifice. They caught their precious tears in tiny pitchers or “tear jars”. The tears became holy water and could be used to sprinkle on doorways to keep out evil, or to cool the brow of a sick child.

The tear jars were kept unpainted until the owner had experienced the death of a parent, sibling, child, or spouse.



After that, the grieving person decorated the tear jar with intricate designs, and examples of these can still be seen throughout modern Greece.

This ancient custom symbolizes the transformation that takes place in people who have grieved deeply. They are not threatened by the grief of people in pain. They have been in the depths of pain themselves, and returned. Like the tear jar, they can now be with others who grieve and catch their tears.

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Shattering Eight Myths of Grief

In order to effectively cope with loss, and to help others who are struggling, it is important to get past some of the common misconceptions about grief. In discussing grief and bereavement during HFA's National Bereavement Teleconference, Cokie Roberts, of ABC News, commented, “Over time, people learn to live with the loss, but it's not something you get over. The grieving process is a series of ups and downs, and often it's more intense in the early years. The thing that we need to remember is that you never have to like a loss. You just have to learn to accept it and deal with it.”

A more accurate understanding of the way grief affects us can facilitate healing.

Myth 1: We only grieve deaths.

Reality: We grieve all losses.

Myth 2: Only family members grieve.

Reality: All who are attached grieve.

Myth 3: Grief is an emotional reaction.

Reality: Grief is manifested in many ways.

Myth 4: Individuals should leave grieving at home.

Reality: We cannot control where we grieve.

Myth 5: We slowly and predictably recover from grief.

Reality: Grief is an uneven process, a roller coaster with no timeline.

Myth 6: Grieving means letting go of the person who died.

Reality: We never fully detach from those who have died.

Myth 7: Grief finally ends.

Reality: Over time most people learn to live with loss.

Myth 8: Grievers are best left alone.

Reality: Grievers need opportunities to share their memories and grief, and to receive support.

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An Entry From My Journal

“Procrastination is the excuse I use for the fear of beginning new things in my life, but I eventually do them....but not without anxiety which I have trouble defining and understanding.”

-Editor

