

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE  
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



# sudSpirit

Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

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## Welcome *from the Editor*

We welcome a new season and as the season changes so do many of our thoughts and feelings.

sudSSpirit was founded 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. Meetings are held monthly in Reading, PA, Etters, PA, and Bennington, VT. Please see the margin in the third page of this newsletter for contact information. sudSSpirit stands for "Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph"

The editor provides some insight into having Hope in our feature article while Sam Night speaks about how "Life Does Go On." John Kreiser provides another beautiful poem and we discover that there can be "Healing through Exercise." A summary about grieving the loss of your spouse is detailed while a walk in the park brings back fond memories.

This issue also includes our regular features; book review, thoughts to ponder, quarterly quote, an entry from my journal, and resources.

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 610-777-4181 or Email [longlivepigheaven@yahoo.com](mailto:longlivepigheaven@yahoo.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](mailto:lmurry2@comcast.net). If you would like a brochure or the current newsletter with more information about our Bennington, VT group, please call 802-440-8100 or Email [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com). You can also reach us at [facebook.com/sudsspirit](https://www.facebook.com/sudsspirit).

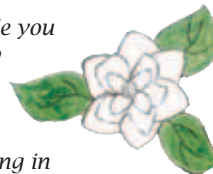


## Healing Through Exercise

Many experts believe that exercise can help relieve the symptoms of grief-related depression. Physical activity is known to release chemicals in your brain that lift your spirits and make you feel better. It also aids in disease prevention. Sample activities include going for a short walk down the street or to a nearby park, doing housework, or tending to your yard. The key is to get out of bed or off the couch and just start moving. We also recommend trying positive self-talk each morning, such as "Today, I'm going to have a good day," or "I'm going to get out of bed and move around today because I care about me." It really does work.

### 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.

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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### Quarterly Quote

- Editor

**"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"**

-Hebrews 11:1

*Together we can help each other heal*

*Like us on Facebook*

## Resources

- Editor

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

Berks Counseling Center  
www.berkscscc.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

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

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## Some Feelings Linger but There is HOPE *by Dominic Murgido*

My wife died on a random Monday in a winter month as a result of being at the wrong intersection at the wrong time. The other driver was speeding and failed to stop at the red light. She died instantly. She was on her way to work. She never arrived. She also never came home....alive.

That day haunts me and will probably haunt me forever. Every time I encounter that familiar scene of an accident like I saw the day my wife died, chills run through my spine, anxiety levels increase, and I experience a panic attack as I recall that time and how my life changed in an instant. Happily married at 8:30 that morning; a widower that afternoon.

There are these kinds of images, feelings, and emotions that we carry with us from that day when it is a sudden death or the time that may surround our loved one's death during a long painful process that ranged from months to many years. Depending upon the situation and the person experiencing the grief process, it could feel like it just happened at times and the rawness of those feelings could bring us to another level or phase of grief that is difficult to climb out of. But we do eventually feel better and as time moves on, some of those feelings linger while others fade away.

Any of us that have been through the loss of a spouse can certainly feel for and identify with others that also have been through this. So many stages of bereavement and all of them change so frequently with time

and at different levels for each of us.

Grief is a journey. It is through this journey that we discover who we are and what we are capable of becoming as a new person without our loved one. Sometimes you have to take one path in life and go through changes in order to find where you need to be. These paths lead to new discoveries about you and enable you to do things you never thought possible. They also allow you to acknowledge and accept things you had trouble doing before. It will be frightening at times and very sad but through our memories of times past and our courageous efforts to move forward a little at a time, things will fall into place.

Have faith and Hope that you will become better. You will find a certain kind of calmness and peace that will allow you to breathe again and feel comfortable with who you are and the person you will become. Allow yourself the time that is necessary to heal. We all have different times and needs concerning this bereavement process. No two people are alike.

Attend a bereavement support group and participate with your heart. Allow your emotions and feelings to be shared with others. Listen to others in attendance. The wisdom is in the group. Their thoughts will sound familiar to you and you will feel validated. Support groups are valuable tools that help you cope with feelings and emotions. Some feelings linger, but they will diminish slowly with time and HOPE.

## A Walk in the Park

*by Dominic Murgido*

I walk my dog every Sunday morning at a local park. He needs it as much as I do and we enjoy that time together. Most times we are alone as we take this long walk but occasionally there will be someone else jogging by or walking alone too.

Today, there was a couple walking in the park hand in hand and then it hits me. When I saw this couple I actually saw myself with my wife walking hand in hand as we have done so many times in the past in so many locations. I paused and for a moment was there in the past with her and remembering the touch and warmth of her hand in mine.

We loved to take walks together. It started on a college campus and continued throughout our lives together. Walks around the neighborhood we lived in at the time, walks around a local park or a trail, walks around a city or country we were visiting at the time on vacation or an extended weekend getaway. Walking with each other was a way of connecting, talking, and enjoying each other's company. Walking together was fun and brought us closer together sharing conversation and making decisions about our lives together.

It's interesting that there are times I see couples and

it does not affect me and I am not sure why this time it did. Triggers like this happen. Something that makes us remember our loved one or a past memory that we shared with them. Triggers are more prevalent in the beginning of one's grief journey and as time allows they become less frequent, but they can still happen to you. The difference is that you can handle them better and in most cases not be as bothered by them and continue on with your day.



It's ok to experience this. You lost someone you truly loved and they have had a huge impact on your life. Embrace this. Accept it as another step on your journey towards a new you, a new beginning without losing your past experiences and memories with your loved one.

There is a new you out there now and eventually you will be able to accept it better and be able to deal with it even if it is only one step at a time as you continue on your walk through your life.



## Life Does Go On

By Sam Night



Grief is a lonely process. Your days and nights are filled with memories. Sometimes guilt gets in the way. Sometimes you feel like “What’s the point?” You don’t like being alone and you don’t want to think about getting involved with anyone else either.

I am a widow—a relatively young widow. I’m a 53-year-old “boomer” who hadn’t given much thought to the possibility I would be widowed at my age. The fact that my husband was 17 years older than me didn’t phase me much because in a lot of ways he was in better shape than I am. He exercised regularly (I hate exercise, always have), ate more carefully than me and was proud of his physique.

Come September, it will be two years ago that he passed away. I wish I could say what the hardest part has been, but there have been many “hardest” parts.

My husband took care of financial stuff in our home. Not that I couldn’t, just that he was more organized, and we both preferred it that way. I made my contributions and he paid the bills for our home, our vacations, whatever. To be perfectly honest, I liked it that way.

He also took care of the management of our property—whether it be himself or hiring a contractor. I found myself at a great loss, but I had to learn the process or have my yard be a disgrace to this lovely neighborhood.

I still have major problems cooking for one, and I usually don’t. I make too much, but cooking is a comfort for me, so I don’t worry about it.

Having a “built in” date made social affairs easier to attend.

My job was a help at keeping me busy and pre-occupied, but coming home to an empty house was difficult. Especially when I had something I wanted to share.

When my husband was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, we tried to be hopeful. It was diagnosed early. As it turned out, he died within six months.

We shared the same sense of humor, so believe me when I tell you I miss the times we watched TV or read a newspaper story we both found amusing or outlandish.

I have some wonderful friends, but they can’t fill that particular hole.

At this point, I realize that time does heal all wounds if you’ll only let it. It’s okay to cry and moan and even holler occasionally, but life is for the living and you must carry on.

I’ve even gotten to the point where I can have “disputes” with my husband. For instance, a few month’s ago I had some plumbing problems. Need I mention how totally inept I am in dealing with this sort of circumstance? Well, as I was wading around in all that water, I looked up and yelled, “Did you know about any of this? You did, didn’t you!” Well, I composed myself and then broke out laughing. Another milestone. Before, I would have just started crying shamelessly and wallowed in enormous self-pity.

Late last year, my parents came for an extended visit. I gave up my master bedroom for them because it provides all the creature comforts they enjoy. I wasn’t put out. I could easily move to another bedroom and the few things I didn’t have were really no big deal.

My mother and father, in an effort to show appreciation, went out and bought a whole new set of bedding material. As beautiful as it was, I burst out in tears. It changed the look of the room entirely, and I realized it came as an internal shock. They hadn’t meant any harm, and I recovered shortly thereafter. It’s all just part of the grief process.

Today, I would say that I’m just about back to normal. The missing goes on and the need to want to “hide out” pops up, but I consider it normal and don’t give in to it on a steady basis. Instead, I focus on the eighteen years my husband and I had and the incredibly wonderful travel experiences we shared.

His ashes are on top of my fireplace (most people have no idea what it is, if they ever notice in the first place). Some people probably think I have way too many pictures of him around and other reminders, but for now they stay.

Bottom line, life does go on, and if you take it one step at a time, reach out for the numerous resources available and take advantage of the kindness of humanity, you’ll live a happier, richer life. Get involved with projects such as the one I am developing over the Internet. Thank God for the Internet! It is crammed with all kinds of information and opportunities and has given me a brighter, encouraging outlook.

The same can happen for you, I promise.

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**sudSSpirit**  
Bereavement  
Support Group  
currently meets monthly  
in three locations:  
Berks Chapter in  
Reading, PA.  
Cumberland/York  
Chapter in Etters, PA.  
Bennington Chapter in  
Bennington, VT

For meeting locations,  
dates, and times,  
please check our  
facebook page

*or email:*

longlivepigheaven@  
yahoo.com  
- Reading, PA

lmurray2@comcast.net  
- Etters, PA

sudsspirit@gmail.com  
- Bennington, VT

*or phone:*

610-777-4181  
- Reading, PA

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

802-440-8100  
- Bennington, VT





## Book Review - Editor

### THE OTHER SIDE OF SADNESS

– *What the new science of bereavement tells us about life after loss.*

by **George A. Bonanno**

After interviewing thousands of people who have experienced grief, the author and his staff came to realize that people are more resilient than we can imagine after dealing with a loss.

Comparing grieving to the swing of a pendulum between sadness and happiness, Bonanno states that it is normal for multiple emotions to co exist without the need to “process” or “resolve” any further. How we deal with loss is part of human nature.

We have to find our own way and what works for us and what feels right in order to achieve a new balance in our lives.

I recommend this book to provide insight and hope from an author who has been researching the science of bereavement for about 20 years.

## Thoughts to Ponder - Editor

“To become different from what we are, we must have some awareness of what we are”

-Eric Hoffer

“Hope costs nothing”

-Colette

“Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives”

-William James



## Grieving the Loss of Your Spouse

Perhaps the most difficult secondary loss to accept is suddenly being without your primary companion. You have grown accustomed to living a certain life-style and engaging in favorite activities with your spouse. You have grown used to being the object of your spouse’s love....It has been often said that when one loses a spouse, they also lose a friend, companion, confidant, someone with whom to take vacations.

The death of your spouse can also change the relationship you had with mutual friends. If you were use to socializing with friends as a couple, those same friends may have a difficult time interacting with you as an individual. You may begin to feel like the “fifth wheel.”

### Coping With Your Grief

How can you overcome the problems you face after your spouse has died? First, you must recognize that grief is necessary, and that it is something you must work through; there is no shortcut.

### Vent Your Feelings

It is important that you express your feelings. Take time to cry, and don’t be afraid to share your tears with other mourners. Talk openly with family and friends. Don’t try to “protect” your children or other family members by hiding your sadness. Express your anger if you are feeling it. This is the time to lean on your friends. They may feel awkward for awhile because they don’t know how to talk to you about your loss. You can help them help you by simply telling them what you need.

### Lighten Your Schedule

If you normally have a pressing schedule, try to lighten it. Remember, grief is mentally taxing; you don’t need the added strain of too much to do. Set aside some quiet times just for yourself, so you can think about your spouse’s death and put things in perspective.

### There is No Time Table

What if you can’t seem to handle your grief?....It is emphasized that there is no time table for grief, so it is difficult to say when a person needs professional help. If you are worried that you are not coping well with your grief, you might consider talking to a counselor. You may be relieved to discover that you are reacting normally. If you believe you need help, ask your clergyperson or doctor to suggest a counselor. Your funeral director can also offer valuable advice.

### Remember, You Will Adjust...

Finally, remember that as time goes on, you will adjust to your new life, and your grief will diminish. This does not mean you must forget your loved one; it means you accept the death and can no longer enjoy your spouse’s physical presence. But he or she will still be part of your life. Your relationship with your spouse has been changed forever, but its existence and your feelings live on forever.

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## QUESTIONS

by **John Kreiser**

I had a wife I truly loved  
My soulmate sent by God  
above  
And though her death set us  
apart  
She'll always occupy my heart  
But now, my future is unknown  
Will I grow old and die alone?  
Is there a plan not yet  
revealed?  
A way for shattered hearts to  
heal?  
I'll always have the love we  
shared  
A special bond without  
compare  
These cherished thoughts of  
her and me  
Emblazoned in my memory  
But is there more? Another  
page?  
A second act upon life's stage?  
Can I move on without regret?  
To love again, but not forget?  
The unique bond that we  
shared first  
Essential to my universe  
Is it betrayal to discover  
The feelings I'd have for  
another?  
Some vexing questions to be  
sure  
And ones I lack the answers for

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from the author*

## An Entry From My Journal

“A few warm days and you can feel it. The season is changing and with it comes many thoughts and memories. You miss them. You miss them sharing the changes with you, you miss making plans with one another, you miss dreaming together”

-Editor

