

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:
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Welcome *from the Editor*

May I extend Summer Greetings to all. Welcome to those that are reading this newsletter for the first time and welcome back to those that have been receiving these newsletters in the past. Our newsletter is now in color with a new look.

The **sudSSpirit** Quarterly Newsletter is a companion to the monthly meeting that we have on the 4th Monday of each month at 6:15pm at the Exeter Community Library. **sudSSpirit** stands for "Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse - Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph"

If you are going through the grieving process of the sudden unexpected death of your spouse and you have not dropped in on a meeting so far, we encourage

you to do so. We are a friendly informal group and our intentions are to make you feel welcome and part of us as we try to help each other heal and find peace within us as we deal with this bereavement process.

Whether your loss is recent or it's been many years, you are welcome to be part of our group for as long as you want to be. The group's monthly meeting is continuous.

If you want more information about our bereavement support group, please email sudsspirit@gmail.com or call 610-779-6809.

Enjoy the summer . . .

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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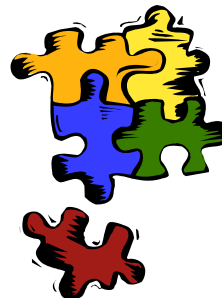
Grief is Like a Jigsaw Puzzle *by Victoria Guthrie*

Grief is a smorgasbord where you go down the line picking a little of this and a little of that. Grief is like a jigsaw puzzle. Some people get all the edge pieces together first and work from the outside in. Others dump everything out on the table and at once and dive right into the middle. Some never open the box at all. They just look at the picture on the lid and wonder why what's inside doesn't match or make sense

You meet a lot of people when you start a jigsaw puzzle. Some are full of advice or they try to make the puzzle look the way it ought to be instead of the way it is.

But once in a while, you meet someone who shares their own finished puzzle and helps you make sense of yours. Then you find it is not as hard as before. Some of the pieces fit together more easily, and you sigh with relief...and remember.

Reprinted with permission from Victoria Guthrie, Tampa, FL., Brief Encounters, 6/98 through Hope for Bereaved Inc., Syracuse, NY



***"In this universe
nothing is ever
wholly lost
That which is
excellent remains
forever a part
of this universe.
Human hearts are
dust but the love
which moves the
human heart
abides to bless
the last generation"***

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

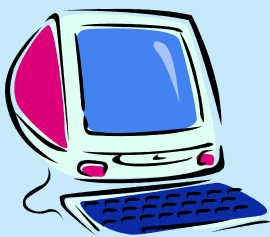
Berks Visiting Nurses
www.berksvna.org
610-378-0481

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



Does anybody really know how we feel? *by Dominic Murgido*

As I continue with my life without my wife, I see changes in my world. My world has been so very different since her passing. Some of our traditions I am still trying to hold onto while others have since been stopped or soon will be stopped. It's hard to hold onto something that only mattered when there were two of you that enjoyed it. When there is one of you left, the fun goes away. Each year is different in its purpose for me. I am trying to understand and accept life that is so different than the many years I have spent with my wife.

The many changes we experience have to be looked upon as a positive in your life. You must recognize that you are ready to let go of some of the things while trying to build upon new things that matter to you. In your own way at your own pace you will find new things. It will never be the same as it once was, but it can be new to you and it can become part of your new life without your loved one while maintaining their spirit within you.

Some of us that go through this grieving process view the outside world differently now. There are times I don't want to have any part of it and on weekends I just want to stay indoors and watch life move on through my window. I am content with that alone time and it allows me to reflect in my own private world of my house. I reflect through thoughts that are translated with pen and into a journal. Other times, I feel like I need to be around people, even people I don't even know. I want to be part of their world and be in places they are in like parks, malls, restaurants, or events. Being around others at times supplies its own sense of belonging to me when I want to be a part of the outside world.

The people around us really don't know how we feel. Those that are neighbors, friends, co-workers, and even some family members just don't get it. They think that our grieving process can be compared to a bad cold or sore back and in a few weeks, we will be good again.

They can't understand our confusion, tears, sensitivity, and sometimes our unwillingness to be part of their day. They question our emotional state and suggest that there must be something wrong with us that it is taking

so long to get over it.

There are people who really do know how we feel. Where do you find them? ; A bereavement support group. I am a firm believer in support groups, any kind of support groups that are existing to help those that are in need to become better at who they are or help to cope with a situation in their life like the loss of a loved one. Being part of a bereavement support group will allow you to express yourself to others and listen to others. This is such a great healing process because it provides you a sense of not being alone in your grief. Continued attendance in support groups builds a bridge that will allow you to slowly cross to the sunny side on your journey through this process. Being part of multiple bereavement support groups has helped me and continues to help me cope and stay focused with who I am and where I am going with my life.

If you are not part of one, I encourage you to do so. You have nothing to lose but some pain and heartache that you are feeling and you will not be alone in your grief.

There are people who really do know how we feel.



An Entry from My Journal

- Editor

"Sometimes I have feelings as fresh as the day my wife passed, feelings of sadness, depression, despair, loneliness. I get chills. I cry. I wish I wasn't here alone without her. I know I can always dream but I also know I can never have her with me again. I hope and pray I will be with her again in the afterlife."



I Wish You Were Here

by Mary Nowyj

As I walked by the colorful shop windows, sun shining brightly, I thought about the times past when my husband would beckon me closer to look at the merchandise displayed in the shop windows. Suddenly, an odd feeling arose within me and I couldn't stop the tears or memories from rushing forward. When my husband died, I lost a special window shopping and strolling companion. My eyes wandered toward other couples who were holding hands, giggling and tugging at each other. As I walked alone, I remembered my familiar times when we were a couple.

Tears trickled down my cheeks and I could almost hear the silent words, "I wish you were here with me to enjoy the day. I wish you were holding my hand and giggling with me. I wish you were here to help guide me along unfamiliar streets. I just wish you were here!" As the emotion and words collided, I felt grief momentarily ease as my heart mellowed into a soft cushion of memories and peace. I had passed through yet another short space of time that was worthy of remembrance. Tucked away in my mind are all the past pictures of a life once lived as a couple. Accepting that past and all it held for me is an important part of my grief process. Memories return because we haven't forgotten our loved ones. Whenever we remember, I believe others seem to live again.

Every time we wish someone were with us, it bears witness to a relationship that was important to our well-being. Missing someone we've loved so much means we felt and cared deeply for them. While we sometimes wish the person was still with us in a more tangible way, would we really miss them so much if they were always by our side? Would we really have known then how much they meant to us? It was then, as my heart and mind returned to memories of the past, that I realized my husband was present in a different way. I didn't have to wish anymore. My wish had come true.

Mary Nowyj is a volunteer for Hope for Bereaved, Inc. If you would like to order her book, Healing Moments, please visit www.centering.org Reprinted with permission from Hope for Bereaved, Inc., Syracuse, NY

From Grief to Gratitude

by Pat Ward

It has been three years since my friend, Joe, died in an accident. I look back on those years as both painful and beautiful. The journey toward healing has been difficult. Sometimes, it seemed that I'd never feel better. Yet slowly, peace has replaced the sadness. Some things, such as a song or approaching anniversary of that day, still bring tears to my eyes. Yet most of what I feel now is joy and gratitude. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be Joe's friend, and the memory of our friendship is joyous. The process of mourning has made me appreciate Joe more and see myself differently.

When I look back on the tapestry of my life, the colors and patterns created with my friend are beautifully unique. Nothing can change them now, because our friendship is endless and eternal. It is in the new phase. I would not trade a minute of our time together for a minute anywhere else or with anyone else.

Reminders of those memories shared do not hurt so much now. What was lost no longer seems as important as what I have. It is true that no one will ever be like Joe or hold his place in my heart. Life has changed, and there is beauty in the difference. So many times, I see my friend in someone else, or recognize him in myself.

As winter is followed by spring, so grief is followed by growth. We go forth with the lessons learned in sorrow, to be a friend and family to others. We take memories with us as we create new ones. Pain is replaced with possibility, just as cold, short days are replaced with warm, sunny ones. It is really true...time does heal...

Pat Ward is a free lance writer from Syracuse, NY. Reprinted with permission from Hope for Bereaved, Inc., Syracuse, NY



**Bereavement
Support Group
meets monthly**

**on the
4th Monday
at 6:15 p.m.
at Exeter
Community
Library.**

**For more
information,
call 610-779-6809
or Email:
sudsspirit@gmail.com**



Book Review - Editor

Good Grief

by Granger E. Westberg

What's 64 pages long, fits in your pocket or handbag, and contains valuable insight and information concerning your journey through the grief experience?

A book called Good Grief.

The author guides you through the stages of grief while maintaining well written examples that anyone can identify with. Originally published in 1962, the message is very much a standard and timely in today's world.

Westberg believes that those of us that go through this process of grieving undoubtedly can become better people as we move forward in our lives.

I highly recommend this gem of a book that is small in size but big in its message.

Grief is a Painful Walk

by Cynthia Carlson

Grief is a process that is not widely understood or respected in our society. Grief is actually a process toward an acceptance and peace, and no one walks this path unchallenged or unchanged.

It can be a very painful walk but through resolving each of the stages of grief, a new understanding of life and the importance of life is achieved, and because of this new understanding, important changes can be made.

Anger is an important part of grief work. As anger is truly resolved, only then is true peace possible.

If anger is overwhelming or frightening, seek assistance from a grief counselor, a support group, or both. The changes you decide to make will come only because you have changed on your journey through grief. Those changes can be very positive to your community and can be a memorial to the preciousness of the life of your loved one. Do not put aside your grief and do not be afraid to resolve the anger that accompanies it.

(Excerpt from a letter to the Editor by Cynthia Carlson, Post Standard, 6-17-92) Re-printed with permission from Hope for Bereaved, Inc., Syracuse, NY

Reflections on an Anniversary

by Dominic Murgido

One's wedding anniversary after your spouse has died can be so heartfelt and sad. This past June was my fourth one without her and it continues to be difficult for me. As time moves on, sometimes the recognition of this kind of event can be laborious. This would have been our 30th wedding anniversary and a trip to Hawaii was going to be our celebration.



On a summer day in June we said "I do" and began a wonderful companionship and marriage that had the potential to last more than the 26 and half years we had together. I met Sue four years prior to our wedding and we became friends first as we fell in love and realized that destiny was to bring us together as a couple.

Sometimes you don't realize what you are missing until you no longer have it. This can apply to a marriage, a partnership, a loving bond between two people that share their lives together. I miss the recognition of our wedding anniversary, the celebration of another year of wedded bliss with the one I was meant to be with. The one that provided me with the love and support I needed over the years. The one that I loved spending time with shopping, going on vacation, taking walks, drinking specialty tea, riding bikes, going to the theatre, eating dark chocolate, watching a movie, going out to dinner, or just staying home and being together.

So on our anniversary this year, it was me alone. With the fondest of memories, I made a toast to my wife with a glass of wine at the end of the day. I am thankful for the time I did have with her and the memories that I will treasure forever.

"The person who has memories is never alone."



Thoughts to Ponder

"The closest bonds we will ever know are the bonds of grief.. The deepest community is one of sorrow" - Cormack McCarthy



"Loss makes artists of us all as we weave new patterns in the fabric of our lives" - Greta W. Crosby

"Grief drives men into the habits of serious reflection, sharpens the understanding and softens the heart" - John Adams