

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE  
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

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## Welcome *from the Editor*

The summer can be a difficult time for some of us especially if this is the season that holds the most memories of our loved one. Although a struggle, it will eventually get a little bit easier. Please seek out help from friends, family and support groups.

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.

The greater Reading, PA and Berks County area is fortunate to have an organization known as the **Circle of Life Coalition**. The coalition addresses the issues of educating the community in the awareness of and planning for sudden or anticipated loss. Monthly seminars are held at the Berks County Community Foundation building in Reading and they also provide a community education series periodically.

For additional information, please check their website at [www.circleoflifecoalition.org](http://www.circleoflifecoalition.org).

In this issue a brief article on “Forgiving” is shared and Mary Nowyj’s article “Not Today” brings the beginnings of grief into focus. The editor comments on Freedom, Not being able to grow old together, and has a special announcement. This issue wraps up with our standard contents that include thoughts to ponder, an entry from my journal, a book review, quarterly quote, 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 group, please call 610-779-6809 or 484-336-5097. Email [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com) or [kaizan2@gmail.com](mailto:kaizan2@gmail.com) **sudSSpirit** looks forward to being part of your healing process as you move forward with your life.

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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## Freedom to choose, Freedom to move on *by Dominic Murgido*

Freedom can mean many things to many people. Independence, ease of movement, a right, liberty, the capacity to exercise choice, free will, exemption from unpleasant or onerous conditions. Freedom for the bereaved takes on another meaning although many of the above meanings can be a part of it.

We lost a loved one; one who meant the world to us in our daily lives, one who loved us for who we are, one who played a significant part in our world every moment of every day. We are devastated, depressed, sad, and feel trapped in another world; the world of grief.

It is very easy to stay in this world but it is not healthy for anyone. We all will eventually reach a point that we will experience the need to make changes by our own recognition or will be forced to do something because it is time to do it. The changes I speak of could be minor in nature but each change brings us closer to a small moment of recovery.

Changes that we make as we grieve are not wrong nor are they a bad idea to be avoided. On the contrary, change is good. Each of us has our own personal time line of bereaving. No two people are the same. The impact that the death of our loved one had on us is so dependent on many personal factors of each of our lives and the relationship we had with our loved one. That said, a calendar does not dictate when it will be over.

## Quarterly Quote

*“Hugs are good  
medicine for  
whatever ails us.*

*They can be  
life savers  
when we are  
struggling  
with grief”*

- *Dr. Leo Buscaglia*

*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



## Freedom to choose, Freedom to move on (continued)

My wife died about four and a half years ago and it has only been within the last nine months that I started thinking of me and what I am going to do with my life now. Sometimes it takes many years and moments of soul searching before one is able to begin again. My life is now my own. I do not share it with her and I have me to take care of. Making one decision at times can set in motion future decisions that will continue to be made to move forward. That first step, that first choice was definitely the hardest for me and I would think it to be the hardest for anyone. I have had the time to search who I am and what I want to become and I am ok with that. As time goes by, another choice will be made and then another, and another. Life continues and I continue with it trying to become whole once again as a person, as the new normal I am destined to be.

We are all on a different timeline of grief. Some may be able to move a little forward while others are still in a phase that they can't. It is ok. Patience is a virtue as they say and too often patience is something that those of us who grieve have very little of.

Making choices and moving on does not mean you are forgetting your loved one. In fact, I feel that you are taking them with you in your new adventure. They are in your heart forever and the memories of the life that you have shared together will always be there to reflect upon. My wife's spirit lives within me and I feel that she is guiding me on this journey of recovery from my grief as I move forward to accept the challenges that life has in store for me.

## I Thought We Were Going To Grow Old Together

by *Dominic Murgido*

I wish I had a dollar for every time I heard this mentioned among those of us that grieve the loss of a spouse. We all believed that. And why shouldn't we? Life was grand for us in a relationship that was filled with love and companionship. No matter how much or how little amount of time we shared with one another, life was good.

Then it happened. Our partner was diagnosed with a terminal illness. They became very sick, very fast. They sustained an injury that became life threatening. Our soul mate had a heart attack, a stroke, an aneurism. They had an accident at work or while they were enjoying a favorite sport or past time. Our significant other was killed while on a boat or by a train or in a plane crash. They were killed in a vehicle accident or drowned, or even murdered.

However it happens, they are gone. Life as we knew it is gone with them. For it will never be the way it was from now on. We were comfortable with our partner and our lives together. We did not see this coming. No one did.

So much more that we wanted to do together, share with one another. Travel, explore new adventures, dine out more, visit friends and family more frequently, take extended weekends, and grow old together.

None of that can happen with them anymore. We are shocked and somewhat traumatized by this life changing event that in some cases happened in the blink of an eye while in other cases death lingered on for some time.

Regardless of the circumstances, we now begin another part of our life but not before we accept the reality of the grief that we feel and the emotional experience that won't go away. Our grief journey begins here. This journey is not one to take too lightly. It will be difficult at times and you can not do this alone. Support from family, friends, counselors, and bereavement support groups may be needed and are there for you to gain a sense of healing and balance within your life.

After months, maybe years, you will begin to feel better and as time marches on so will you. Our loss will eventually not dominate our thoughts and we will have many past memories to reflect upon as we look forward to our future.

Although we are alone now minus our better half, their presence is with us spiritually helping and guiding us through many tomorrows as we learn to live once again in a world full of hope and promise.





## Forgiving Yourself and Others

Forgiving yourself and others Forgiving may be the hardest thing we ever have to do. When someone we love has been hurt or died, there may be many people with whom we are angry. Most of all, we may be angry with ourselves for something we feel we failed to do. Holding onto anger, however, can make us sick physically. At some point we need to forgive in order to move on in our grief recovery journey.

There are two levels of forgiveness: First, we have to choose to forgive, and then we actually have to work through the emotional pain that is holding the unforgiveness in place.

Being willing to forgive yourself or someone who has hurt you, or someone you love, is the first and hardest step. In doing this you are not saying that what was done was right. Forgiveness does not mean you approve of the behavior. If you are forgiving yourself for something you think you did or didn't do, you are acknowledging that whatever happened wasn't your fault. Forgiving yourself and others allows you to release the emotional bond and to move on. It is a freeing experience.

*Reprinted with permission.  
Beyondindigo.com*

## You Know You're Getting Better When ...

You know you're getting better when....

- Your memories make you smile instead of break into tears.
- When someone else's pain hurts you more than your own.
- When you can tell someone else life really DOES go on.
- One day you wake up and you don't have to remind yourself to breathe.
- You want to find a way to leave your grief in the past.
- You find you are actually enjoying living.
- You can come home and be content in an empty house.

*Reprinted with permission from  
widownet.com*

## Not Today

By Mary Nowyj

When the gentlemen walked in the office, he was in a hurry. I thought maybe he was late for a meeting. We glanced at each other and then went about our business. I finished my work a few minutes later and brought it to an assistant. As I looked up, the man was wandering in the hall as if searching for something. Finally, when someone from another office spoke to him, I heard him say, "I'm looking for the widow / widowers meeting."

He was directed to a room down the hall, but I had already seen him glance into that room and walk away. Then I heard him say, "Not today, I guess" and I watched a change come over him as he hurriedly exited the building. That brought me back to an earlier time when I had come to the same meeting. My husband had just died, and I just didn't want to face anyone.

"Not today, when I have to face my world alone. Not today when others remind me that someone they've cared about has also died suddenly – or slowly. Not today, because I hurt too much and don't want others to see it. Not today, because my grief is too new. Not today, because I see your pain and it's just too hard to look in the mirror. There's still time to face the loneliness, rebuild my life, and get the courage to go on with only memories to cherish. People are ready when they are ready, not a minute sooner or later, and I'm not ready today. Not today; just not today."

It takes a lot of courage to walk into a support group the first couple of times. The awkwardness of feeling so naked and raw in the grip of grief can send us running out the door before we even begin to shed the skin of the past and renew ourselves in vulnerable moments with others. Maybe not today, we think, but when?

I'm glad I finally walked through the doors to face the grief that can cripple us at times. I'm glad I allowed myself to be vulnerable in the face of others. And I'm glad to be involved with a group of individuals who have courage, strength, and hope to deal with the issues that surface during the intense grieving period. As we bond together, we find ourselves knowing what we can do today and not wait for tomorrow. We can do today! We can!

*Reprinted with permission from the book "Healing Moments A Collection of Inspiring Reflections after the Death of a Spouse" by Mary Nowyj. To obtain a copy of this book, please visit [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)*

**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 610-779-6809  
or 484-336-5097.  
Email [sudsspirit@  
gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com) or  
[kaizan2@gmail.com](mailto:kaizan2@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](mailto:lmurry2@comcast.net)**



## Book Review - Editor

### In Lieu of Flowers, A Conversation for the Living

by Kay Soder-Alderfer

Nancy Cobb's book allows one to explore death rather than avoid it. From the introduction that defines the "divine intersections" where the living meet the dying to how crucial it is to say good-bye to your loved one, Nancy proclaims how much death is a part of our lives. The author shares moments of her own mourning and is able to communicate about this topic that we, as a society, avoid more than we should. She shares that what depresses us can also enlighten us.



## An Entry From My Journal

"We are a different kind of group or club, those of us that lost a loved one - a wife or husband - we are unique because of the loss of so much that we had with them and so much more that will never be."

-Editor



## Links

[www.groww.org](http://www.groww.org) (on line grief recovery with helpful information)  
[www.memory-of.com](http://www.memory-of.com) (a way to celebrate your loved one's life and legacy)  
[www.healthboards.com](http://www.healthboards.com) (a place to ask questions, review boards of topics being discussed to gain on line support)  
[www.memorybearsinc.com](http://www.memorybearsinc.com) (a unique way to remember your loved one or anything)

Email: [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com) or Call: 610-779-6809

## 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.*

## Special Announcement From the Editor

As this issue goes to press, I am taking a personal step to move forward with my life with the start of a small business and relocation. My departure from the area will not affect sudSSpirit Bereavement Support Groups for they will continue under the direction of very capable facilitators. As is often said, sudSSpirit is all of you helping each other cope with and survive from the loss of your spouse or significant other.

Please welcome Karen Keiser as the facilitator of the Berks Chapter of sudSSpirit. Karen will become the local contact for our support group. She can be reached at 484-336-5097 or [kaizan2@gmail.com](mailto:kaizan2@gmail.com). Thank you Karen for your interest in this cause and willingness to support a much needed bereavement resource for our community.

This support group will always be a part of my soul and it is my intention to continue opening chapters wherever there is a need. I will continue to be the editor of this quarterly publication and will always be available for input, guidance, and support for the two sudSSpirit support groups that have been established so far.

Together we can help each other heal.

## Thoughts to Ponder

"Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning"-Psalm 30

"It is important, when dealing with all aspects of grief, to keep the process moving. The temptation is to freeze, to stay perpetually recoiled against so terrible a blow"

-Martha Whitmore Hickman

"On the wings of time,  
Grief flies away"

- La Fontaine

