



sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

All of our loved ones

SUMMER 2012

Volume 4, Issue 4

Welcome *from the Editor*

Did you know that **sudSSpirit** has a facebook page? Check it out and like us on Facebook and become a friend. Facebook / **sudsspirit**.



Information is power. When one is on this path of grief, the more they know and read and share with others, the better they can become in their *new normal*.

This newsletter is available to anyone anywhere so if you know of someone that can benefit from these pages, please contact us with their email or mail information and we will make sure that they become part of our mailing list for future publications. sudsspirit@gmail.com or 802-440-8100.

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*"

In this issue:

As the summer begins, so does the recalling of an anniversary by the editor while John Kreiser provides a beautiful poem entitled "Last Caress". An excerpt from an article "Watching Them Watching Me" by Dean Murphy is included as well as our Mission Statement and Links. Andrea Ripke's "Such a Simple Word" carries such emotion with her story while the editor talks about how "We Miss Our Friend".

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

The Berks Chapter of **sudSSpirit** is in a transition phase at this time and *usually* meets the 4th Monday of the month at the Exeter Community Library in Reading, PA. Since the library is booked for the date and time, we encourage you to meet as a group and discuss your feelings and progress as you continue on this journey together. When possible, there will be a facilitator present. **sudSSpirit** strives to continue its mission of helping those in our community help each other. For local contact and support, please call John at 610-777-4181.

If you would like a brochure with more information about our Reading, PA group, please call 610-777-4181 or Email 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. 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. You can also reach us at Facebook / **sudsspirit**.

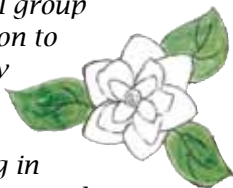
Dominic Murgido - Editor

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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.

Quarterly Quote

- Editor

***"Be kind to yourself.
You are human and
grieving. Anger
is one color on the
griever's palette."***

-Harold Ivan Smith

Resources

- Editor

GRMHA (Greater Reading
Mental Health Alliance)
www.grmha.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

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

Bayada Hospice Services
www.bayada.com
855-696-2072



Anniversary for two is now for one

by Dominic Murgido

Another year has gone by, another wedding anniversary to mark without her. This past June was the seventh one without her. Sometimes it feels almost like the first one without her which was six months after her death; very raw emotion, unsettledness, pondering my future, and feeling like a lost ship at sea. Other times, you can accept it better.

It does make you sad that you are the only one left to celebrate or recognize the day that once was and is no longer there in its familiar capacity. And many people can remember and think of you on that day and that in itself is special and kind, but the one person that matters, is no longer around.

It would always bother me when people would say that today is so and so's birthday and they "would" have been sixty indicating that they died or this "would" have been my fifteenth anniversary had my husband not died so suddenly. I often thought, why do that to yourself and bring back something that you feel bad about, stir up some old feelings that put you down and out?

I understand it now. I did it. I said to myself, this would have been my thirty third wedding anni-

versary. And my recalling it in that way was to recognize and honor the day we became one as a couple, not to feel bad or stir up feelings that made me sad. A memory of the times we had together as a couple for all those years and how strong our relationship was and how much we loved each other. Recalling it that way matters. And I now recognize that it is ok to do that. I get it.

Our marriage was forever, but forever ended one January day in 2006.

I have known her for thirty years, married for twenty-six and a half years. Many couples had more time together than that.... but many more had less.

I am grateful for the time I did have with her. She was one in a million to me. As I move forward with my life, I will recall memories of our life together; memories that will bring a smile to my face, warmth to my heart, and a reflection in my soul. She is with me every day and I will never be without her spirit in my heart.

Thoughts to Ponder

- Editor

"I am beginning to learn that it is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all."

-Laura Ingalls Wilder

"We are made to persist. That's how we find out who we are."

-Tobias Wolff



"Humility is the one true wisdom by which we prepare our minds for all the possible changes of life."

-George Arliss

Living with the Loss of a Child Grief Support Group for Parents

This is a free and confidential group, which meets monthly. The first Tuesday of each month At 6 Banks Street (at school street) North Bennington Congregational Church 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm. No registration required.

For more information please call:

Beth Newman, LMFT, ATR-BC
Bereavement specialist

802-688-4557

artstherapy@myfairppint.net

bethnewman.com

Book Review

- Editor



Don't Let Death Ruin Your Life

by Jill Brooke

Coping with any loss is painful; however, Brooke takes an approach that something positive can come out of a sad situation by focusing on memories and drawing comfort from those that have passed. In this book, the author covers all the bases with walking us through the grieving process from rituals to therapy. Insight and suggestions are offered on a variety of topics including possessions, writings, and leaving a legacy. The grieving process can actually help us heal and move forward with personal growth and allow us to become survivors in our new world and reclaim happiness.



Such a Simple Word

by Andrea Ripke

Speeding down the freeway and rushing toward the ER's revolving door did not speed up the moment – the waiting, the knowing, and the dread of learning that you were dead. Learning –as if I had to be taught what it meant that you were gone. As if, I needed a dictionary to comprehend the words, “He’s dead.” As if I didn’t have the intelligence to understand that you were dead. Nonetheless I learned that you were dead on a sunny, autumn day from a pretty doctor with bloodshot eyes and a gentle voice that said, “He’s dead.”

Class dismissed, as if, I learned what I needed to know about you being dead from those two words. The doctor, the nurse, the officer-they kept telling me, explaining to me, describing to me how you died.

I listened while watching from above, my body shivering in a chair below, rocking, questioning, crying, and then, nothing. Nothing but the glow of the stained glass window blurred in the corner of the chapel. I dried my own tears with my trembling hand. I called the family, one by one, my hand shaking like I was playing a tambourine as I said over and over, “He’s dead.” And then I listened dry-eyed to their sobs so far away, wishing I, too, could cry. I didn’t understand why the tears had stopped. I didn’t know it was normal. And so I felt strong, composed, when they took me to you down the hallway to a small, sterile room. “Take as much time as you need,” the nurse said. How much time do people need?

First I saw your boots in a bag and envisioned you climbing poles. I saw your computer on the floor and thought of you working at the table after dinner. I saw your jeans cut open, gown over your chest, minor abrasions on your arms and a tube in your mouth, just as she had warned. A tube in your mouth. You looked so strong, so healthy, so alive, except for the tube in your mouth. Avoiding the tube in your mouth I touched you as if you were alive. Asleep. I felt your curls between my fingers. The contours of your chest met my face as I collapsed from sobs patiently waiting behind my composure. I caressed your arms and your face with the back of my hand, trying to soothe away your gone-ness.

I slid your rings, one by one, onto my fingers remembering the moments that made each one special. Around my wrist I fastened your watch, still ticking, the weight of its largeness as a reminder of your touch – your touch for sixteen years. As I took these things, methodically, I realized I didn’t understand that small word even a child can say...dead.

Such a simple word...with so many complications. Easy to say. Hard to hear.

An explosion. An indefinable sound. An echo that sings the brain – a sting and then numbness, no feeling, no pain.

“I need you to sign some forms,” she said. My tambourine hand met pen to paper but with no sound – not even I could recognize the signature as my own. But my hand kept on playing as I sat next to you. It tried to find a rhythm for days. I am still trying to find a rhythm without you. I never knew being alone could be so crowded with things to do, people to please, places to go, decisions, revisions of everything that once was.

Dead. “He’s dead,” someone else said, again. Almost four months later I am still trying to believe it.- after the funeral, after Thanksgiving, after our wedding anniversary, after Christmas, after New Year’s, after Valentine’s Day. You’re dead. I know that. I read it on the forms, in reports, and in my journal.

“He’s dead,” I said. I said it to your friends. I said it to your family. I said it to the mail carrier, to the vet, the pharmacist, and your co-workers. I said it to dozens of people. “He’s dead.” That’s what I said to them, in spite of my tambourine hand.

Dead. It is easy to say, but I’m still learning what it means for you to be gone, passed away – for you to be dead. I am still learning after all this time – if only you were able to explain it to me.

Dead. You’re dead, but everywhere I look you’re still alive, you’re just not here. I really don’t understand what it means when I say “He’s dead.” Maybe if I could hear the tambourine. Maybe if the sobs were not so patient. Maybe if I could touch you one last time, then maybe I would understand. I don’t understand ashes or memorials or silence. I don’t understand that you are gone forever – not even after 120 days of knowing. You’re dead. It’s easy to say...it’s hard to hear.

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An Entry From My Journal

“It’s not fun getting old alone. It’s not supposed to be that way – we were united as one and now die separately – and one of us is left alone. I wonder if it was me that left first, how would she be handling this? I guess that will never be known.”

-Editor



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](mailto: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



Watching Them Watching Me *by Dean E. Murphy*

You see, as hard as it has been for my three sons to lose their mother — she died rather suddenly two months shy of our 25th — I learned that anniversary night that it has also been hard for them to watch me lose the love of my life. As alone as I feel, I am not actually alone. I have three sons who can pinpoint with laser like precision the gaping hole in my heart. It is an odd feeling as a father to be so transparent, so naked, in front of the children you still provide for. But the death of a spouse rewrites the rules of a family in ways I never could have imagined. Some decisions in life, it turns out, are made for you, leaving you an unwitting accomplice and spectator at once. ...

When I look back to the morning my wife died, it is now clear to me that my sons were well down this road even then — that they recognized our family's changed order and its consequences. As we were driving home from the hospice in exhausted silence, my oldest son, in the passenger seat where his mom had always sat, turned to me and then to his brothers. "It is just the four of us now," he said. "We'll need to be here for each other."

Reprinted with permission: excerpt from legacy matters-grief and grieving archives

We Miss Our Friend *by Dominic Murgido*

Our friend loved us and we loved them.

Our friend was kind, considerate,
and compassionate.

Our friend respected us, admired us, and was
proud of us.

Our friend loved to talk about us.

Our friend was patient with us.

Our friend was always there when we
needed them.

Our friend never hesitated to comfort us,
be with us.

Our friend walked with us, touched us,
and hugged us.

Our friend loved to shop and always shopped
for us.

Our friend was a companion and someone
we learned so much from.

Our friend spent time with us, laughed with
us, enjoyed quiet times with us.

Our friend was friends with so many others
and always considered others before
themselves.

We shared a friend that we loved and who
was special to each of us in totally
different ways and our friend loved
all of us unconditionally.

Our friend was Sue and she was taken away
from us.

We were saddened by the loss of our friend
but were fortunate and blessed to have
spent time with her.

We are Dominic, her husband;
Mandy, her daughter; and Hal, her dog,

and... **We Miss Our Friend.**

LAST CARESS

by John Kreiser

I've spent the better part
of life

Devotedly in love
I'd found the one,
my perfect mate

Thanks to the Lord above
'Twas early morn,
just barely light

Along a busy street
She sought a ride,
I had a car

And thus, we two did meet
I was heading home
that day

She was heading out
God caused our lives
to intersect

Of this, I have no doubt
As time moved forward,
I would call her

Girlfriend, lover, wife
For more than thirty years
we shared

The ups and downs of life
These challenges we faced
head-on

Emboldened as a team
Yet, just as in some fairy
tales

Cruel fate would intervene
To see her beauty
stilled by death

Was hard to understand
I kissed her unresponsive
lips

And held her lifeless hand
I miss the music of her
voice

The warmth of her
embrace

Five years have passed by
since that day

I last caressed her face
But, death and time
cannot deter

A love so strong and deep
She'll always live on
in my dreams

Both waking and asleep

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from the author*

Links - Editor

www.groww.org

(on line grief recovery with helpful information)

www.griefshare.org

(a nationwide grief support group network with local ties to meetings)

www.memory-of.com

(a way to celebrate your loved one's life and legacy)

www.healthboards.com

(a place to ask questions, review boards of topics being discussed to gain on line support)

www.memorybearsinc.com

(a unique way to remember your loved one or anything)