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Welcome *from the Editor*

Our Winter issue of this Quarterly Newsletter welcomes the new year with hope and faith that our collective journey of grief will continue forward allowing us to become better with time in our new normal.

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 third page of this newsletter for contact information and meeting locations and times. **sudSSpirit** stands for “*Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph.*”

We would like to welcome John Kreiser as the new facilitator for the **sudSSpirit** Group, Berks Chapter in Reading, PA. This is the same John Kreiser that writes beautiful poetry that has graced the pages of this newsletter.

In this issue, the editor talks about the New Year and new beginnings and also extends a thank you to a friend. Amy Twain provides some helpful tips for the newly bereaved while Steve Wickham talks about finding your way to a new life. John Kreiser provides another meaningful poem, the power of time is discussed, and a recent snowfall brings back memories of happier times.

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. 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 sudspirit@gmail.com. You can also reach us at facebook.com/sudsspirit



The Power of Time

Sometimes after we lose a loved one, our thoughts become chaotic and the simplest tasks feel overwhelming. We have trouble sleeping or can't sleep enough. With broken hearts and anguished minds, we wonder how life can continue and if we'll ever feel “normal” again. In time, we learn that it's possible to develop a new “normal.” Members of our Facebook page at Facebook.com/mygriefsupport recently shared how time has helped them move through their grief journeys.

According to Darlene, “The pain changes into something more livable. [It's] always there but allow[s] us to continue to live. At some point, we stop crying over every thought, and smile. The

good things come creeping in a little at a time, which allows [us to] smile — albeit [it's] painful sometimes. I still cry, and it's been almost six years now. I often do something he would have done. When I realize it, I stop, smile, and thank him for becoming part of who I am, even though he isn't here.”

Julie said, “Not without work. Does time heal [or does] faith fix a flat tire? Not without [the] work that you put into it. [The] same [thing] goes for grief.”

Grief is often a long and difficult process, but we can learn to cope with our pain in time. Sharing with others who have had similar experiences and channeling fond memories of our loved ones can help tremendously.

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Dominic Murgido - Editor

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Quarterly Quote

- Editor

“You have the capacity to choose what you think about. If you choose to think about past hurts, you will continue to feel bad. While it's true you can't change the effect past influences had on you once, you can change the effect they have on you now.”

-Gary McKay, Ph.D.

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.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

facebook.com/sudspirit
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New Year, New Beginnings *by Dominic Murgido*

Happy New Year 2012!

Time moves so quickly as we all get older. The seasons seem to change faster. Our lives can become more complex and emotional as we continue with our grieving process as the year advances to a fresh new number.

All of our lives are based on Time. Time to learn; to be educated, to grow, to understand, to encourage, to be liked, to love, to be in a relationship, to marry, to have children, to own a home, to celebrate, to be in sadness, to grieve.

We often say that “there isn’t enough time” or “when I have a time I will . . .” or “there is no time”. We talk about time, we experience time and hopefully we are able to spend the right amount of time doing the things we love to do. We also hope that we are able to share the most amount of our time with those we love.

Time is something that when lost, not given, or taken away from you cannot return to you. Time matters...and what you do with it is even more important.

As a new year begins, people like to reflect on time past and look forward to time in the future. Those of us that grieve the loss of a loved one, look at time a little differently. Time can be a burden to us; perhaps there is too much time to think about there being too much time when alone. We tend to look at the next twelve months as being another hurdle to get through with all of the special dates that use to be part of our lives when we were with our spouse or significant other. This will get easier – in time.

Our attitude and outlook should gradually develop to accept those things we can not change ----sound familiar? We have to be able to have the desire to move on even if it is on a smaller scale. Moving on is difficult. Some of us are living in the past yet relishing those wonderful moments we shared with our spouse. There is nothing wrong with that, and you can always remember those fond memories and old feelings. No one can take that away from you.

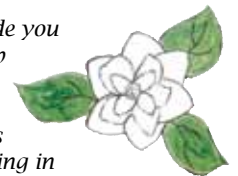
You can not be satisfied with that though, you must develop the courage to move forward; and when that mood strikes you, you will take a step in the right direction. A step that may take you to a place in your life that you can have those fond memories and old feelings as well as the new beginnings of a new year and a new life.

What can we do to become closer to the old self we once knew we were? What activities did we stop doing or places we stopped going too? Who is in our circle of friends? Who isn’t? What can we do to change that? Is there something we always wanted to try, but never did; a place we wanted to visit, but never went? Maybe this is the time to think of moving closer to these kinds of opportunities to reach out, discover and be part of a new experience in our life.

I know this is easier said than done. Taking the chance, the opportunity, and the courage to take a small step towards a small recovery of ourselves in the New Year will help promote and foster a small sample of a new beginning for our lives. In the end, wherever that is, we will become stronger and better at whom we are. Let’s face it – we are new people without our spouse or significant other. We are different, we are changeable, and we need to recognize this in order for us to be more comfortable with whom we are to become in this New Year and in our life.

Our Mission

sudSpirit 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.



sudSpirit does not take the place of professional guidance and we encourage you to seek therapy as required.

sudSpirit 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.

sudSpirit wants those in attendance to realize that they are not alone with this problem and the group is available to provide infinite support.



Beyond the Blackening - Finding Your Way to New Life By Steve Wickham

Dates are peculiar things. The 22nd of September will always be memorable for me, for instance. Whenever the clock strikes 8pm on that day it's almost like I have a minute's silence for a time when a previous life ended and the new one began.

THE 'NON-EXISTENT NESS' OF DEATH DOESN'T FIT WELL

As living beings we cannot comprehend the 'form' of death. (And by death I don't just mean loved ones who've died; I'm talking the death of anything or anyone special to us, for instance, divorce as a prime example - the relationship 'died'.) Death is in many ways a sort of 'non-existingness' that just doesn't fit with our schemas in an existent world. We cannot deal very well with the gap of 'not seeing' that once-acutely special person, relationship or thing anymore. It is beyond our truest understanding and recognition. The pain diminishes with time and processing but the mystery of that loss never does.

But what makes it possible for us to overcome this 'blackening' phenomenon known to all of life is new life; a life now differently defined, holding respectfully to the past but not bound by it.

'TIMING' ISSUES IN GRIEF

The journey that takes us through grief into the moment of pain past even the pain of previous - that pain of staying solidified in the grief as opposed to breaking out to blossom - is not bound by time or anything we might propose. It simply arrives.

Earlier, I referred to the significance of dates; these now as markers for progress through the grieving process.

It is dates that provide us with a yardstick to progress. We encompass the entire spectrum of 'returning' emotion; painfully considered dates that now bring more calm perspective - beyond the blackening, on past the whitening, and now into the reddening, we marvel at how time's seemed to have changed.

But times haven't changed; we have. And thankfully so.

We have grown adept at fitting ourselves to this new form of living - that life thereafter. No longer do we hear ourselves repetitively saying the same things over and over. That time has finished. And we are thankful for it, for it was intrinsically part of our grief. We're also ravenously thankful for those dear ones that listened.

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Raining Blessings

by John Kreiser

This morning I awoke to the sound of falling rain
Softly tapping on the roof and down the window pane

The sun was high above, but hidden from my view
The clouds were hanging low and gray,
obscuring skies of blue

We all enjoy a day that offers sunshine and a breeze

We try to plan our day around outdoor activities
But what of rainy days? Should we just sit inside and mope?

Thinking dismal thoughts that breed despair
instead of hope?

I think that we should celebrate and recognize our need

That rainfall makes it possible for all life to succeed

When dreary days come calling, remember,
don't complain

Instead, give thanks to Heaven for blessing us
with rain

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Thank You

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Karen Keiser, **sudSSpirit** facilitator for the Reading, PA group, who will be relocating to Hawaii. Karen is a kind and warm hearted person who stepped forward to continue **sudSSpirit's** mission this past year and a half. Her interest, dedication, and compassion to pay it forward maintained the original chapter of **sudSSpirit**. I am most sincerely grateful to her.

Thank you Karen,

Dominic Murgido
sudSSpirit Founder

Berks Chapter meets monthly on the 4th Monday at 6:15 pm at Exeter Community Library, Reading, PA. For information call 610-777-4181 or Email longlivepigheaven@yahoo.com



Cumberland / York Chapter meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 7 pm at Fishing Creek Salem United Methodist Church, Etners, PA. For information call 717-938-1928 (ext 241) or Email lmurry2@comcast.net



Bennington, VT Chapter meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6 pm at It's All About The Bean coffee shop, Bennington, VT. For information call 802-440-8100 or Email sudsspirit@gmail.com



Book Review - Editor

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE GRIEVING SOUL

by Jack Canfield
and Mark Victor Hansen

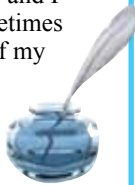
Another fine edition to the Chicken Soup for the Soul Series, this book explores stories that provide insight, coping, healing, and support about overcoming the loss of a loved one.

This collection of stories provides a valuable resource to those that are grieving as well as their family and friends to help them through the grieving process. The message throughout the book is that you are not alone, all of society shares in the experience of loss and sadness. Every life has a meaning and there is so much caring and compassion out there for all of us to become stronger as we move forward with our lives.

An Entry From My Journal

"There are times when my feelings (happy or sad) change daily or multiple times a day and I don't know why. Sometimes it feels like everyday of my life is surviving it until the next day, then it repeats again."

-Editor



Thoughts to Ponder - Editor

"Loss makes artists of all of us as we weave new patterns in the fabric of our lives"

-Greta W. Crosby

"You may forget with whom you laughed, but you will never forget with whom you wept"

-Author Unknown

"The experience of grief is a great gift...for the heart that breaks is just opening again"

-Sharon Callahan



Helpful Tips for the Newly Widowed

By Amy Twain

Losing a loved one, especially a spouse, is always painful. The heavy transition from being a husband to a widower, wife to a widow, is a very difficult and sorrowful journey. Aside from the fact that you're losing your life partner, you are also faced with a whole new myriad of questions, adjustments and decisions to be made.

1) It's ok--cry and freely allow yourself to mourn. Who says crying is acceptable for females only? Adults of both genders must be allowed to mourn in their own personal ways. Postponing your emotions by filling everyday with activities could simply defer and aggregate your grief reaction. At the end of the day, the pain is still there till you recognize it.

2) It's natural that you'll feel a wide array of emotions--be prepared for that. Through your efforts, you could conquer your grief. Especially for the newly widowed, your grief process must be a very personal one; you don't

have to follow others into their own grieving styles. It's not true that if you really wait long enough, the pain will stop--it doesn't; you have to take action.

3) You can let go and say farewell in your own time at your own pace, so no need to rush. There's no deadline for your mourning and at some point in this process, the time will come when you're ready to say goodbye--at your own convenience.

4) For the newly widowed person, you may be facing some legal and financial obligations and decisions--and that alone can be daunting, while you're not even done with your grief.

But since this is about your future, try your best to deal with this stuff, taking it one step at a time--so as not to drain you both physically and emotionally.

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Snow Falls...Memories Return

By Dominic Murgido

Fresh fallen snow, white and silent as it accumulates outside my window.

She made me look at snow in a whole new different way. We were in college and it snowed. She decided to walk away from the shoveled path into the adventure of the drifts of snow that was around campus. I followed only to have the time of my life. We jumped through the snow, chased each other in the snow, made snow angels, threw snowballs at each other, made a snow man, and wrestled in the snow. When it was all said and done, I carried her in the snow. It's what she wanted all along. We laughed. We then headed indoors for warmth and some hot chocolate.

Those were the days...

We fell in love, got engaged, and then married and our times in the snow continued.

We went sledding, continued to build snowmen, and the occasional snow ball battle was not out of the question.

We loved to take walks in the snow while it was snowing to try to catch the snowflakes on our tongues and on a moonlit night even better, so silent and illuminated. A stroll in the snow during Christmas was extra special with all of the holiday lights aglow.

Watching the snow now brings back these wonderful memories. I treasure these memories. And as it snows, whenever it snows, I reflect on past times of our beginnings as well as our entire life together.

Snow and winter makes me remember.

Perhaps the fall brings back memories for you; walks among the fallen leaves around a lake. Or maybe the summer and time spent on a beach or on a vacation together. We all have triggers that allow us to remember happier times and are grateful that we experienced them with the one we love.

It was a great life I had with her, one that ended way too soon. Without her and her time with me, my life would not be as rich as it is today.

