

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE  
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

# sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter



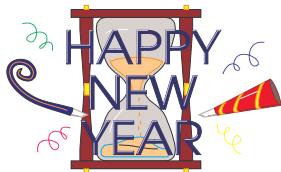
THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED  
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## Welcome from the Editor



New Year, New You? Begin the New Year with a positive attitude. You are not alone on this grief journey that has become part of your life. Many others have been there and are still there and you can find them at bereavement support groups in your area.

If this is the first time you have heard about us and are in need of some help through our support group chapters, please see page three in the right margin for additional information about our five chapters. We also have a list of other resources on page two in the left margin that may be helpful to you. A Face book page is also available, please check that out. This newsletter is available to anyone anywhere regardless of their specific loss so if you know of someone that can benefit from these pages, please contact us with their email or address information and we will make sure that they become part of our mailing list for future publications. You may also contact the editor/founder directly at 717-866-2401 or sudspirit@gmail.com.

### In this issue:

Our feature story this quarter is on Forgiveness. Our editor attended the Circle of Life Coalition's Annual Conference this past Fall and the theme was on Forgiveness and Mindfulness. [www.circleoflifecoalition.org](http://www.circleoflifecoalition.org) It is interesting to learn how much we harbor inside when we don't include "forgiveness" in our lives. His take on Forgiveness is provided.

An article on "A Transition to be Celebrated" is shared along with two poems. "How long is this Grieving going to Last" is commented on by Elizabeth Harper Neeld as she describes two different kinds of time. We begin our first issue of 2015 with a reminder of our Mission Statement.

**sudSSpirit** was founded in 2008 to help provide a place of comfort, compassion, and hope for those that have experienced a sudden unexpected death of their spouse or significant other. Meetings are held monthly in Reading, PA, Etters, PA, Dover, PA, Lebanon, PA and Bennington, VT. All meetings are Free and No registration is required. Additional information is within this newsletter. **sudSSpirit** stands for "Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph"

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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## Quarterly Quote

- Editor

*"None of us knows  
what might happen  
even the next  
minute, yet still  
we go forward.  
Because we trust.  
Because we have  
Faith."*

- Paulo Coelho,  
Brida

## Thoughts to Ponder

- Editor

"Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one."

- Brad Paisley

"It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it."

- Lou Holtz

"Understanding is the first step to acceptance, and only with acceptance can there be recovery."

- J.K. Rowling,  
Harry Potter and the  
Goblet of Fire



## Lost by Shani Sutton

I lost my soul mate, he was taken from me one terrible day, without him by my side I have lost my way. That was the plan for him to go live in heaven among the angels above, I just hope that he is showered in their love. I, on the other hand am wandering lost through each day, not knowing just how to handle him being gone this way. I pray for guidance and ask for a message to be passed down the line, that when its my turn to go he will be the first one I will find. But until that time comes to pass, my love for my Jason will always last. One last thing before this poem concludes, make sure that you keep the one that you love so close to you. I say this because tomorrow is never guaranteed, then this poem describes precisely the place you will be.

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Together we can help each other heal



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## Resources

- Editor

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

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

St Joseph's Spiritual Care  
www.thefutureofhealthcare.org  
610-378-2297

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  
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

Pathways Center for Grief & Loss  
www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org  
800-924-7610

Lutheran Home Care & Hospice  
www.lutheranhomecare.org  
610-320-7979



## Forgiveness by Dominic Murgido

The beginning of the New Year can be daunting for anyone. Society encourages us to look closely at ourselves and chart a plan of action towards improvements with resolutions and real goals to become a better person. For most of us resolutions made become resolutions lost.

People tend to hold onto things that anger them. And this feeling, for some of us, stays with us a long time. We hold on to it. We keep it in our minds. We never let it go. We hurt from it and we will not be the same because of it. We can't forgive ourselves or apply forgiveness for the reason of our anger or discontent. "Forgiveness" can be a New Year's resolution; one that *can* be kept.

Losing a loved one can produce anger, disappointment, resentment, and even hatred for a situation or a person or even a business. And these feelings can run the spectrum. From being a little bothered to an intense anger, we can become full of rage against the subject of our discontent.

You can be angry at the person that has died for many reasons; one being that you are now alone without them. It is now up to you to continue on raising children, paying bills, trying to keep the house, and maintain the sanity that is left within you.

You can be angry at the medical profession for not saving or doing enough to save your loved one. From the actual hospital and staff to those that are still searching for a cure of a disease.

You can be angry at your loved one's organs that failed them; heart, lungs, kidneys, brain.

You can be angry at a business or employer that was responsible for the death due to negligence or unsafe practices.

You can be angry at your own religious and spiritual beliefs including your God. You can be angry at family and friends. You can be angry at an individual that you believe was directly related to the death of your loved one.

You can be angry at yourself for not knowing or realizing or being able to control something that you wish you could have controlled even though reality dictates that it was totally out of your control.

All of this anger is bad for you and in most cases being angry will not change the situation that has occurred. Not forgiving breeds anger, hostility, and hatred. Being angry and not forgiving will allow you to continue living in the past and not being current to the present

day. I know. I've been there. You don't even know that you are angry and are filled with hatred because it is so much inside you and part of your being. You just know you are not yourself and it hurts and you see so much of life around you in a depressed and sad way. It's not an easy task to forgive. As C.S. Lewis once said; "Everyone says that forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive".

It took me a long five years to forgive the one person responsible for my wife's death. Afterwards, I reflected on the time I wasted *not forgiving*. And it is not just something that you just do. You have to believe in yourself and your true feelings and you have to want to do it. Holding onto anger and distaste keeps you angry and depressed about what happened to your loved one and concentrating on that all the time prevents you from living again. I felt it was time to move forward and become whole again. I was so tired of not feeling right about me or my life. Once done, you can begin to move ahead a little at a time and build your life again.

I never thought I would forgive but I realized how not forgiving was destroying who I am and who I wanted to be. I did not like that I was angry and resentful to the world. I started to understand that being that way was keeping me stalled in life's path. I needed to move forward and become free again to do and choose what I wanted. Staying angry kept me confined and uncomfortable with myself and the world around me.

Forgiveness opens your world with possibilities of living again without the burden of the past holding you back. You will feel "lighter" and more at ease to move forward. You will look at life through the eyes of hope instead of despair.

So as we begin a new year let's look for hope and faith in ourselves and select "Forgiveness" as a New Year's resolution for whatever we need to forgive. I know you will feel better about yourself and the life that surrounds you. Happy New Year

### An Entry From My Journal

"Every New Year provides me with an opportunity to get a little bit better being the person I am and the person I want to eventually be."  
-Editor





## A Transition to be Celebrated by Ellen Perry Berkeley



I'm celebrating. Maybe you've experienced the same journey that has caused me to celebrate.

If so, happy days to all of us. If not, just wait a bit. Here's what happened. Ever since my husband died, in 2009, I've driven alone to destinations no further than an hour away.

Why? Perhaps I've worried about being sad, with memories of how much we enjoyed life and each other, at places I'd now be visiting alone. Perhaps I've worried about getting lost, with no passenger to watch for signs and turns. Perhaps I've worried about being stranded, with my 2002 Saab suddenly falling apart, along the way.

Whatever the reasons, and they don't entirely make sense, I've missed many a gathering. Then I just couldn't skip one -- a presentation in Grafton, Vermont, about the Colonial meetinghouses in New England: both their architecture and their importance in the community. (I studied architecture, years ago, and I've written extensively about architecture; I was a Senior Editor of the professional journal *Architectural Forum* before we moved to Vermont.)

As this event approached, I began the page that Roy and I often prepared -- "Go" on one side, "No Go" on the other. Each of us would briefly list the factors we considered important, no matter which side we thought we favored. The decision soon made itself, leaving us free of the later bickering we saw in other couples, as one spouse blamed the other for a decision that hadn't worked out well.

My "No Go" side had more entries than my "Go" side, but I was already consulting a map, seeing that Grafton was almost two hours away. I had phoned the Grafton Inn that we loved -- a delightful place in a delightful town -- learning that they were full (of course) on this Saturday during leaf season. But I was already filling a canvas bag with everything needed for an overnight elsewhere, if I got tired. Then I was in my car, arriving just before the afternoon event began.

What happened on the road was more than surprising. It was stunning.

Instead of sadness and a sense of loss, I felt only a soft happiness. I drove past many places that Roy and I had been to, and I recalled our many pleasures at these places. I smiled non-stop. Even the dirt road into Grafton brought sweet recollections. Fond memories surfaced as I passed the historic mansion I had written about for *Vermont Life* (Roy had done the photographs);

the motel where the New England chapter of an intelligence organization of Roy's had held a weekend meeting; the library where Roy had calmed me for a talk I was soon giving. On and on it went. A new restaurant where we had eaten and I had then written about for *Vermont Magazine*. A beautiful meadow where we had always chuckled to see a single black sheep among the herd. A roadside pull-out where we had savored an impressive view and exchanged words that are still with me. The parking lot of an attractive inn where we had changed drivers. The excellent buffet where we had binged on rare desserts.

On this trip by myself, I thought of nothing but these lovely experiences. I felt only gratitude -- that my life had been blessed by Roy's presence in it.

Days later, I am still marveling at this journey of mine. Not just the road trip to and from Grafton. No, I had suddenly moved decisively into my new life, without Roy. And I can see that this will be a good life. The day in Grafton was fun.

I have a sense of triumph at having reached a new stage in the grieving process. I have a slight sense of guilt, too, because I was alone and it was OK. Roy would understand, though. He would be glad for me.

Grief has many stages. I'm just surprised that this jump of mine took me by surprise.

*The author is a long-time and grateful member of our sudSSpirit group in Bennington, VT.*



### Book Review - Editor

#### Healing a Spouse's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Husband or Wife Dies

*by Alan D. Wolfelt, Phd.*

A helpful and insightful book with short chapters and sound advice to help those learn to cope and find continued meaning in life after the loss of a spouse.

The author provides practical suggestions on mourning well with compassion and care and offers hope on living and loving well again. Alan Wolfelt is well known and highly read in grief circles nationwide. This is a great book to read and pass along to others.

### sudSSpirit

Bereavement Support Group currently meets monthly in **five** locations:

**Berks Chapter**, Reading, PA.  
4<sup>th</sup> Wed. of the month 6 PM  
Exeter Library

**Cumberland Chapter**,  
Etters, PA.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. of the month 7 PM  
Fishing Creek  
Salem U.M. Church

**York Chapter**,  
Dover, PA.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mon. of the month 6 PM  
Dover Area Community  
Library

**Bennington Chapter**,  
Bennington, VT  
4<sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month 6 PM  
Bennington Library

**Lebanon Chapter**,  
Annville, PA  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tues. of the month 6 PM  
Annville Free Library

For additional information, please check our facebook page or email:

[sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com)

- Reading, Lebanon and York, PA

[lmurray2@comcast.net](mailto:lmurray2@comcast.net)

- Etters, PA

[sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com)

- Bennington, VT

or phone:

717-866-2401 - Reading, Lebanon and York, PA

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

802-441-5562

- Bennington, VT

- Editor





## How Long is this Grieving Going to Last?

by Elizabeth Harper Neeld, Ph.D.

I don't think you ever get over the loss in your heart. I think you have to acknowledge the fact that, when you love someone and that person is gone, you're going to miss him or her. And that has nothing to do with your spiritual strength or trust or even with whether you've been true to your grieving. It's a perfectly human thing to continue to miss [someone] who has died. When Christmastime comes, Christmas Eve, and there's no Cliff who's going to walk in the door with a big sack of presents and say, "Hi, Mom!" I have a hard time.

But there's no agonizing over Cliff now. There is peace and a quiet calmness. Dean and I are comfortable with the situation. If something beautiful happens or we're somewhere Cliff would have been with us, we'll say, "Hi, Cliff, wish you could see this...how's it going, ol' boy?" Something like that, but it's not heavy. (Excerpt from *Seven Choices* by Elizabeth Harper Neeld).

We feel so bad when we are grieving that it is not a surprise when we wonder, "How long will I have this terrible pain? Will this suffering ever end?"

To talk about this, we need to think about two kinds of time.

There is chronos time.

This is the kind of time measured by a calendar. Chronos time is counted in days, weeks, months, years. Chronos time describes a continuum of past, present, and future. It is the kind of time measured by clocks. A simple way to talk about chronos is as physical time.

Then there is kairos time.

Kairos time refers to "the time within which personal life moves forward." The movement we experience as a result of moments of awakening or realization measures Kairos time. Kairos time refers to a deepening process that results from our paying attention to the present moment, a process through which we are "drawn inside the movement of our own story." Kairos is an ordered but unmeasured kind of time outside space-time.

We might be tempted to measure the time of our grieving in chronos time. "Oh, it's been a year—four seasons have passed—I should be ok by now." Someone may suggest, "Give yourself a few months. You'll feel like yourself again." But it is not useful to measure our grieving in chronos time. In fact, chronos time is helpful only in that it

gives us a span within which to experience our own kairos time. To think that because a certain amount of time has passed we should be farther along in our grieving is to set up a false measure of how well we are going. The mere passing of days and weeks and months and years does not within itself bring integration of our loss.

What matters is kairos time. What insights have I had? What have I realized? What meaning am I making of this terrible loss? We each have our own "entelechy"—to use a term from anthropology—that means our own "immanent force controlling and directing development."

The amount of calendar time it takes to reach integration in our grieving is determined by our own kairos time, through our own entelechy. That's why is no right or wrong amount of time an individual should take to grieve.

All that being said, what else can we note about time and grieving?

From my own experience and from the research I've done for decades on the grieving process, I can say this: the amount of time each of us takes to reach integration of our loss is usually longer rather than shorter.

What do I mean by this?

That the amount of kairos time it takes each of us to reach a place where the loss is integrated into our lives but does not dominate our lives is longer than "the person on the street" might suggest. Many folks around us would like for the process to be shorter rather than longer because they are not comfortable with the whole experience of grieving. As a society, we have cultural practices that suggest grieving

should be short. (Don't, for instance, many government workers get three days off when they lose a family member?)

The good news is that healthy grieving does result, at the time right for each of us, in an experience of integration. We take stock and say: I am changed by our loss, and I have changed my life as a result of my loss. And we are not shriveled permanently like a dry stick because of our loss. We can feel alive again...probably wiser, maybe quieter, certainly full of gratitude and a desire to contribute from what we have been through.

And all in good time. All in good kairos time.

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## Winter's Beauty

by John Kreiser

Snowflakes falling to the ground  
 Winter's beauty all around  
 Trees encased in pearly white  
 All of nature shining bright  
 Children sledding down a hill  
 Laughing as they take a spill  
 Building snowmen in the yard  
 Packing snow until it's hard  
 Overstuffed clouds hide the sun  
 Ground and sky are joined as one  
 Nighttime shines as bright as day  
 Gloom and darkness chased away

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 from the author

## 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.

