

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE  
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



dominicmurgido.com

*sudS* Spirit



Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED IN  
LOVING MEMORY OF...

*My wife, Susan J. Murgido*

*She touched so many lives that have been  
forever changed by her kindness and  
compassion. Her spirit lives within me.*

WINTER 2026

Volume 18, Issue 2

**Welcome** from the Editor



As the calendar turns the page to a new year, 2026 marks twenty years since the sudden unexpected death of my wife, Sue. I did not have a plan B. Most of us don't. But about two years later, I created this bereavement support group to help myself and others like me cope with the loss of their spouse or significant other. Eighteen years later, sudSSpirit continues to be available for those seeking a listening ear, support, and a safe place to talk, listen and learn to live with their grief as they remember their loved one while living their best life.

Time moves on, and change is inevitable. We have to seek out and explore new beginnings, new traditions, new attitudes, and a new us without losing sight of where we came from and the contribution to our lives that our loved one gave us to make us the person we are today.

Social media posts concerning **sudSSpirit** are now on my personal facebook page: [www.facebook.com/dominic.murgido](https://www.facebook.com/dominic.murgido). Please check out my website: [www.dominicmurgido.com](https://www.dominicmurgido.com) for more information.

We also have a list of resources for support inside that may be helpful to you. Additional grief resources, videos, suggested books to read, and past issues of this newsletter can be found at [www.dominicmurgido.com](https://www.dominicmurgido.com). You may also contact the editor/founder directly at 717-866-2401

or [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com)  
or [dmurgido@gmail.com](mailto:dmurgido@gmail.com)  
or [www.dominicmurgido.com](https://www.dominicmurgido.com)

Thank you to those that have been long time supporters of our group such as other grief support groups, churches, social service agencies and the Exeter Community Library. A thank you to all of the past attendees that have been helped and to the current attendees for believing in **sudSSpirit** as a helpful resource to help you in your time of need. **Together, We Can Help Each Other Heal.**



Find your Support  
Pursue your Strength  
Fuel your Spirit  
[www.dominicmurgido.com](https://www.dominicmurgido.com)



## An Entry From My Journal



"I feel so alone. I miss someone to share things with. I look back so many times and realize I didn't share enough when I had someone to share things with. Why?"

-Editor

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## Quarterly Quote

-Editor

"Sometimes we know hope as much by its absence as by its presence- sometimes all I could hope for is that I'll feel more hopeful tomorrow."

**"Healing After Loss,"  
Martha W. Hickman**

-Editor

Together, we can help each other heal



717-866-2401 / [dominicmurgido.com](https://www.dominicmurgido.com)



## Resources

### -Editor

[www.dominicmurgido.com](http://www.dominicmurgido.com)

### St. Joseph's Spiritual Care, St. Joseph Medical Center

[bereavement@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:bereavement@pennstatehealth.psu.edu)  
610-378-2297

### Family Guidance Center

[www.familyguidancecenter.com](http://www.familyguidancecenter.com)  
610-374-4963

### Clear Water Wellness

[www.cwwellness.com](http://www.cwwellness.com)  
610-750-9096

### Greater Reading Mental Health Alliance

[www.grmha.org](http://www.grmha.org)  
610-775-3000

### Diakon/Lutheran Home at Topton

[www.diakon.org/fls/NPLoss.asp](http://www.diakon.org/fls/NPLoss.asp)  
610-682-1337 / 877-342-5667

### Lori Kuhn, RN-BC

#### Grief Recovery Method Specialist

[lorikuhngrms@gmail.com](mailto:lorikuhngrms@gmail.com)  
[www.lorikuhngriefrecovery.com](http://www.lorikuhngriefrecovery.com)  
610-334-9845

### Pathways Center for Grief & Loss

[www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org](http://www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org)  
800-924-7610

<https://www.211.org>

[www.speakinggrief.org](http://www.speakinggrief.org)

[www.save.org](http://www.save.org) (suicide loss)

[www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

[www.grief.com](http://www.grief.com) (David Kessler)

[www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

[www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)  
(bereavement support)

[www.healingenergy.world](http://www.healingenergy.world)



## Forever began twenty years ago

by Dominic Murgido

My forever without you began on just a regular day, when you were killed by a distracted driver who was speeding and ran a red light. When your life stopped, my life came to a standstill. It was a feeling I had never experienced before. From that day forward, a different kind of feeling stayed with me due to your absence in my world.

When you spend thirty years with someone and suddenly and unexpectedly you are left alone when you haven't reached the age of fifty yet, it affects you in ways no one around you will ever understand. The life you took for granted that you would share with the love of your life is no more. Your death came way too soon. The grief journey I am on was not in the plan of my life.

My life these last twenty years has been empty, unfulfilling, and lonely. I have had to learn to live without your love, friendship, companionship, and all those little things that made me love you and the person you were. I have spoken your name out loud and missed you every single day since your departure from this earth and my heart.

Over the years I sought your guidance and advice through prayer, dreams, meditation, and walks along many nature trails. I have felt your presence and received signs that made me realize you were around me and were acknowledging my choices and decisions. That, in itself, made me comfortable, at peace, and delighted to know that the direction I was heading was one of promise and inspiration for myself and to also help others.

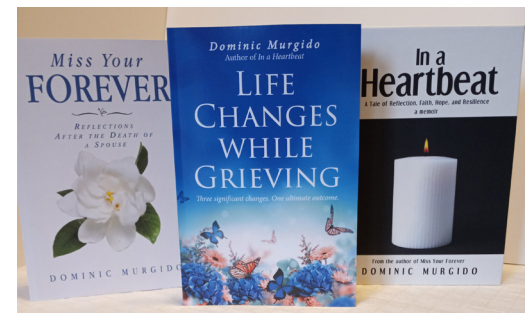
Before these past twenty years without you, I was fortunate to spend thirty with you. I reflect on that time that began on a college campus, getting married, becoming parents, moving many times, making sacrifices, supporting, caring, loving, and enjoying the life we built with

each other. I experienced a joy with you that will never come again in my lifetime.

And so, I go on as does time and the world spinning to bring daylight after every nightfall. I am perhaps one of a million people out here that miss their soulmate every day like I do you. I am grateful and blessed that I not only met you but was able to spend a good part of my life loving you. I miss you and all that was meant to be as we would have shared a longer collective life together.

**I miss your forever when in a heartbeat my life changes while grieving you.**

Susan J. Murgido died  
on January 16, 2006.



## Thought to Ponder

"Sometimes death gives us a sense of urgency adding amplification to the mundane. You want to create more memories, get your fill of life moments, and make sure your loved ones have plenty to remember you by when you are no more."

- "Just  
One Look,"  
Harlan Coben

-Editor



## How to Cope with Grief in the New Year

The start of a new year is often a time for fresh beginnings, celebrations, and setting goals. But if you're grieving the loss of a loved one, the new year can feel like a painful reminder of that absence. Setting goals may seem overwhelming, and the traditions you once held may now feel bittersweet or incomplete. And after the bustle of December holidays, January can feel like a tough downswing in activities and joy. You might be feeling a range of emotions in this new year: defeated, maybe relief, or perhaps a little numb.

If you find yourself in this space, it might help to reimagine traditions and start-of-the-year activities that honor your grief, allow room for healing, and bring moments of comfort and meaning.

Whether you decide to continue beloved traditions, start new ones, or introduce a combination of both, we're here to help you navigate this unfamiliar journey. Think about your beloved traditions. Jot down your answers to the questions below and be curious and kind with yourself about what emerges. Which traditions would you like to continue? How do you want to feel as you continue your traditions? How do you think you will actually feel? Who can you lean on for support as you continue your beloved traditions? How can you adapt or reimagine your traditions to bring you comfort and help you honor the memory of your loved one?

Memories of your loved one will likely arise in the new year, and you may feel like there's an empty space at your New Year's Eve gathering or as you're preparing for a fresh year. Try jotting down your thoughts and feelings in a journal. Or, consider choosing a question from these reflection pages to help you process your feelings about a new year or upcoming meaningful occasions in 2026. Explore these questions from the pages to get you started:

What have you learned about yourself in the last year? In what ways are you stronger? In what ways might you need more support? What is something you can look forward to this season? Do you have any traditions you'd like to modify or release?

Your intention for the new year doesn't have to include a major resolution or huge, stressful goals. Instead, you can set a gentle goal—one that is meaningful to you and includes the memory of your loved one. Consider these questions when setting a gentle goal:

Is your goal attainable in the next year?

Consider a simple goal.

How will you motivate yourself to meet this goal? Consider setting a goal that you are excited about or were planning to do this year anyway. Who can you share your goal with? Who will walk alongside you as you reach toward your goal? Consider inviting a close friend or family member to join you in your goal or to check in with you on your progress.

There is no "right" way to welcome a new year when you're grieving. You have permission to:

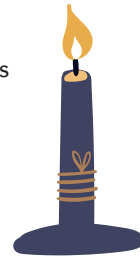
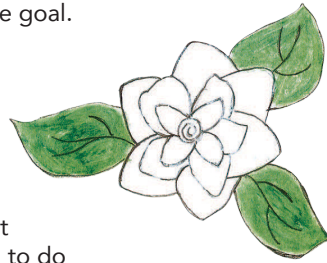
Opt out of events that feel overwhelming. Spend the day quietly in reflection or rest. Create new traditions with trusted friends, family, or yourself that feel nourishing.

And remember, it's okay to experience joy, laughter, and hope—even as you grieve. Grief and joy can coexist.

Grief doesn't have an end date, but reimagining traditions and setting goals can honor your loved one as you continue forward in your life. Remember to be gentle with yourself. This year, you may feel ready to reimagine traditions and set gentle goals, or maybe you simply need to move through each day and take care of yourself without adding anything new to your routine. Wherever you are in your grief journey, know that your feelings are valid and healing takes time.

*Editor Note: Article edited for length and clarity.*

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**forgrief.com**



### BELLS OF THE NEW YEAR

Another year has come and gone.  
Time does not wait, it travels on.  
This chapter closed, we turn the page;  
remembering all we've lost and gained.

Let's raise our hearts, and turn to face  
the dawning light of this new day.  
May courage be the song we sing  
as hopeful bells of the new year ring.

—John Mark Green



**sudSSpirit**  
**Bereavement**  
**Support Group**  
**meets monthly.**

Exeter Community Library  
4569 Prestwick Drive  
Reading, PA 19606  
610-406-9431  
berkslibraries.org

\*\*\*

January thru October  
4th Tues. of the month 6 PM

November and December  
3rd Tues. of the month 6 PM

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**Additional Information:**  
sudsspirit@gmail.com  
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-Editor





## In Sickness & In Health

by Gabriele D. Hysong

"To love and to cherish, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." When I repeated that vow as a romantic eighteen-year-old bride with the world at my feet, I didn't fully understand the significance of those words. Now I do.

John and I exchanged our marriage vows on a cold January day after a whirlwind courtship. A hopeless romantic, madly in love, I said yes to his proposal of marriage only six weeks after we had met. It just seemed like the natural thing to do. I couldn't imagine spending my life without him. And so, a traditional wedding inaugurated our May – December marriage. John was twenty years older than me. We were going to spend years of wedding bliss together.

There were new worlds to explore and experience. John taught me to appreciate the "Big Band" sound, and I showed him the finer points of rock 'n roll. A stroll through the park, a candlelight dinner, a drive through the country— these were small delights that

reinforced my conviction that I had been right about marriage.

John was kind and generous, strong and wise. He had all the qualities I lacked. Because my dear husband was someone whom I depended on dearly, I knew that he would shelter and protect me just as my parents had when I was a child. I gladly deferred all major decisions to him.

After several contented years, though, my idealized romantic world came crashing down around me. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a devastating respiratory illness, took its place.

My world was now filled with hospitals, intensive care units, oxygen tanks, potent medications, with destructive side effects, and most of all, John's total dependence on me. I spent agonizing hours in emergency waiting rooms hoping for some word from a doctor who would tell me that my husband would be strong and healthy again. But no such word came. John was very seriously ill. The pillar of strength, on whom I had leaned for so long, now crumbled.

John, his once strong and muscular body

now emaciated, was a prisoner to his bed and oxygen tanks. I tried to continue working full time to keep ahead of the medical and oxygen expenses, but it was a losing battle. Without any care during the day, John's condition grew worse.

So, I made the decision to leave my job and care for him. Unsympathetic social workers told me to place my husband in a nursing home, but I steadfastly refused. The vows I had repeated years ago came rushing back to me, and I knew I was not going to abandon the man who had taken care of me. I now committed my life to the total care of the man I loved.

In the beginning, it was very difficult to provide for John's care. I had crash courses in nursing, pharmacology, and respiratory therapy – all without the benefits of teachers.

I learned and struggled and cried as I went along. There were no second and third shifts to relieve me. I got up at 2 AM and 6 AM to administer medication. I wrestled and changed 100 lb. oxygen tanks, often at night, winding and unwinding tubing so that John could sit in his wheelchair for a few hours during the day.

It was a bittersweet relationship – subordinating my own life to give dignity to a man, now confined to a wheelchair, who had once trained as an Olympic runner. The hard work, the tears, the nights without any sleep, the desperate calls for an ambulance were suddenly an integral part of my life.

But now I understand fully what I promised almost thirteen years ago in a marriage ceremony – "to love and cherish, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part." Holding those memories dear, I now live for today.

P.S. John died after a courageous three-year battle. He died the way he wanted – I climbed into his hospital bed and held him as he took his last breath. I miss him very much.

**Reprinted with permission: Bereavement Magazine, December 1992**

## Book Review

### Bearing the Unbearable

by Joanne Cacciatore, PhD

This book feels like sitting across from someone who finally understands the kind of loss you can't explain—the kind that shakes the foundation of your breathing. There is no rushing your pain here, no polished promises, no neat endings. Instead, the author offers companionship in the dark: gentle words, steady truths, and a quiet reminder that grief is not a malfunction of the heart but proof that it once loved deeply.



Reading this feels like having someone take your trembling hands and say, "Your sorrow is not too heavy for me. Let's carry it together for a while."

A few things learned include:

1. Grief doesn't ask for permission; it remakes you.
2. Love doesn't disappear when someone dies; it changes form.
3. Healing isn't a destination; it's a constant negotiation.
4. Remembering is a courageous act.
5. Pain connects us more deeply than ease ever could.
6. Life after loss is learning how to live with two realities.
7. Grief is love's final devotion.

To grieve is to honor what mattered. It is the heart refusing to pretend that a great love was small or ordinary. In that sense, the ache is not the enemy—forgetting is.

-Editor

