

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



sudS Spirit

dominicmurgido.com

Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED IN
LOVING MEMORY OF...

Manley Victory

SPRING 2026

Volume 18, Issue 3

Welcome *from the Editor*

Spring has sprung! Seasonal changes are good for us. Time for renewal, growth, fresh start, hope, a new attitude, and a vision of looking forward to better days. I love that daylight stays with us longer as the temperature slowly climbs and the flowers bloom, the grass grows, and life moves on for all of us.

I reflect that in Spring of 2008, the first meeting of this grief support group began. It is necessary to acknowledge the eighteen years that we have been helping others in their worst of times. The newsletter began in the Fall of 2008 and continues to provide resources as well as articles that comfort, inspire, encourage, and inform. Every newsletter is available on the website: www.dominicmurgido.com under the sudSSpirit tab.

Social media posts concerning **sudSSpirit** are now on my personal Facebook page: www.facebook.com/dominic.murgido. Please check out my website: 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. You may also contact the editor/founder directly at 717-866-2401 or sudspirit@gmail.com or dmurgido@gmail.com or 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.**



An Entry From My Journal



"A life change. We all experience happy and sad ones, but in the end, we learn something about life and ourselves. Maybe not right away, but eventually there will be a time that matters to us or someone else and it will be due to a life change."

-Editor

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Quarterly Quote

-Editor

"Grief frequently leads to changes in the endocrine, immune, autonomic nervous, and cardiovascular systems; all of these are fundamentally influenced by brain function and neurotransmitters."

-Joan Didion
-Editor

Together, we can help each other heal



717-866-2401 / dominicmurgido.com

Resources

-Editor

www.dominicmurgido.com

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

bereavement@pennstatehealth.psu.edu
610-378-2297

Family Guidance Center

www.familyguidancecenter.com
610-374-4963

Clear Water Wellness

www.cwwellness.com
610-750-9096

Greater Reading Mental Health Alliance

www.grmha.org
610-775-3000

Diakon/Lutheran Home at Topton

www.diakon.org/fls/NPLoss.asp
610-682-1337 / 877-342-5667

Lori Kuhn, RN-BC

Grief Recovery Method Specialist

lorikuhngrms@gmail.com
www.lorikuhngriefrecovery.com
610-334-9845

Pathways Center for Grief & Loss

www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org
800-924-7610

<https://www.211.org>

www.speakinggrief.org

www.save.org (suicide loss)

www.griefshare.org

www.grief.com (David Kessler)

www.opentohope.com

www.unitedway.org

(bereavement support)

www.healingenergy.world



Replacing a watch band

by *Dominic Murgido*

I own two wrist watches. One is a Seiko quartz world traveler that was a gift from my wife, Sue, on my 34th birthday. It has a black face with three dials and can tell you the time anywhere in the world at a glance. It's sleek with a black leather band and at the time of purchase cost more than my monthly car payment. The other is a Timex indiglo that was my father's. It is a simple watch with a white face and large numbers with a brown leather band. I love that by pressing the stem, it lights up the face. It's great when you are in a dark theatre and want to know the time. I took possession of it shortly after his death, which was two months before my wife died.

Watch bands don't last forever, and part of the two-piece band (the one without the buckle) of the Timex came apart. Looking for a watch band isn't that easy anymore. Years ago, they were everywhere and in ample supply with lots to choose from the many countertop spinners they were on in any department or big box store. I went into one store to find a single spinner with watch bands. I guess, when you think about it, most times the replacement watch band or even the battery sometimes is priced more than any simple watch one would buy today, so many people elect to just get another watch.

So, after the purchase, I get the watch band home, and now it is time to replace it. Well, the part that broke was already off, so I had to maneuver the new watch band piece with the small spring tension bar in between the two prongs that come out from the watch face itself. Let's just say this wasn't an easy task. With the small space of where this is attached and my large fingers and thumbs, the tension bar kept flying into the air onto the floor or table I was working on. I was getting frustrated and was thinking I was doing it wrong, but then I thought, there isn't any other way to accomplish this feat.

I pursued multiple times till I started asking for help out loud to my father.

In the blink of an eye, the watch band slid onto the prongs perfectly, making the connection and providing me with a solid contact. I was thrilled, and after all the effort that I had given to making this happen, was thinking twice about how I had the second part of the watch band to replace. The second part (the one with the buckle) was fine and functioned just right. So why go through the hassle of removing it, and then trying to replace with the new piece. They are compatible together to go around my wrist. The difference is they are slightly different styles and shades of brown. But, you know what, I'm good with that, and leaving things like this makes me remember the story behind the replacement and to tell it like I'm doing right now to you.

You see, Dad was around me that day. He felt honored that I kept his watch and wear his watch on occasion, and when I called out to him, he helped me achieve the objective, however small it was. I also believe that he encouraged me to leave it as it is for the very same reason I decided. A mismatched watch band on a simple Timex watch once worn by a father and now his son that tells a story about those that went before us still watch over us and are there for us during any time we need or want them to be.



Marking Milestones

by Leandra Walker

We humans tend to measure our days by predictable events. Holidays like Easter or Passover, special family days like birthdays and anniversaries. Something as personal as "we always went to the beach on THAT weekend." Or something as nationally recognized such as Independence Day - picnics & fireworks together.

When you lose the one you love, those days can be misery. Or they can be a healing reminder of all the wonderful things you shared. It depends on how you plan to face it.

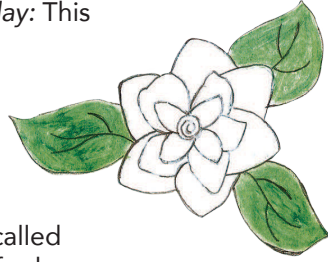
My first difficult milestone was Thanksgiving, shortly after John's memorial service. I had to find some way to get through the holiday with some semblance of grace. Sorry to say, I didn't handle it well. I cried on my way to my family celebration, and cried harder on my way to my in-laws. It was then that I realized that "business as usual" wasn't going to cut it.

The first time through the year without a partner, every significant day is like a knife wound. You know your own style best, but here are some suggestions to help get you through.

Holidays: Take a break from them if you can. Let family know you aren't up to "celebrating" this year. Make plans to do something entirely different from the way you shared the day with your partner, something you find enjoyable. Visit a museum, the zoo, go shopping, go out instead of dinner at home, whatever will make you feel "in charge" and keep the calendar at bay.

Your Birthday: This was a tough one for me. I spent my birthday with friends who didn't know it was my birthday. We had a big dinner and good conversation and I was able to lose myself in the day. One young widow threw herself a party, invited only her closest girlfriends and they took turns giving each other makeovers. OR you could buy something special for yourself and know your partner is watching and approving.

HIS/HER Birthday: This is worse yet. I dreaded it for weeks. Finally, I decided to send John's mother flowers and when she called me, we talked for hours about the good times. That evening, I attended a spiritual discussion group where everyone KNEW it was a tough day and they supported me and didn't mind my tears. Being around people who love you and take care of you is a great way to get through a tough day. For parents, a grief counselor suggested having a party for your spouse that you and your kids can enjoy. A special meal, your partner's photo at the place of honor, a cake with candles the kids can blow out. For older kids, this may be a good time to present them with special keepsakes that belonged to the missing parent. This also gives you a chance to share both your grief and your memories with your children -- they are grieving too, and it's very healing to let them see that, however much you miss someone you love, life continues and that person is always in your heart.



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Thought to Ponder

"Today, in our 'shut up, get over it, and move on' mentality, our society misses so much, it's no wonder we are a generation that longs to tell our stories."

-Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

-Editor



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

Additional Information:
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-Editor



How We Survive

by Mark Rickersby

If we are fortunate,
we are given a warning.

If not,
there is only the sudden horror,
the wrench of being torn apart;
of being reminded that nothing is permanent,
not even the ones we love,
the ones our lives revolve around.

Life is a fragile affair.
We are all dancing
on the edge of a precipice,
a dizzying cliff so high
we can't see the bottom.

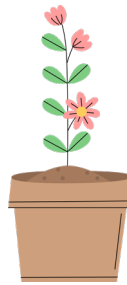
One by one,
we lose those we love most
into the dark ravine.

So, we must cherish them
without reservation.
Now. Today. This minute.

We will lose them or they will lose us
someday.
This is certain.
There is no time for bickering.
And their loss will leave a great pit in our hearts;
a pit we struggle to avoid
during the day and fall into at night.

Some,
unable to accept this loss,
unable to determine
the worth of life without them,
jump into that black pit
spiritually or physically,
hoping to find them there.

And some survive
the shock,
the denial,
the horror,
the bargaining,
the barren, empty aching,
the unanswered prayers,
the sleepless nights
when their breath is crushed
under the weight of silence
and all that it means.



Somehow, some survive all that and,
like a flower opening after a storm,
they slowly begin to remember
the one they lost
in a different way

The laughter,
the irrepressible spirit,
the generous heart,
the way their smile made them feel,
the encouragement they gave
even as their own dreams were dying.

And in time, they fill the pit
with other memories
the only memories that really matter.

We will still cry.
We will always cry.
But with loving reflection more than
hopeless longing.

And that is how we survive.
That is how the story should end.
That is how they would want it to be.

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Mark Rickerby (c)
2011



Reflections

"Sometimes you need to look back and reflect on how you made it so far without your loved one to provide the encouragement and desire to continue forward." -Dominic Murgido

In the last twenty years I...

- Volunteered.
- Attended many support groups.
- Retired from three employers.
- Missed the love of my life every day.
- Became an entrepreneur and learned to roast coffee.
- Cried myself to sleep.
- Started a grief support group and created a newsletter.
- Was comforted by her dog, Hal, and later mourned him.
- Read at least a hundred grief books.
- Slept in more times than I can remember.
- Moved twice and lived in as many states.
- Asked for help from seven therapists.
- Authored three grief related books.
- Purchased two cars alone and became comfortable dining alone.
- Authored my first fiction book.
- Learned to live with loss.
- Did my best to help others in need.
- Found peace within myself to continue forward.

