SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A SPOUSE
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

sudS Spirit

dominicmurgido.com

Quarterly Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED IN LOVING MEMORY OF...

Connie Galdun

FALL 2026 **Volume 19, Issue 1**

Dominic Murgido - Editor

Welcome *from the Editor*

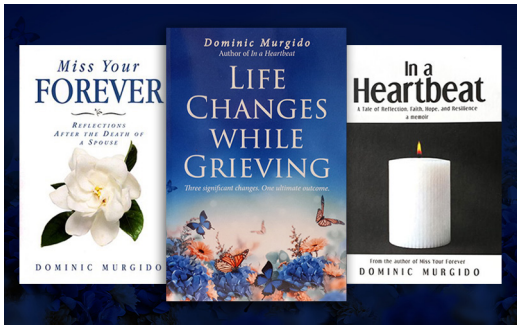
Fall is one of my favorite seasons as it was for my wife, Sue. I have wonderful memories of times spent with her during the Fall that traces back to our college days and continued on throughout our lives together in the many places we called home. And with the amount of time that has passed since her death, those memories bring joy, not tears; a smile, not a frown. Seasons of the year that matter can do that to us, and if any one season still brings you tears, be patient. One day, you will smile and be happy for the memory.

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 sudsspirit@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.***

Find *your* Support
Pursue *your* Strength
Explore *your* Imagination
Fuel *your* Spirit
www.dominicmurgido.com



An Entry From My Journal

"The journey through life is more difficult when you are doing it alone. Not having the one you love with you can be trying – I miss her. Lack of human contact hurts one's soul, one's being."

-Editor

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Quarterly Quote
-Editor

"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

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

Twenty Years of Journaling

by Dominic Murgido

This is hardly the first-time journaling has been mentioned on these pages. The first feature article by yours truly written in the very first issue of this newsletter in 2008 was titled: My Discovery of Journaling. Two years later, in 2010, the same article made a re-appearance due to the amount of interest that it generated. Over the years, many other mentions of journaling were brought up and discussed by other writers that graced this newsletter and all with good cause.

If journaling is something that fits with you, works for you, and has helped you, then you understand the profound difference that it can make in one's life. But it is not for everyone. Some of us can't imagine picking up a pen and putting thoughts down on paper. It's not comfortable to them, and that's ok. Journaling isn't the only option out there to deal with the stress, feelings, emotions, grieving, and expression of sadness.

As for my own situation, I absolutely know that if someone would have encouraged me to "journal" in the beginning of my tragedy explaining the process, I would have been intimidated and rejected the idea from the get-go. At times, unknowingly, it may sound like you need to be a writer to journal correctly. Many times, with the explanation that is given, there is a misconception of it being this formal rigid process outlining dos and don'ts, and that would have sounded like too much work for me during a moment that I needed less time to think and more time to pray. Guess what? There are no rules to journaling. Take it from someone who knows and has been successful at it.

Only days after the tragic death of my wife, Sue, I got out of bed not being able to sleep and went into the spare bedroom (office) and just starting writing what I was feeling on 3x5 cards. After completing a few cards and being exhausted, I went back to bed. That began as a ritual of sorts and I continued doing that because it made me feel better emotionally to write down all that I was experiencing.

By the end of the first year, I had accumulated hundreds of cards. Sharing with a friend what I was doing that was helping me, they said "that's journaling." I found journaling to be a great release of my sadness and depression that I was experiencing with the knowledge that I was now without my wife. It also helped me with the struggle of so many unanswered questions concerning the rest of my life.

This is what twenty years of journaling looks like.

I graduated from 3x5 cards to bound notebooks and journals over the years but have had some inkling to go back to the 3x5 cards on occasion. It really doesn't matter the format, as long as you are putting it down in some fashion. If not hand-writing / printing, perhaps on a tablet, phone, or laptop? Just let it out. Good. Bad. Indifferent. Happy. Sad. All of it is helpful to you in more ways than you know. And the great thing is that your journaling can be totally private to you and only you. You can always go back to your writing and see how you have improved over time with your attitude, thoughts, and disposition of your life. It is like having a gauge of where you've been, where you are, and where you need to be. Progress is something we all like to see in ourselves and combined with our grief experiences our pain will lessen in time.

I started journaling in 2006 without even knowing I was doing it. I continue to journal to this day in 2026. I don't journal as often as I once did, but I continue to find peace and comfort in doing so. At times, my journaling becomes somewhat of a diary of the present or the recall of beautiful memories of times that have passed long ago.

Reflections

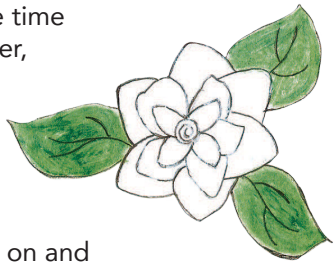
by Dominic Murgido

There are probably only a few of you out there that have done exactly what they thought they were going to do with their lives and maybe are still doing it. For those few, I congratulate you. You have indeed beaten the odds. For most of us, something happened to us personally or professionally that changed the course of events and our path of life. And that change has affected us in ways and means that we are still trying to figure out.

Take my situation. I was living the dream until I wasn't. I lose a loved one suddenly and unexpectedly and find myself in unchartered territory. Everything that was, stayed. Everything that was going to be, didn't.

My life changed in a heartbeat along with my attitude towards life and everything that goes with living. I decided to help myself by helping others. That decision led to new places to live, learning how to do things I've never done before, listening and learning, writing, and a whole lot of self-healing and renewal. I became a new version of myself out of a need and have accepted the unplanned change.

There is a part of the "old me" still buried within that remembers how I once was with the loved one I lost, and I am grateful for the time we had together, however short that time was. I will always be grateful for that.



As time moves on and we get older, we realize that certain events and celebrations in our lives that were once the most important, are not as much anymore. Traditions fade away, as do friends and family sometimes that help mark the end of eras once thought to be everlasting. We come to understand that life as we know it continues to change and evolve, and eventually, we can mark life as it unfolds into chapters.

Chapters are written then read and then end. With the ending of one, another chapter begins. And that is where hope is. The encouragement to move forward with inspiration, new thoughts, ideas, and emotions to become a better you.

Mission Statement

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.

For additional information: **www.dominicmurgido.com**

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Bereavement Support Group meets monthly.

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

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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
dmurgido@gmail.com

717-866-2401
www.dominicmurgido.com

-Editor

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The Grief of Non-Death Losses: Understanding Grief

by Eleanor Haley

Our society seems pretty comfortable with the following if-then logic.

"If there has been a death, then there will be grief."

This logic is easily observed and understood by just about anyone. Take a look at Oxford Dictionary's definition of 'Grief': Deep sorrow, especially that caused by someone's death.

We willingly recognize that when a person dies, it's almost certain someone close to them will grieve. We have a myriad of rituals and etiquette based on this premise, and as loving friends and family, we are poised and ready to offer our support and comfort should it be needed.

With the correlation between death and grief being so blatantly obvious, we often believe we can reverse the logic to assume: "If there is grief, then there has to have been a death."

Now I am horrible at math and all things related. However, I did confirm via this regent's prep website (shout out NY public schools) that in a 'conditional statement' when the second condition (the then statement) is false, the whole statement is false.

And notice our grief definition says grief is caused especially by a death, not exclusively.

If we want to change the statement to make it true, then I think it should read: "If there is grief, then there has been a loss." So why doesn't Oxford choose a more comprehensive yet simpler definition like: Deep sorrow caused by loss.

I have no idea how definitions are determined so I'm just going to assume that a definition of grief without emphasis on the word death seems too unnatural. However, I'm here to prevail upon you that it certainly is not.

Here is how Oxford Dictionary defines 'Loss' (as it pertains to our discussion): The fact or process of losing someone or something. The state or feeling of grief when deprived or something or something of value. A person or thing that is badly missed when lost.

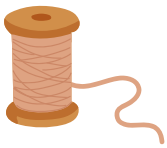
Okay, so now we're getting somewhere.

Society needs to broaden its understanding of loss and grief. There are many kinds of losses capable of evoking a grief response, and these responses vary from person to person and differ in duration, depth, and complexity.

Many types of losses are capable of causing complicated emotions, difficulties in daily functioning, and impairment in one's ability to move forward. These losses are often significant enough to require a decent amount of processing and, just like after a death, grievers often view their lives in terms of before and after the loss. Here's a brief list of events that can evoke feelings of loss and grief:

Illness or Injury, Shift or weakening of the family/support system, Loss of employment or another role, Abuse, Trauma, Exposure to death or trauma, Loss of home, Incarceration, Marital discord, Divorce, Separation, Being the victim of a crime, Mental Illness, Dementia, Serious illness, Infertility, Divorce, Empty nest, Substance abuse, Addiction, Rehabilitation, Life transition, Estrangement

These events can have a profound impact on one's emotional wellbeing. They may cause individuals to experience grief due to loss of security, hopes, dreams, innocence, independence, health and mobility, comfort, community, connection, love, intimacy, immortality, trust, and faith. One may also feel grief due to shifts in their self-perception, identity, purpose, or worldview.



I don't think anyone can fully understand grief until they expand their definition to be inclusive of all types of loss. Especially because many of these losses occur as secondary losses after a death. And it's essential to understanding how dynamic a person's situation becomes when they have multiple losses to reconcile.

Furthermore, new losses can drudge up emotions related to old losses, while old losses can magnify and complicate one's ability to deal with further losses.

And you thought my logic statements were complicated!

Heck, let me complicate things a little further by pointing out that when a person's losses are minimized, unacknowledged, or disenfranchised, they will likely experience:

- A lack of support from friends, family, and society who don't understand the significance of the loss.
- Uncertainty about whether they have the right to grieve.
- Feelings of being misunderstood, unsupported, disenfranchised, etc.
- Harmful avoidance and negative coping, etc.

Unfortunately, many of the circumstances that lead to loss are complicated - job loss, divorce, illness - one needs to navigate paying bills, details, legalities, treatments, etc. Keep swimming, stay afloat, who can worry about anything else?

But we can't always out swim our losses, and leftover feelings of sadness, anger, regret, guilt, and anxiety loom ominously in the dark and murky water. So, we must give ourselves and others the permission to acknowledge and grieve these losses.

Reprinted with permission: whatsyourgrief.com, August 2026

Thought to Ponder

"Everyone is just coming out of some trouble or about to go into some trouble. Every time you look into someone's face, you're looking into a mirror. We're all the same. We're going through life together, sharing this planet. We're human."

-Mira Kirshenbaum

-Editor