

Comforting Friends

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A NATIONAL OUTREACH & SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY A SUICIDE DEATH

2023
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YOUR LOVE GOES WITH ME

YOUR LOVE GOES WITH ME
TODAY AND EVERY DAY

I FEEL IT
WHEN I'M LISTENING
TO THE SONGS THE TREES MAKE
OR THE MUSIC WE LISTEN TO
ON SUNNY SUMMER DAYS.

I FEEL IT
WHEN I LOOK AT
OLD PHOTOS OF YOU.
I HAVE YOUR SAME EYES AND SO MUCH
OF THE SAME OUTLOOK AS YOU.

I FEEL IT
WHEN YOUR OLD RING
CLANGS AGAINST MY HEART,
HANGING FROM A CHAIN
THAT I WEAR EVERY DAY
AND NEVER TAKE APART.

I FEEL IT
WHEN A FAMILIAR SCENT
MIXES WITH MY MEMORIES OF YOU,
THE COLOGNE ON YOUR CLOTHES
AND THE WAY THE SMELL
SHOCKS MY SENSES ANEW.

I FEEL IT
WHEN I EAT YOUR FAVORITE FOODS,
PERCH DINNERS OR PAYDAY CANDY BARS
WHATEVER YOU ARE INTO.

I FEEL IT EVERYWHERE.
I FEEL IT IN EVERYTHING.

IT TRICKLES INTO MY DAYS
IN A MILLION LITTLE WAYS.
YOUR LOVE WILL NEVER BE LOST,
IT COMFORTS AND PERSISTS
AND IT STAYS.

YOUR LOVE GIVES ME STRENGTH.
YOUR LOVE MAKES ME BRAVE.
YOUR LOVE GOES WITH ME
TODAY AND EVERY DAY.



WE HONOR THE LIVES OF OUR
LOVED ONES WHO ARE NO
LONGER PHYSICALLY WITH
US. WE STRIVE TO REMEMBER
THE GOOD MEMORIES WHILE
WE ADJUST TO A DIFFERENT
FUTURE. IN THE EARLY DAYS OF
OUR GRIEF WE LOOK FOR PEOPLE
WHO CAN OFFER US HOPE.

MARILYN KOENIG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Source: I Look to the Mourning Sky ~ A Book of Poems and Writing. Prompts for the Grieving Heart by Liz Newman. Reprinted with permission.

Appreciate Your Transformation

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.



*"Nature does not know extinction;
all it knows is transformation."
~Wernher Braun*

The journey through the grief that follows the death of someone precious to suicide is life-changing. When you leave the wilderness of your grief, you are simply not the same person as you were when you entered the wilderness. You have been through so much. How could you be the same?

I'm certain you have discovered that you have been transformed by your journey into grief. Transformation literally means an entire change in form. Many mourners have said to me, "I have grown from this experience. I am a different person." You are indeed different now. Your inner form has changed. You have likely grown into your wisdom, in your understanding, in your compassion.

Now, don't take me the wrong way. Believe me, I understand that the growth resulted from something you would have preferred to avoid. Though grief can indeed transform into growth, neither you nor I would seek out the pain of grief that comes with a suicide death in an effort to experience this growth. While I have come to believe that our greatest gifts often come from our wounds, these are not wounds we masochistically go looking for. When others offer untimely comments like, "You'll grow from this," your right to be hurt, angry, or deeply sad is taken away from you. It's as if these people are saying that you should be grateful for the death! Of course you're not grateful for the death!

Someone you care deeply about has taken his or her own life. You are totally a changed person. To understand how transformation in your grief occurs, let's explore some aspects of growth in grief.

Growth Means Change

We as human beings are forever changed by the suicide death of someone in our lives. You may discover that you have developed new attitudes. You may be more patient or more sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of others, especially those suffering from loss. You may have new insights that guide the way you live your new life. You may have developed new skills or ways of viewing humankind or the world around you.

You are "new," different than you were prior to the death. To the extent that you are different, you can say you have grown. Yes, growth means change.

Nourishing Your Transformed Soul

Yes, your soul has been transformed by the suicide death of someone you loved. Your soul is not a physical entity: it is everything about you that is not physical — your values, your identity, your memories, even your sense of humor. Naturally, grief work impacts your soul! I often say that grief work is soul work.

In part, nourishing your grieving soul is a matter of surrendering to the mystery of grief. Real learning comes when we surrender: surrender our need to compare our grief (it's not a competition); surrender our self-critical judgments (we need to be self-compassionate); and surrender our need to completely understand (we never will).

There are, of course, many ways to nourish your grieving soul. Here are some that work for me. I nourish my soul...

- * by attending to those things in life that give my life richness and purpose.
- * by trying to fulfill my destiny, by developing my soul's potential.
- * by striving to give back what others have given me.
- * by learning to listen to what is going on around and within me to help me decide which direction I need to go.
- * by having gratitude for family and friends.
- * by observing what is requesting my attention and giving attention to it.
- * by finding passion in ministering to those in grief.
- * by going out into nature and having gratitude for the beauty of the universe.
- * by praying that I'm living on purpose and using my gifts, whether by writing a book, teaching a workshop, or caring for my children.
- * by setting aside time to go into exile and be by myself in stillness.
- * by earning my living doing something I love to do.
- * by going through my own struggles and griefs and realizing that it is working through these wounds that helps unite me with others.

How do you nourish your transformed soul? What

can you do today and each and every day henceforth to pay homage to your transformation? How do you most authentically live your transformed life? These are the questions of your present and future life. It is in honoring these questions that you appreciate your transformation and live the best life you can.

Carrying Your Transformation Forward

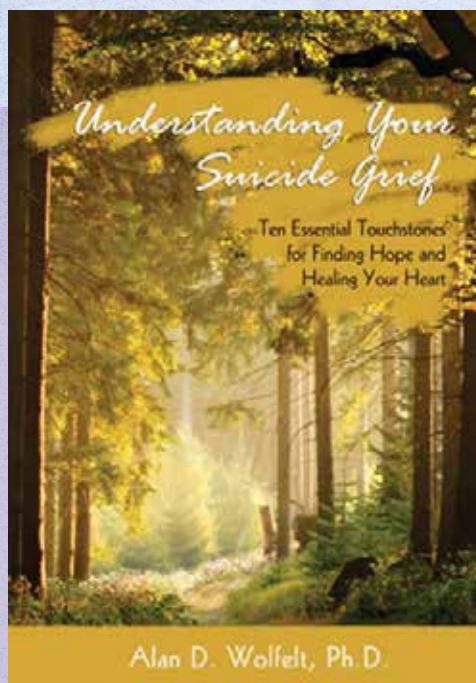
Tomorrow is now. It is here. It is waiting for you. You have many choices in living the transformation that grief has brought to your life. You can choose to visualize your heart opening each and every day. When your heart is open, you are receptive to what life brings you, both happy and sad. By "staying open," you create a gateway to your healing.

When this happens, you will know that the long nights of suffering in the wilderness have given way to a journey towards dawn. You will know that new life has come as you celebrate the first rays of a new light and new beginning. Choose life!

As you continue to experience how grief has transformed you, be open to the new directions your life is now taking. You have learned to watch for trail markers in your continued living. Listen to the wisdom of your inner voice. Make choices that are congruent with what you have learned on your journey. Say "YES" to life and "NO" to suicide. Bless you.

Source:
Excerpt from
Touchstone Ten,
*Understanding
Your Suicide Grief*
– *Ten Essential
Touchstones for
Finding Hope
and Healing Your
Heart* by Alan D.
Wolfelt, Ph.D.

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Support

RESOURCES

Friends for Survival

www.friendsforsurvival.org

Phone: (916) 392-0664

Toll Free: (800) 646-7322

If you are in crisis and need immediate help, call the 24-hour National Crisis Line:

"988"

Alliance of Hope

Survivor services including a 24/7 on-line community forum
www.allianceofhope.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

Extensive lists of available meeting support www.afsp.org/find-support

Bereaved Parents of the USA

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

www.save.org

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

For service members, veterans, and their families: www.taps.org

The Compassionate Friends

For bereaved parents of a deceased child: www.compassionatefriends.org

The National Center for Grieving Children & Families

The Dougy Center
www.dougy.org/grief-resources

**SACRAMENTO
COUNTY**

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