

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2022

JANUARY



KISSES FROM HEAVEN

by John Read

Snowflakes are kisses from Heaven
Silently falling, when your world seems grey.
A gentle kiss, that brushes your cheek
Then lovingly melts away.

Those precious little gifts that fall
Are kisses, from an angel above.
To let you know, they are missing you
A snowflake is a sign of their love.

Each snowflake that falls around you
Are from loved ones, no longer here.
Each snowflake, is a gentle reminder
That the one you love is still near.

Yes snowflakes are kisses from Heaven
From an angel, who remembers and weeps.
A million little loving kisses
Turning to tears, as they touch your cheek.

January: In the January 1 entry of the book, *365 Days of Understanding Your Grief*, Dr. Alan Wolfelt writes: "As long as I work on mourning my grief openly and authentically, this year will be one of momentum and positive personal growth and healing." Great advice and I encourage you to join us as we share our grief, discuss what helps and support each other.

As we enter our 39th year of service to suicide loss survivors, watch for new virtual and in-person meetings this year, as well as special virtual events and webinars.

I would like to wish the newly bereaved grace and patience - patience with yourself in the weeks ahead. To those of you whose loss is further out and wonder how long this goes on, I also wish you patience to continue to work through your grief with the knowledge that grief softens with time.



Gratefully,
Marilyn Koenig
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Support

GROUP MEETINGS

Go to our website, click on **Upcoming > Meetings**. Find your virtual meeting date and time, click on **"Register."** On this same page, you can also check for updates regarding in-person meetings.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

Second Monday

January 10 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

Fourth Wednesday (holiday date change)

January 26 @ 7pm PST / 10pm EST

Grieving Moms Groups (2)

#1 January 6 @ 6:30pm PST / 9:30pm EST

#2 January 27 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

Grieving Spouse & Partner

January 13 @ 6pm PST / 9pm EST

IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

Due to health protocol, please call to confirm meetings. 916-392-0664 or 800-646-7322

Cameron Park, CA

Tuesday, January 11 @ 6:30pm

Faith Episcopal Church

2200 Country Club Dr., Cameron Park CA

Carmichael, CA

Tuesday, January 18 @ 7pm

Carmichael Presbyterian Church

5645 Marconi Ave., Sacramento, CA

Jackson, CA

Tuesday, January 4 @ 3:30pm

Sierra Wind Wellness & Recovery Center

10354 Argonaut Lane, Jackson CA

Lincoln, CA

Thursday, January 13 @ 6pm

Lincoln Public Library

485 Twelve Bridges Drive, Lincoln, CA

Modesto, CA

Monday, January 17 @ 7pm

The Bridge Covenant Church (Riverbank)

2201 Morrill Road, Riverbank CA

Legacy Survivors, UT

Wednesday, January 12 @ 6pm MST

Location TBD

WEBINARS: Available to watch anytime: FriendsForSurvival.org > Upcoming > Webinars

what happens after christmas?

by Mauryeen O'Brien



"I spent a lot of energy anticipating and dreading the holidays," Chris told me over the phone one evening last week. "I pushed myself to be with people, even though I did not want to be.

I even shopped for presents and decorated the house as I had always done before

Jim died. I guess it was not as bad as I

thought it would be – though I have to tell

you it wasn't great. But now I am wondering,

what happens after Christmas? What happens to me now

that there aren't a lot of people visiting me, there are fewer

distractions, and there is much less running around? What

happens now that I've worn myself out physically and emo-

tionally trying to cope with the pain of my Christmas without

Jim? How can I get through these next few months?"

Chris's questions are very familiar to those going through separation pain due to the death of a loved one.

We certainly cannot change the nature of the winter that is upon us. No matter what we do, there will be days with fewer hours of sunlight. It will be cold, and snow and ice may well keep us inside more than we would like. Though none of that can be changed, what we can have completed control over is "slowing down" in mind and in body and giving ourselves some time to heal from the pain of loss.

Winter is, in itself, a "slow" time. Life seems to come to a halt for a while; trees are bare and new life is dormant under snow-covered earth. There is a quiet that hangs on the air. It can be in the quietness, in this slow-paced expectancy of a spring that will eventually come, that we can begin to open ourselves to the gentle prodding of beginning a new life. But to do that, we must indeed "slow down."

We can truly do something with these days after Christmas. They can be quiet times in which we can work at our healing and growth. The healing will never be perfect, and there will always be scars, because love has the capacity to leave scars. But the scars can produce a growth beyond just survival.

The growing may be difficult. Indeed, the grieving was and is. But as nature survives the winter and moves into the freshness of a new spring, we, too, can use this time before us to begin to nurture ourselves, listen to our inner yearnings, and realize that this time can be put to growth. What happens after Christmas? We take the time to pay attention to ourselves and to the possibility of using the cold dreary months, as nature does, to begin to heal and grow. Spring always follows winter no matter how harsh the winter has been. So, too, can strength follow suffering, if we try to work through the suffering to new life.

crying

by Paul Cox, Author of *"When Suicide Comes Home - A Father's Diary and Comments"*

I believe it is as important for a man to feel masculine as it is for a woman to feel feminine. Society, and maybe genes, teach us from the time we are born that boys don't cry. When Heber died, I was unable to weep for the first few hours. It was only after everyone had gone home and we were alone in our bedroom that my tears began to flow. Even during the funeral I did not cry. I wanted to. I wished I could, but I could not. I was in public. Of all the crying I have done in the time since his death, I only actually cried in public once. The incident came on so unexpectedly and was so powerful that I could not stop the tears.

Crying is good for the soul. Whenever I have had a session of tears, especially when I've cried my heart out, I have felt much better when finished. It feels like a poison has been purged. When the grief caused "poisons" build up to critical levels, more weeping once again purges them. It functions like a safety valve continually releasing excess pressure. I realized that when I cried, which was often, I cried for me as much as for him. Sometimes I cried that he was gone and the awful mind set that led to his death. Other times I knew I was crying for me and my terrible loss. He taught me to weep. Weeping is not a sign of weakness. Weeping imparts strength.

Order a free copy of Paul's book from our website: friendsforsurvival.org/shop



The Nurturing of Nature

WHENEVER I FEEL THE MOST ALONE, THE MOST ISOLATED FROM LIFE, I'VE LOOKED AROUND AND REALIZED THAT WE ARE NEVER, EVER ENTIRELY ALONE. WHENEVER I'VE WONDERED ABOUT THE REASONS FOR LIVING, I'VE GOTTEN ANSWERS FROM OTHER FORMS OF LIFE SURROUNDING US, WHICH NEVER QUESTION WHY. NATURE GIVES US ONLY REASONS TO GO ON - NEVER REASONS TO GIVE IN.

SOURCE: "FROM A HEALING HEART" BY SUSAN WHITE-BOWDEN



Message from A Teardrop

by Orrie Snyder, RN, BS, MA

A tiny tear slid slowly down a flushed and burning cheek. It fell, unheeded, to the hard surface of the window ledge where it lay alone, completely unnoticed and hardly visible. "Oh, Thank Heaven," breathed the little teardrop. "I've waited so long to be free! So many months have passed...months of terrible pain and gripping grief. But all the pressures of shame and anguish kept me locked up tight inside the duct of tears."

The little teardrop waited. Maybe more tears would come. It was so quiet, as though the whole world was hushed in silent anticipation. The soft glow of the moon reflected in its silver light from an unseen sun. It sent its beams, like outstretched hands, to permeate the darkness of the night. Then, out of the darkness, one little moonbeam began to spread itself across the window ledge, gently caressing the little teardrop until it began to sparkle in the light.

"Oh, moonbeam!" cried the teardrop. "Why do people try so hard to hide us? Why are they so ashamed to show their tears? We are their friends. We were created to cleanse, to soothe and help to heal their hurts. We were made to be a release, a help to free the soul from pent-up pain. For all those emotions, whether fear or joy, hurt or anger, pain of loss or loss of hope...whatever the feelings, we are there to help. Sometimes we release tears of laughter, of sheer joy, surprise or great relief. At other times, we flow with tears of pain or agonizing grief. Whenever emotions reach a depth to touch the tender soul, or pressures build as if to crush the spirit, we are there. We share in empathy, the pain of other hurting souls. We release our tears of thanks for awesome things of beauty...like a breathtaking scene, a sunset, a memory, or a song. Yet people seem afraid to free one tiny telltale tear. They hold us back, keeping us from our divine purpose, keeping us from helping them. They say that it is weak to cry, yet so many times truth can be revealed and strength renewed through the flow of human tears."

The moonbeam softly embraced the little teardrop, causing it to twinkle with emotion. "Being afraid to cry is almost like being afraid to laugh," the teardrop continued. "There are times when giddy humor fills the soul with glee, yet lips are sealed, pressed tight with hands that hold the laughter in. The pressure builds until it bursts and peels of laughter fill the room. Oh,

what relief it is! To laugh with freedom and release that inner joy. God gave us tears and He gave us laughter. Both are good, and both are so needed for a healthy soul."

The moonbeam and the teardrop rested. Sitting there on the window ledge overlooking the tranquil valley, they felt a quiet peace. Then the little teardrop spoke again. "Moonbeam...you travel all over the world. You can bring your light into the smallest, darkest corners. You carry the message from the sun. You let us know it is there and still watching over us, even through the darkest nights. Would you also carry a message from me? I know I am only one little teardrop, but I can speak for tears all over the world. Would you let people know it's okay to cry...that it is really good for them? Tears are a healing salt. They are sent to wash the soul and soothe the aching pains of grief. They can flush out anger and all those hidden emotions that stress the mind and heart. They can bring relief as welcome as rain in summer's awful heat. And when the daylight comes and friends are near, people need not be afraid to cry. For others need to know. They need to learn and understand. For one day sure, they too will need the healing touch of tears."

Suddenly, the silence of the night was broken with a loud and wailing cry. More tears began to fall. The little puddle on the window ledge glowed softly in the night. Gradually, the sobbing stilled. Then, out of the silence, was heard these words...

"Oh thank you, thank you, Lord above. Thank you for your caring love. Thank you for the tears to weep and soothe my soul so I can sleep. Thank you for my new-found peace, and for the tears that brought release."

Orrie Snyder, RN, BS, MA was a special education nurse in Sacramento, California and author of "The Sun Can Shine Again," a profoundly moving story of her son, his battle with bi-polar disorder, the harrowing experience of his prison incarceration and the pain that led to his death by suicide. We were honored to have Orrie serve on our Board of Directors at Friends for Survival, Inc. Her book can be found here on Amazon here: <https://www.amazon.com/Sun-Can-Shine-Again/dp/1579210066>

The Afterloss Credo

by Barbara LesStrang



I need to talk about my loss.
I may often need to tell you what happened –
or to ask you why it happened.
Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself
face the reality of the death of my loved one.
I need to know that you care about me.
I need to feel your touch, your hugs.
I need you just to be *with* me.
(And I need to be with you.)
I need to know you believe in me and in my
ability to get through my grief in my own way.
(And in my own time.)
Please don't judge me now –
or think that I'm behaving strangely.
Remember I'm grieving.
I may even be in shock.
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.
I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before.
Don't worry if you think I'm getting better
and then suddenly I seem to slip backward.
Grief makes me behave this way at times.
And please don't tell me you "know how I feel,"
or that it's time for me to get on with my life.
(I am probably already saying this to myself.)
What I need now is time to grieve and to recover.
Most of all, thank you for being my friend.
Thank you for your patience.
Thank you for caring.
Thank you for helping, for understanding.
Thank you for praying for me.
And remember, in the days or years ahead,
after your losses - when you need me
as I have needed you - I will understand.
And then I will come and be with you.

The AfterLoss Credo is from the book, "AfterLoss, A Recovery Companion for Those Who Are Grieving." Visit www.afterloss.com for more resources and information.

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:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

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 Nat'l Center for Grieving Children & Families

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



*This program is funded in part by the Division
of Behavioral Health Services through the
voter approved Proposition 63, Mental Health
Services Act (MHSA).*

Friends for Survival, Inc.
P.O. Box 214463
Sacramento, CA 95821-4463

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sacramento, CA
Permit No. 230



No longer reading our newsletter?

Please discontinue by contacting
us: info@friendsforsurvival.org or
916-392-0664

