

# Comforting Friends

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

2022  
FEBRUARY



## LITTLE THINGS

by Terry Kettering

Little things set it off - the clouds and the rain. The big things I think would wound me don't. The little things stab me when I am not looking. And then the storms come.

A hat I bought for you that tumbles from a closet. A picture of us smiling together. A grocery list left in the bottom of a drawer. An anniversary card, saved from years gone by. A song on the radio while driving. A shirt you bought me. A tie you picked out.

It's not the big things I miss so much. It's the little things.

Your infectious giggle. The sound of you washing the dishes in the kitchen. The way you said my name. The way we nestled together like two spoons as we slept. Your voice on the phone at work on a hectic afternoon. The dimple in your cheek when you smiled. Your hand in mine at the movies, even after we were long married.

It's not the big things I miss so much. But all the little ways you touched my heart. They made such a big difference. Their absence leaves a huge hole in my soul.

**February:** I recently was reorganizing our grief library at the office and I became distracted by a few books that I had not read in a while. Opening one of the books, I sat down, reading my notes in the margins and highlighted text and before I knew it, an hour had passed. Revisiting a book that I purchased 24 years ago gave me insight as to where I was then and where I am now. A lot of life has gone on in the past 24 years, but the words in the book are still comforting and timeless.

There are many publications to choose from and we have made several suggestions on our website under Support Resources, Helpful Books. While this is not an exhaustive list, it is a place to start. You can also visit the Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors website ([www.allianceofhope.org/bookstore](http://www.allianceofhope.org/bookstore)) for additional suggestions.



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

February 14 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

### Fourth Wednesday (holiday date change)

February 23 @ 7pm PST / 10pm EST

### Grieving Moms Groups (2)

#1 February 3 @ 6:30pm PST / 9:30pm EST

#2 February 24 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

### Grieving Spouse & Partner

February 10 @ 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, February 8 @ 6:30pm

### Carmichael, CA

Tuesday, February 15 @ 7pm

### Jackson, CA

Tuesday, February 1 @ 3:30pm

### Lincoln, CA

Thursday, February 10 @ 6pm

### Modesto, CA

Monday, February 21 @ 7pm

### Legacy Survivors, UT

Wednesday, February 9 @ 6pm MST

**WEBINARS:** Available to watch anytime: [FriendsForSurvival.org](https://www.friendsforsurvival.org) > Upcoming > Webinars

## letter to julie

by Jan



**D**epression, yours so deep, so dark you were not aware you had other options. Mine, as I pick up the shattered pieces of a life without you.

**E**motions flooding my being, guilt, anger, the unanswerable "why," bewilderment over the tragedy of a world without Julie.

**V**astness of the love of God flowing through family, friends and acquaintances, caring and compassion, tears and laughter. It helps.

**A**nguish that penetrates the marrow of my bone.

**S**earing pain to the innermost depth of my soul. I will not see you again in this lifetime.

**T**ears, will they ever stop? I cry alone, I cry with others. I cry as I write this. Today would have been your fifth wedding anniversary.

**A**bandonment, why did you leave? There are so many quiet conversations, family get-togethers, holidays and even trial and tribulations we counted on sharing with you.

**T**ouch, what I would give right now to touch you. I touched the shell of your earthly body in the casket, the earth and rosebuds on your grave. My only consolation is that you are where our dear, sweet Nanny can touch you.

**I** miss you, my beloved daughter, you brought joy and happiness to those around you. I was so proud to be your mother.

**O**nly the memories are left, the soft cuddly baby, the delightful child, the beautiful, accomplished adult. You had so much to offer. Why did you feel unworthy?

**N**othing is the same without you. It's been a month and the ache is still so raw. I will put one foot in front of the other because life goes on, and I must go on without you. It is so hard.

# secret of survival

From nature comes a secret of survival.

While some will falter and fall from a perfect perch, others will rebuild each nest destroyed.

While some give up without reason, others achieve greatness in the face of doom.

Some will go on soaring though left alone, gaining strength from the struggle of their flight.

Survivors seem to sense the sun behind the clouds, weathering a storm just to glimpse a rainbow.

On the wings of life there are gentle currents and rough winds.

Survivors float and fight as each day dictates, their hearts set determinedly on the horizon of hope.

The light they follow is their will to live. The reward they receive is life itself.

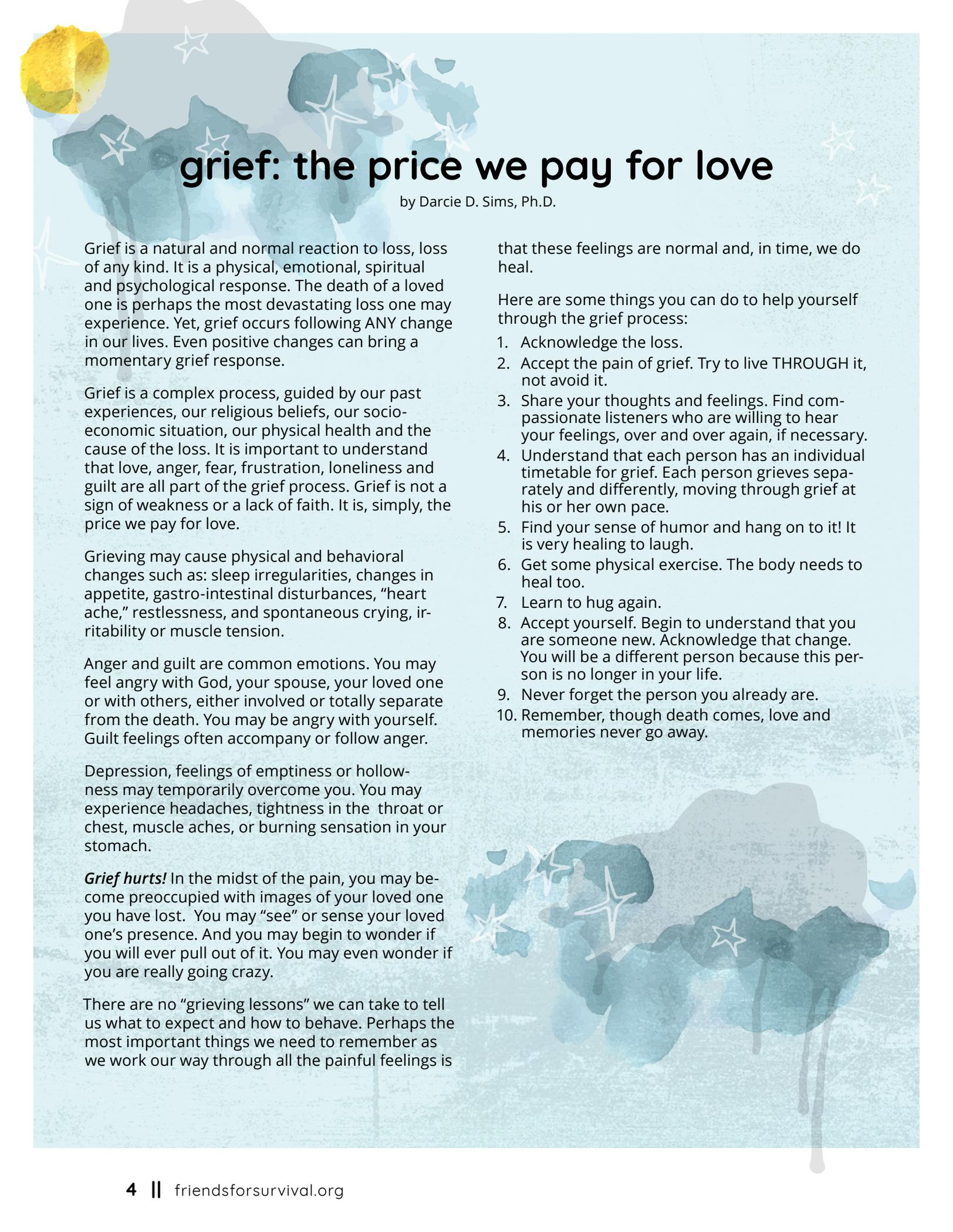
*Source: "From A Healing Heart" by Susan White-Bowden, Author of "Everything to Live For"*



## Hearts Like Wildflowers

*By Nikita Gill*

**I HOPE YOU ARE BLESSED WITH A HEART LIKE A WILDFLOWER.  
STRONG ENOUGH TO RISE AGAIN AFTER BEING TRAMPLED UPON,  
TOUGH ENOUGH TO WEATHER THE WORST OF THE STORMS, AND  
ABLE TO GROW AND FLOURISH EVEN IN THE MOST BROKEN PLACES.**



# grief: the price we pay for love

by Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D.

Grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss, loss of any kind. It is a physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological response. The death of a loved one is perhaps the most devastating loss one may experience. Yet, grief occurs following ANY change in our lives. Even positive changes can bring a momentary grief response.

Grief is a complex process, guided by our past experiences, our religious beliefs, our socio-economic situation, our physical health and the cause of the loss. It is important to understand that love, anger, fear, frustration, loneliness and guilt are all part of the grief process. Grief is not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. It is, simply, the price we pay for love.

Grieving may cause physical and behavioral changes such as: sleep irregularities, changes in appetite, gastro-intestinal disturbances, "heart ache," restlessness, and spontaneous crying, irritability or muscle tension.

Anger and guilt are common emotions. You may feel angry with God, your spouse, your loved one or with others, either involved or totally separate from the death. You may be angry with yourself. Guilt feelings often accompany or follow anger.

Depression, feelings of emptiness or hollowness may temporarily overcome you. You may experience headaches, tightness in the throat or chest, muscle aches, or burning sensation in your stomach.

**Grief hurts!** In the midst of the pain, you may become preoccupied with images of your loved one you have lost. You may "see" or sense your loved one's presence. And you may begin to wonder if you will ever pull out of it. You may even wonder if you are really going crazy.

There are no "grieving lessons" we can take to tell us what to expect and how to behave. Perhaps the most important things we need to remember as we work our way through all the painful feelings is

that these feelings are normal and, in time, we do heal.

Here are some things you can do to help yourself through the grief process:

1. Acknowledge the loss.
2. Accept the pain of grief. Try to live THROUGH it, not avoid it.
3. Share your thoughts and feelings. Find compassionate listeners who are willing to hear your feelings, over and over again, if necessary.
4. Understand that each person has an individual timetable for grief. Each person grieves separately and differently, moving through grief at his or her own pace.
5. Find your sense of humor and hang on to it! It is very healing to laugh.
6. Get some physical exercise. The body needs to heal too.
7. Learn to hug again.
8. Accept yourself. Begin to understand that you are someone new. Acknowledge that change. You will be a different person because this person is no longer in your life.
9. Never forget the person you already are.
10. Remember, though death comes, love and memories never go away.

# question: what brought you the most comfort in the preceding months after your loved one died?

by Friends for Survival members



*"Having a fellow suicide survivor simply LISTEN and help me experience my feelings with acceptance and understanding rather than judgement of me or my loved one who took his life. Having the gift of a good listener brought me the most comfort!"*

*"My loving family, especially my husband, and caring friends. Several months later, a Kaiser therapist recommended Friends for Survival: it saved my life."*

*"Visiting all the special places we visited together and created memories. Every place we went for dinner, or to sit and talk, to cry, to adventure, all those spots held an even more special place in my heart. The first time visiting was always the hardest, but every time after it was smiles instead of tears. Wearing his old clothing, hanging pictures and tapestries in remembrance."*

*"Sitting in front of the fire with my dog. Taking walks. Crying. Praying."*

*"A wonderful friend who had also experienced losing two children to suicide came to my home daily for almost three weeks. It was such a gift of service and love. I felt 'safe' with her, and could ask some personal questions I needed help dealing with at the time. I also found music and a religious connection helpful. Grief is so 'loud' and learning to be more 'still' within myself brought many unexpected and sweet moments of comfort where I felt a connection to my son."*

*"Peer support, online groups, helpful articles, newsletters, websites, Facebook Pages, etc. I wish my family and friends could understand and be more of a comfort. I know they mean well, but they make me feel worse when they won't let me have my feelings. It's been three years and I've hardly got a chance to grieve for my husband!"*

*"Knowing that there are other people who understand my grief and pain."*

# Support

## RESOURCES

**Friends for Survival**  
[www.friendsforsurvival.org](http://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](http://www.allianceofhope.org)

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)**  
Extensive lists of available meeting support [www.afsp.org/find-support](http://www.afsp.org/find-support)

**Bereaved Parents of the USA**  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

**Suicide Awareness Voices of Education**  
[www.save.org](http://www.save.org)

**Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)**

For service members, veterans, and their families: [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

**The Compassionate Friends**  
For bereaved parents of a deceased child: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**The Nat'l Center for Grieving Children & Families**  
The Dougy Center  
[www.dougy.org/grief-resources](http://www.dougy.org/grief-resources)

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

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*Comforting*  
Friends