

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2021

MAY



GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER

by Cynthia G. Kelley

My grief is like a river,
I have to let it flow,
But I myself determine
Just where the banks will go.

Some days the current takes me
In waves of guilt and pain,
But there are always quiet pools
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger;
My faith seems faint indeed,
But there are other swimmers
Who know that what I need

Are loving hands to hold me
When the waters are too swift,
And someone kind to listen
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is a process
Of relinquishing the past.
By swimming in hope's channels,
I'll reach the shore at last.

*Source: Chicken Soup for the
Grieving Soul*

The warm air makes me dream of what was, and of what would be if you were here. I know that this dream is but an inaptitude to live the present. I allow myself to drift on this current without looking too far or too deep. I await the moment when I will find my strength again. It will come. -Anne Philipe

May: Mother's Day is a very special day for many of us. Hopefully, if your mother is alive, you will be able to celebrate with her. But for many of us, Mother's Day is another day of sadness as we miss our children. Some of us may have a box with Mother's Day cards that we received from that loving child so many years ago. Some are grieving the tragic death of their mother. There are precious memories, and some that are painful. Whatever your situation, we are still missing that irreplaceable person.

As the intensity of our grief softens, we gradually begin to remember snippets of good memories. We begin to experience a bit of peace while still wishing for their presence in our lives. You are not alone, and we are here to share your journey. It is our wish for you that, in time, hope returns and the memories become sweeter.



Gratefully,
Marilyn Koenig
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SUPPORT GROUPS

Until further notice, all support group meetings are virtual via Zoom.

Go to our website, click on **Upcoming, Meetings**. Find your meeting date and time, click on **"Register."**

MEETINGS:

Second Monday

May 10 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

Third Tuesday

May 18 @ 7pm PST / 10pm EST

Fourth Wednesday

May 26 @ 7pm PST / 10pm EST

Grieving Moms Group

May 6 @ 6:30pm PST / 9:30pm EST

May 27 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

PRIVATE CHAPTER MEETINGS:

Legacy Survivors Utah

Wednesday, May 12 @ 6pm MST

Modesto

Monday, May 17 @ 7pm PST

WEBINARS:

More information and register at:
friendsforsurvival.org/our-webinars

Are you interested in starting a grief support program in your area?

Order our free publication:

"Pathways to Purpose and Hope: A Guide for Creating A Sustainable Grief Support Organization for Families and Friends After A Suicide Death." This is a 100-page spiral bound book with all the steps you need to put together your group. Call 916-392-0664, or order on our website under "Shop."

to the newly bereaved

Part 2 of 2 by LaRita Archibald



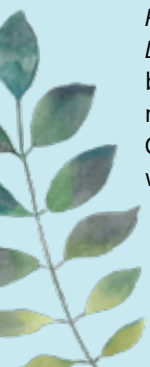
9. Take the best possible care of yourself...of your emotional being, your mental, spiritual and physical being. Eat properly! Don't allow yourself to get too hungry or to go without meals. Try not to overeat. Pace yourself. This process is aptly called "grief work" and it is truly the most exhausting task your emotions, mind or your physical body will ever be called upon to do. You may experience some physical symptoms, for grief often manifests itself physically. Do not dismiss these symptoms ... see your physician as soon as possible.

10. Grief and the workplace. For many bereaved it is an economic necessity to return to work soon after the funeral. It can be helpful to discuss your limits and concerns with your employer, perhaps arriving at a compromise whereby you work a few hours a day when you first return to the workplace. It is also helpful when an employer engages a counselor to speak of suicide bereavement with fellow employees placing them at greater ease in offering you support.

11. Suicidal thoughts are scary. When someone we love dies, we are overwhelmed by the pain of loss and fear of the future without them. We may believe we cannot endure the intensity of the pain. For a time, we may not wish to. When the cause of death is suicide, the surviving family members have been shown the worst possible example of how one can end pain and problems and the survivor may view ending their life as a way to stop hurting. It is normal to want to escape the pain of loss and grief. It is not abnormal to think of ending one's own life to escape it. But there is considerable difference between having suicidal thoughts and acting upon them. If you are obsessed with thoughts of killing yourself or believe you don't deserve to live due to some circumstance surrounding the loved one's death, see a mental health professional without delay. It would be a grave injustice to compound the loss and magnify the grief of others by this manner of resolving your own.

LaRita Archibald lost her son, Roger Kent Archibald, to suicide on August 30, 1978. She is the author of *Finding Peace Without All the Pieces- After A Loved One's Suicide*.

Read the full article here <https://friendsforsurvival.org/blog>



journeys into the past

Our world is full of things that will take us back into the past, remind us of our loved one and what we have lost by his or her passing. Old songs. Fragrances. Seasonal changes of weather. Holidays. Birthdays. The list goes on.

Well, let them come, these reminders. Sometimes they bear with them a poignant sweetness. Sometimes we think they will break our hearts, so devastating is our sense of loss, brought into sharp focus again.

As time passes, these sieges will be more short-lived, easier to move through and come out on the other side.

It is well not to fight these images of a lost world, to let them pass through us -- savoring their sweetness if it is there, bearing the pain while it lasts -- knowing that in a little while we can lay claim to ourselves again.

The journeys into the past always include a way back into the present, which is where I live.

*Source: Healing After Loss - Daily Meditations for Working through Grief (May 6).
Author, Martha Whitmore Hickman*



Breathe

by Sharon Lagueux

"ALL OF THE TIMES YOU FELT THIS ANXIOUS AND THIS OVERWHELMED. ALL OF THE TIMES YOU FELT THIS LEVEL OF PAIN. AND REMIND YOURSELF HOW EACH TIME, YOU MADE IT THROUGH. LIFE HAS THROWN SO MUCH AT YOU, AND DESPITE HOW DIFFICULT THINGS HAVE BEEN, YOU'VE SURVIVED. BREATHE AND TRUST THAT YOU CAN SURVIVE THIS TOO. TRUST THAT THIS STRUGGLE IS PART OF THE PROCESS. AND TRUST THAT AS LONG AS YOU DON'T GIVE UP, AND KEEP PUSHING FORWARD, NO MATTER HOW HOPELESS THINGS SEEM, YOU WILL MAKE IT."



reflections of a mother

The following was written by Friends for Survival member Josie Comphele for Comforting Friends in April 1988, not long after her son's death. She added her perspective recently, 34 years later.

I know how much he meant to you; how you loved him and how you cared for him when no one else could find the time for him. Divorces, teenage boys, struggling without money; trying to make ends meet when you thought that rope would break; everything, everything and you know none of it could be possible without a strong love of God. Someone who, when all else fails, is there holding you up; making you go on. The one Being who is a constant and who makes us aware of the good things we have.

Maybe we have kids who are struggling to make their way in the world and in so doing almost breaking our spirits but oh, the beauty of children. It does come around though and with the love you give your living children, they cannot help but be children to be proud of.

Forget that they don't put out the garbage when they're supposed to, and you end up doing it once again. Forget that when you ask them to put their clothes and shoes away and they say okay, and you get up the next morning and they still are where they left them. Forget that they drag a blanket out to cover themselves when they watch TV and in so doing clutter up the front room. Forget that they leave dirty dishes in the sink. At least they got cleared from the table. Yet do not be afraid to scold. Discipline must be there, not to make you feel guilty but to guide them.

So many, many times these past few months since Kenneth went away do I sit and wish his shoes were in the front room; the blanket all messed up and oh, how I wish that I could make him his breakfast again. But I did have the opportunity and I did make him his breakfast. Be thankful that you have others and that they belong to you and no one else. Don't quit making them breakfast.

I thank God every day that He chose me to be Kenneth's mother and to bless me with the beauty of my other children. Every day when I think about missing him so much, I can sit quietly and reflect on all the memories that he left me. Sometimes I cry; sometimes I smile just from thinking about something thoughtful or silly that he did. And I feel quite confident that if he were still alive that I would still be trying to get him to fold the blanket, put the dishes away and everything else that I could do to mold him into a fine young man. Which he was. He's gone now, but he left me so many,

many memories. Yet, my heart never fails to skip a beat every time I admit to myself that he is gone. I ache for that second chance.

You keep on going through. Do only the best that you can and more. Your reward will come. It has to.

I am no expert, just a mother trying to make her way through motherhood with all of its ups and downs. And most of the time I try to keep this philosophy: You can either live in the past or meet the future head on. I choose the future but somewhere tucked away I will be bringing the past with me. I will try to dwell on the good past but that does not mean that I will forget the bad memories; that is impossible. I will learn from them too.

In loving memory of Kenneth Martin Comphele - Born 08-11-68 Died 01-23-87

34 years? Has it really been 34 years? Yes, it has! Here it is, 2021, and so much has happened since then. Marriages, divorces, grandchildren being born, family moving away, family coming back. And now a pandemic. Life has changed. Kenneth is still gone from our lives, but he still lives on in our memory. His picture still hangs on the wall. Forever 18 and the rest of the family has gotten older. I see a little of Kenneth in every grandchild born into this family. So many times during these last 34 years Kenneth has been with us in good times and not so good times. He has moved on in pictures, in love and in the memory of all who knew and loved him. Much of us has moved on, but much of us has stayed behind with Kenneth. But we can be thankful that Kenneth didn't have to go through some of the bad times and the changes that this world has gone through. But it would have been bearable with him in our lives. A lot of "what ifs?" still linger, but the only thing that keeps us sane is knowing the short time we had him with us was oh so worthwhile. His smile, his silly ways, his love for God and family. That cannot be forgotten. And yet we look forward to the one hope that God our creator has given us...the hope that one day we will see Kenneth again in a beautiful new world he has waiting for us.

Heaven on earth, as it is written in Matthew 6:10, "Let Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We have hope of seeing Kenneth once again...to see his smile, his silly ways and his love for God and family. Yes, we have hope.

mother's day gift

Jane Casa, a *Friends for Survival* member, graciously shares this beautiful poem written by her son, Matt. Matt wrote this poem for his mother and gifted it to her on Mother's Day in 2006.



THE LADY

Like a fine vintage wine,
Getting better with age,
Is the lady of this tale,
Now turn the page.

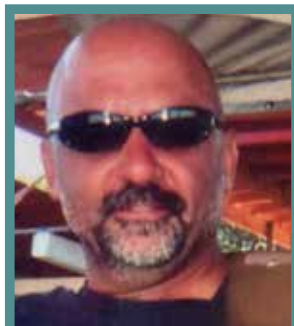
She is a lady from modest roots,
Born a mid-west farmer's last,
In a basement her first breath taken,
Now just an echo in the past.

She always did what was proper,
Her guidance up above,
Had three children of her own,
Two highly spoken of.

A black sheep is the other,
And restless are his boots,
The highway is his home,
He is never bound by roots.

Find as fine a lady,
A clone would be another.
For that black sheep tells this tale,
And that lady is my mother.

Poem by
Vincent Matthew Casa
Born 11-27-55
Died 03-27-17



Support

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

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

www.suicidology.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

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SACRAMENTO COUNTY

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



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During the last year's Big Day of Giving campaign, your generous donations gave us the ability to develop new resources for survivors. Help us reach our goal this year - www.bigdayofgiving.org/friendsforsurvival

