

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2021

JUNE



JOURNEY TOGETHER, A REFLECTION

by Father Arnaldo Pangrazzi

You are welcome to this circle where we hope you may find space to grieve, to search, to listen and reach out.

Each one of us brings here a story: the story of our brokenness and sorrow, the story of our survival, our need to get more out of life.

We come here to be with people who understand our struggle and our hurt: they too have tears in their eyes and pain in their hearts.

This is a sacred place where we can explore our feelings: our loneliness, our shock, our anger, our guilt, our sadness or whatever is hurting us inside. This is a place where we can share our humanity

and find strength and inspiration in each other.

Let us remember that each one of us is at a different point of our journey: let us respect where each one is and let us learn from each other.

For all of us, life remains a mystery and we can only choose to trust and to love; we cannot choose to know, we cannot choose for others.

Although we remain deeply wounded people, let us find comfort and healing in what we believe and in our ability to care for each other.

June: Abraham Lincoln said, "The better part of one's life consists of his friendships." This is true when we are doing well, and also when we are struggling. Friends celebrate the good times and cry with us during the sad times. I recently talked to a woman who had tears in her eyes as she shared with me the story of her best friend who is grieving the suicide death of her husband. Tears of compassion for her friend, tears for the loss of a loving husband, tears for the unbelievable anguish of the grieving wife and friend.

These are the true, loyal friends who walk with us through this journey of pain and uncertainty. This newsletter is part of our walk with you, for as long as you want or need a companion.

You have told us you use our newsletter to reach out to help other grieving persons. We are grateful for your involvement.



Gratefully,

Marilyn Koenig
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GROUP MEETINGS

Currently, all support group meetings are virtual via Zoom. Check our website for updates regarding in person meetings

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

MEETINGS:

Second Monday

June 14 @ 3pm PST

Third Tuesday

June 15 @ 7pm PST

Fourth Wednesday

June 23 @ 7pm PST

Grieving Moms Groups (2)

#1 June 3 @ 6:30pm PST

#2 June 24 @ 3pm PST

Grieving Spouse & Partner

June 8 @ 6pm PST / 9 EST

PRIVATE CHAPTER MEETINGS:

Legacy Survivors Utah

Wednesday, June 9 @ 6pm MST

Modesto

Monday, June 21 @ 7pm PST

WEBINARS:

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

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

We have updated our publication:
"Pathways to Purpose and Hope: A Guide for Creating A Sustainable Grief Support Organization for Families and Friends After A Suicide Death."

To get our free, 100-page spiral bound book with all the steps you need to put together your group. Call 916-392-0664, or on our website under "Shop."

memorial prayer

One of our Friends for Survival families shared this poem in a recent support group meeting.



Memorial Prayer After My Child's Suicide

by Alden Solovy

"This Grateful Heart. Psalms and Prayers for a New Day"

Oh grief,
How deep was his/her pain,
That our child
Could take his/her own life?
God of Mercy
Grant a perfect rest under Your tabernacle of peace
To _____, son/daughter of _____ and _____
Our son/daughter
Whose life was cut off by sorrow.
By hopelessness, depression, and despair.
Even in this darkness,
In this moment of inconceivable horror,
In this grief and void that seems beyond repair,
Help us to remember his/her wisdom, talent and skills,
Our times together,
Our joy, laughter and tears.
[Give us respite from this profound sense of guilt.]
In this hour of desolation,
Bring our family comfort and consolation
As we pray for him/her to find a new peace
In the world-to-come,
A peace, he/she did not enjoy in this world.
May his/her soul be bound up on the bond of life,
A living blessing in our midst.

This Grateful Heart offers an anthology of modern day psalms and prayers to lift us up, inspire our days, and mark our milestones. Written by Jewish poet and liturgist Alden Solovy, the collection provides nearly 100 readings, spanning topics from the simple delights of daily living to the complexities of grief.

every once in awhile

by Purnel L. Collicott, Jacksonville, Florida

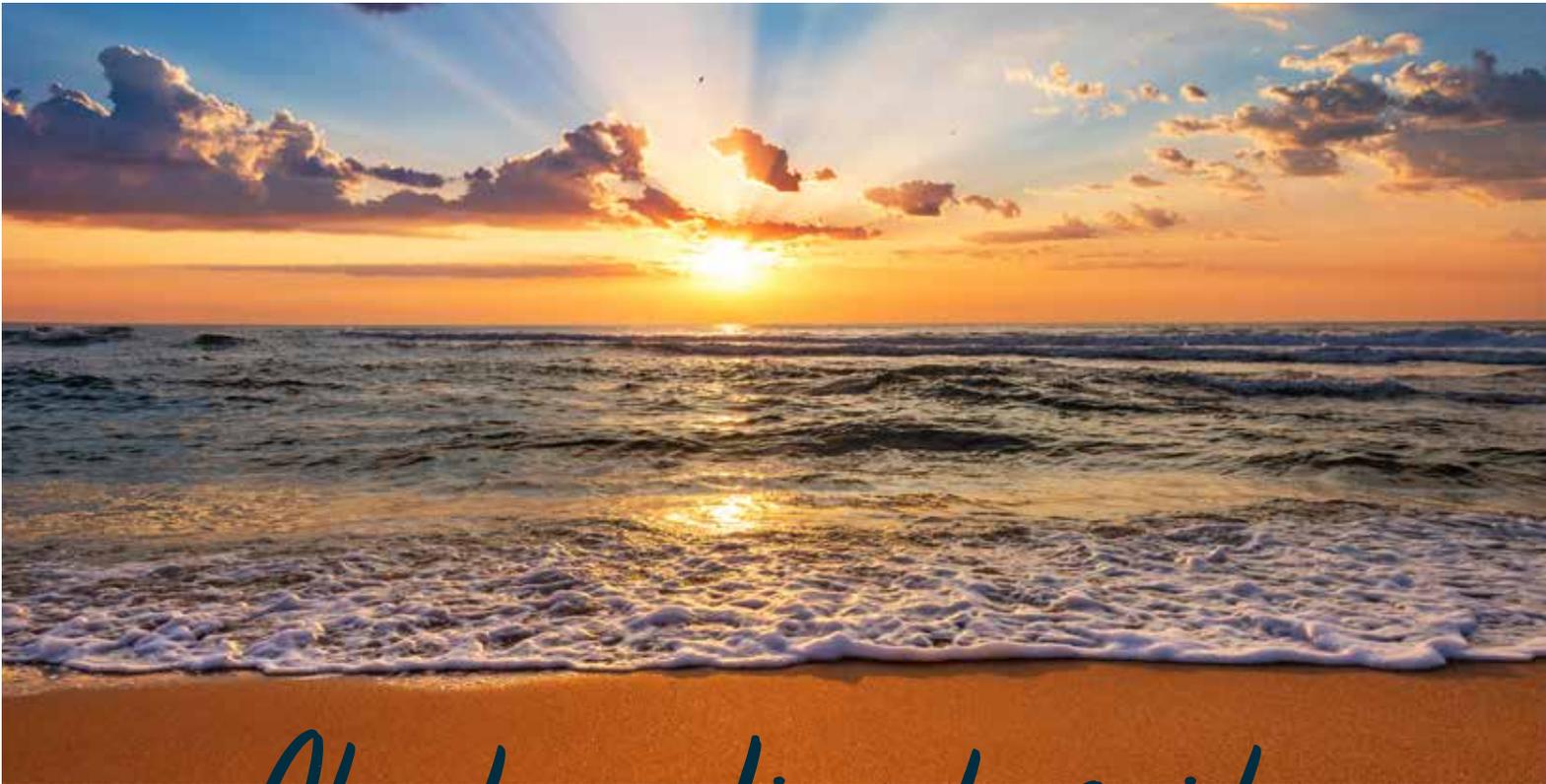
Every once in a while, I think of the days long ago. When you were with me, and I was with you, and our love was new.

We didn't have much in worldly possessions or money, but life was a smile and seemed made just for two. And love made it all worthwhile.

Our greatest joy, I now recall, was simply in being together. The cares of the day that came our way, were easily dealt with and placed in the light of our love.

Simple things shared, and little we cared that we didn't have much, or about worldly events or the weather. With love, we had it all. We had each other.

Years have now passed, but the memories last, and I often recall (sometimes with a tear, but often with a smile) that tho' you are gone, still you live on. In the joy you still bring to my heart -- every once in awhile.



Abraham Lincoln said...

"IN THIS SAD WORLD OF OURS, SORROW COMES TO ALL; AND IT COMES WITH BITTER AGONY. PERFECT RELIEF IS NOT POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WITH TIME. YOU CANNOT NOW REALIZE THAT YOU WILL EVER FEEL BETTER. BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE. YOU ARE SURE TO BE HAPPY AGAIN. KNOWING THIS, TRULY BELIEVING IT, WILL MAKE YOU LESS MISERABLE NOW. I HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT I SAY; AND YOU NEED ONLY TO BELIEVE IT, TO FEEL BETTER AT ONCE."

*Lincoln's son, Edward, died in 1850 (age 3); son, William, died in 1862 (age 11).
After his assassination in 1862, son, Tad, died in 1871 (age 18).*

i'm still alive and still unbroken

by Susie Goodwin, Friends for Survival Member

September 2, 2003. My mother accomplishes her goal to take her life. My mom abused her body with drugs and alcohol for years. I pleaded with her on numerous occasions to stop and seek help. Her continued responses to me: "Leave me alone, this is how I want to die." There was absolutely no changing her mind. So, I honored her request. I got to be with my mother for several days while she was passing away. A silver lining, I got to say goodbye to my mom who I loved with all my heart.

February 20, 2016. I have a sick feeling in my stomach which I call my gut feeling. For me the word "gut" is an acronym for "God Under There."

This feeling started around 8:45am, when I reached out to my father via text. My two daughters and I taught him how to text, which is funny because he was actually a rocket scientist. I sent him a text message to check in on him due to some health issues. No reply. I waited...my gut feeling grew stronger, but still no word from him. He was always quick to respond. I could no longer ignore my gut feeling, so I headed over to his house to check on him. My father leaves the door unlocked during the day so we can check in on him whenever we want to. Today was nothing different; little did I know that my life was about to change forever. I entered his house. Walking down the hallway heading toward his bedroom talking to him. "Hey dad, it's me...how are you today?" When I walked into his room it took a few minutes for my brain to catch up with what I was seeing. My dad had shot himself and yet he was still breathing. For me, I think I stopped breathing. I immediately called 911 and we lost him two hours later. The beauty that my father lived for two hours longer than he intended gave me and my daughters time to pray over him and say goodbye. Wasn't what he wanted, but God gave me that gift. Silver lining! Look for it and grab on!



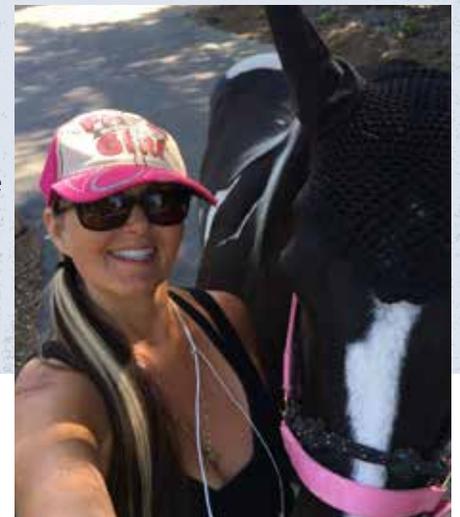
January 21, 2020. My beautiful 28-year-old daughter, Malorie, wrote a suicide note and attempted to overdose on drugs and alcohol. "This is what our family does --" words from my daughter. She is still alive today. Silver lining. Praise God.

I don't read self-help books. I don't want to stay stuck in my grief. I rely on God to carry me through every step of this journey. I learned to ALWAYS look for the silver lining in every situation. Whether that be an amazing doctor or nurse or the support of both my daughters.

I had to learn to get to know my audience. That was a huge eye-opener for me. I have been in the rooms of Al-Anon since January 2, 1986. WOW!! 35 years. I am very comfortable with public speaking on the topic of alcoholism, which my father, mother and daughter were and are afflicted with. I had to learn that discussing suicide was a very sensitive topic for me, but also had to learn that it was extremely painful for people to hear my deep, gut-wrenching pain. Especially my beautiful daughters who were 30 and 25 years old at the time. Or someone who had experienced a suicide as well but couldn't or didn't

feel comfortable discussing what happened. I felt so alone and frustrated.

This prompted me to reach out to Friends for Survival after several years of trauma therapy. It was a bit of a rocky start because I was so driven and specific about what I needed, or I thought I needed. I wanted so badly to talk with someone who could "feel the exact pain" that I was feeling. I learned in time that God was truly the only one that could handle it. Meeting the staff was wonderful, but when they connected me with Candy, I finally started to feel a sense of peace. What a gift! She has devoted so much of her precious



time walking with me on this journey. God put her and another woman by the name of Ann Marie in my life after my father died because I had no idea what was coming next. I have some close friends to vent/share. God had my spiritual leaders in place. Like preparing for a storm.



I have been an avid runner since 1979. I chose not to stay home with the covers pulled over my head. I get out every day with nature, but that is how I have been my whole life because my parents were suicidal most of my life.

I am surrounded by the animal kingdom, including a beautiful bird rescued from the wild, a parakeet, a great little Chihuahua, a cat and my horse, Miss Lola. I bought my beautiful horse -- a black and white pinto -- after my dad passed away. She is deemed as my emotional companion. Miss Lola and I spend every day together.

I have the blessing of being friends with my older daughter, Leslie. She has been my rock through this whole journey. I learned that crying does not mean that I was weak; it is the absolute opposite.

I practice kind thoughts, kind words and kind deeds every day! Why do I say practice? Because it has to be on a conscience level for me with the human race.

Words of wisdom: The only thing that I can say is: "suicide is not about you." Sad to say, but the person who takes their own life is not thinking of you. Hard pill to swallow, but it was true with my mother and father.

When Malorie recently attempted to take her life, it was a bit more difficult for me. Why? I'm MOM! I am the one that could fix anything! Put a bandage on her scraped knee. Cheered her on at her swim meets. Held her when she cried. I can't fix suicide. Was I to blame for my daughter wanting to die? I did question this numerous times. Since I had experienced two prior suicides and knew on an emotional and intellectual level that I was not responsible for my parents taking their lives, why would I blame and beat myself up for my daughter? Another Silver Lining! I wrap her in a blanket in my mind and hand her to God every day.

So, I live my life for myself. Selfish? No, it isn't. The three "C's" ... I didn't Cause it, I cannot Control it, nor can I Cure it. I have my own life, my own passions and desires. God is the only reason I am here today. He has carried me through.

I think it is important for me to share that my mother and father, who I loved and continue to love so deeply, brought me great joy in my life! My father bought me my first horse when

I was seven years old and would take me riding every Saturday, as well as cross-country skiing. My mother and I played backgammon every day for years. Both of my parents attended all my activities in high school, and we used to sit and talk for hours.

My daughter, Malorie and I have shared so many wonderful and funny times together throughout her life. She bought me a beautiful journal with a gorgeous peacock on the front of it. We made a decision that the peacock journal would only be filled with good and funny memories. I keep the journal on a shelf in my living room with a gold sparkly pen.

Anytime Leslie and Malorie come over, they can write in the book. We have written about 30 pages in the last four years. We have walked alongside each other through many different scenarios in our lives.

There is so much good to share about my daughters. My faith gives me hope that we will see each other again soon!





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