

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2022

JULY



JULY FOURTH

Grief makes clear our interdependence with others, and it is this interdependence that gives our lives joy and meaning. And yet the paradox is that each of us is a singular human being with an independent will and consciousness.

What this means is that our grief is unique. The thoughts, feelings, and memories we harbor inside us aren't quite like anyone else's. It also means that our most effective methods of mourning are unique. What works for me might not work for you, and vice versa. In this way, our grief and mourning are independent.

And yet, the healing of our independent grief is depending, in part, on the support and compassion of others. Such is the mystery of love, grief, and life.

Reflection: I am both independent and dependent in my grief. Healing requires both.

Source: Grief One Day at a Time by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

July: I truly relish the longer days of summer, warm nights, and eating ice cream on my patio. I can honestly say that I did not feel the seasons change for some time after my son died. It took perseverance (and patience) on my part, and slowly my healing began. If you are feeling down, my advice is to take advantage of Mother Nature. If you can, sit quietly in the sun for a few minutes and feel the warmth on your face. Take a few deep breaths in and out, then try to release whatever is gripping you at the moment.

It is okay to feel every emotion, sometimes all emotions all at once. You need to feel them. Once you feel them, write it out, talk it out, create art. Do whatever feels right to you, right in this moment while extending grace to yourself.

You can do this; we are here to support each other.



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

July 11 @ 3pm PT / 6pm ET

Third Wednesday

July 20 @ 4pm PT / 7pm ET

Fourth Wednesday

July 27 @ 7pm PT / 10pm ET

Grieving Moms Groups (2)

#1 Thursday, July 7 @ 6:30pm PT / 9:30pm ET

#2 Thursday, July 28 @ 3pm PT / 6pm ET

Grieving Spouse & Partner

Thursday, July 14 @ 6pm PT / 9pm ET

IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

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

Cameron Park, CA

Tuesday, July 12 @ 6:30pm

Faith Episcopal Church

2200 Country Club Dr., Cameron Park CA

Carmichael, CA

Tuesday, July 19 @ 7pm

Carmichael Presbyterian Church

5645 Marconi Ave., Sacramento, CA

Jackson, CA

Tuesday, July 5 @ 3:30pm

Sierra Wind Wellness & Recovery Center

10354 Argonaut Lane, Jackson CA

Lincoln, CA

Thursday, July 14 @ 6pm

Lincoln Public Library

485 Twelve Bridges Drive, Lincoln, CA

Modesto, CA

Monday, July 18 @ 7pm

The Bridge Covenant Church (Riverbank)

2201 Morrill Road, Riverbank CA

Legacy Survivors, UT

Wednesday, July 13 @ 6pm MST

Weber State University - Ogden Campus

Merrill Allied Health Building, Room 327

a poem

by C. L. Katz of England
Friends for Survival Member

I lost my son almost three years ago and have been writing about feelings. Here is one of my recent poems.



TRIGGERS CAN HIT
WHENEVER THEY SEE FIT
CONVENIENT OR NOT
IT CAN HAPPEN IN A DOT
AS MUCH AS WE THINK
MEMORIES DO SHRINK
SOMETHING STAYS THERE
AND WE'RE NOT ALWAYS AWARE
TRY TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE SITUATION
YOU DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE TO GIVE AN
EXPLANATION
GO AND CRY IN A SAFE SPACE
TREAT YOURSELF, HAVE A TIME OUT
IT'S NOT A RACE
EVENTUALLY YOU CAN EXPLAIN TO SOMEONE
WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN AND GONE
THEY MAY NOT TOTALLY GET WHY YOU RAN
BUT WILL SUPPORT YOU IF THEY CAN

a message to my wife

by Don Hackett, Friends for Survival Member

The years have been few when measured against a lifetime. We have encountered joy and shared confidence in our future. We have known hope's ending and have borne the death of dreams. We have together been diminished. Even minor aspirations have eluded our grasp in the cruel shadow of the loss of our child.

Yet we still share our lives. And though the brightness we once knew has fled, we have grown enough to sense a return of laughter -- an uplifting to shatter the dimness, to remind us that tomorrow will come and dreams may again be born.



**ANYTHING THAT IS HUMAN IS MENTIONABLE, AND ANYTHING THAT IS
MENTIONABLE CAN BE MORE MANAGEABLE.**

**WHEN WE CAN TALK ABOUT OUR FEELINGS, THEY BECOME LESS
OVERWHELMING, LESS UPSETTING AND LESS SCARY.**

**THE PEOPLE WE TRUST WITH THAT IMPORTANT TALK CAN HELP US
KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE.**

~ FRED ROGERS

Feeling It

by Jaletta Albright Desmond

I spent the last few weeks pissed off. Sorry if that word offends you. Sorry if my anger offends you. But if there is one thing I've decided to do during this process, it's to accept, without judgment, whatever emotions suddenly attack.

And sometimes I genuinely feel attacked by my own emotions, by my grief. It blows in quickly, swirling like a powerful tornado, leaving a path of destruction where there once was some small spindly structure of peace. In the past, I felt gentle winds of anger that were quickly stilled by compassion and forgiveness. It took over six months to get there, but I finally got really mad. Anger is one of the accepted "stages of grief." There are five: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. They are "not stops on some linear timeline in grief," says Grief.com. They are simply a framework, according to the co-authors of "On Grief and Grieving," Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler.

I didn't really care if anger was an "accepted" stage or not. I just knew I felt it. So, I chose to accept it. And I stayed in it. I settled in and bathed in it. I didn't throw dishes or yell at strangers while behind the wheel. Instead, I had long conversations with my daughter, who chose to leave us.

I was mad at her. Mad at God. Mad at the professionals who couldn't read a crystal ball to tell me my daughter was definitely suicidal. Mad at some other people who could've stopped what they were doing or done something differently. I was mad at myself for not seeing more clearly the signs or for failing to read her mind that day.

But mostly I was mad at Jocelyn for not stopping and taking 10 minutes to think about what she would be missing out on in life. I was mad at the damage she left behind with her loved ones. I was mostly mad at her for not seeking the help she knew was so readily available.

Some people might be uncomfortable with me being angry, especially when that anger is directed at Jocelyn. But I think Jocelyn is OK with it. Jocelyn kinda liked her anger — it was a way she expressed her depression, which is common for some depressed people. She felt empowered by her anger, as if it could protect her. Eventually, she discovered that wasn't true. That might've been one reason she gave up.

I also think Jocelyn is OK with her loved ones being angry because she knows it's because we miss her, want her back, love her. I don't think she is hurt by my anger. Maybe she can observe it, maybe not. But I feel like it wouldn't cause her pain.

How would I know, right? I know it sounds crazy, but if you've ever lost someone you love, you know that it's possible to feel them around you...either because they are somehow there or because you are imagining it. But the feeling itself is very real.

In the past, I've felt her trying to rain down peace on me when I'm weeping in pain and sorrow. But while I sat in my "mad cave," as I came to think of it, pouting in the dark, surrounded by dank and stale air, heavy rock overhead and claustrophobic misery all around, I could sometimes feel her poking me and prodding me, teasingly. As if to say, 'Com'on, mom, don't be mad at me. Please, let it go.'

Anger isn't attractive. I noticed I was irritable, more rudely opinionated, more abruptly outspoken and brazenly unfiltered. I felt slightly crazy. But I've read that is a normal part of grief, too. I tried to channel my anger appropriately. I worked out a lot, took time for myself rather than overcommitting. I kept trying to pray, even when I didn't want to.

I even sneered at my daughter's beautiful smiling face in photographs. I called her stupid (something I never do to the living) and rolled my eyes at her. I threw my arms in the air in disgust as I walked through the bedroom she had picked out in our new home where she never slept. I would've much preferred to be mad that her clothes were all over the floor as usual. But I don't have that privilege.

Finally, the anger began to dissipate. Finally, I crawled out of my mad cave and took a breath of fresh clean air. I forgave her. Again. But this time I had gone deep enough into the anger that the forgiveness and grace felt deeper and truer.

I may someday be annoyed, maybe even angry, again. The stages of grief are circles that you cycle in and out of. But I hope I don't go that deep into it again.

"The anger," Kubler-Ross and Kessler say, "is just another indication of the intensity of your love." The love is a more comfortable, peaceful and warm place than the cave, so that's where I plan to end up.

Jaletta Albright Desmond is a freelance writer/former weekly columnist who writes about grief, family, and the fascinatingly mundane aspects of daily life. She lives in North Carolina with her family. (Editor's note: This column was originally published in 2012, several months after her daughter died by suicide. Jaletta adds that she hasn't felt that intense anger again since writing this piece.)

2021

our impact

compared to 2020

1,393 people were supported in 91 group meetings

↑48%

26%

59,296 newsletters were delivered

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SINCE

1983

Friends FOR SURVIVAL

894 new family packets were distributed

37%

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

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

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