



Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

H IS FOR HONORING

by *Therese Gump*

To be able to honor a person's memory is a great consolation when they are no longer around. How do we come to terms with honoring the memory of the person we loved who has died by suicide? We do not wish to honor the act, and yet we wish to maintain a reverence for the person's life. To hold dear the good times and the happiness that we shared for many years is part of our healing. How do we manage to keep those moments that we cherished in a special place in our hearts while detaching them from the awfulness of the suicide? What can we do that lets us savor the sweet moments of their life and not deify the person or attach a heroic flavor to the choice they made that destroyed this previous life?

It may take us a long time to focus on the positive parts of this life which was so suddenly erased from our presence. The negatives are so dramatically imprinted upon our souls. Painful images keep passing before our eyes. Our failure to find a means to stop them beats us up emotionally like waves washing up on the sand wearing us away. When we can, we need to let go of some of that pain and allow ourselves the truth in

the knowledge that we did the best we could do.

I remember when my son played Santa Claus. That has become a good memory even though that first Christmas was excruciating to see a different person in the garb of this Spirit of Christmas. It hurt so badly that I wanted to scream sometimes. Now I don't feel that way. The memory of his wanting to help out that way at Christmas for his nieces and nephews is a warm glow inside of me. I never thought it would be a truly pleasant memory again, but it is.

My focus is not on the pain of his death, but on the joys of his life. I can honor his strengths - and he did have strengths before this depression overcame him.

A survivor who lost a son to suicide told me in the very first weeks after his death to hold fast to the good memories. I did not fully understand what she meant, but I do now. The intensity of the pain is no longer present.

I can honor the good memories and bless him for his strengths. I can toast to his life, to his love and to the son he was to me. I honor the blessing of the time he was with us, not his act, but the joy of his life.

Source: *The Obelisk*, November 1991, Vol 12, Number 16

2021 DECEMBER

This month we honor our loved ones. We honor our special relationships and friendships, new and old. Let's not forget to honor ourselves and practice self-care.

Many of us put our health and our well-being on the back burner while we deal with the awfulness that has happened. Whatever your circumstances, however busy you are, however many other people you are trying to take care of, or if you don't have a super busy life, I want to encourage you to take at least 15 minutes a day to ask yourself: "What am I doing to take care of me?" And then practice your self-care. This you must do.

How are you honoring the memory of your loved one? There are many ways you can do this - think about it and find something that is meaningful to you. Plant a tree, make a donation to a favorite charity, make a memory jar, run a marathon in their honor, prepare their favorite meal and share the recipe.

As the year draws to a close, let's take a quiet moment to honor every member of our family, all of our friends and fellow human beings. Light a candle, place a wreath, make a toast and share your love.



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

December 13 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

Third Tuesday

No meeting in December

Fourth Wednesday (holiday date change)

December 29 @ 7pm PST / 10pm EST

Grieving Moms Groups (2)

#1 December 2 @ 6:30pm PST / 9:30pm EST

#2 December 16 @ 3pm PST / 6pm EST

Grieving Spouse & Partner

December 9 @ 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, December 14 @ 6:30pm
Faith Episcopal Church
2200 Country Club Dr., Cameron Park CA

Carmichael, CA

Tuesday, December 21 @ 7pm
Carmichael Presbyterian Church
5645 Marconi Ave., Sacramento, CA

Jackson, CA

Tuesday, December 7 @ 3:30pm
Sierra Wind Wellness & Recovery Center
10354 Argonaut Lane, Jackson CA

Modesto, CA

No meeting in December
The Bridge Covenant Church (Riverbank)
2201 Morrill Road, Riverbank CA

Legacy Survivors, UT

Wednesday, December 8 @ 6pm MST
Warehouse 22 - 1068 W 350 S
Syracuse, UT

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

self-care suggestions after the death of a loved one

by Iris and Kit

It is hard to define "self-care" because there are different perspectives on what it means. In our view, it is important to pay attention to what you want to do and what is best for you during your mourning. This is difficult, especially if you normally take care of



others, putting yourself last. Even knowing what you want to do, or what is best for you, can be tough. The following is a list of suggestions for good self-care.

1. Doctor's checkup. Consider this: a visit to your doctor for a thorough checkup is a good place to start. You may have physical problems which need attention. For some, there is immediate comfort and relief in talking with their doctor and knowing someone is taking care of them. It provides a safe place to begin a conversation about your ailments, your stress and your grief. Your doctor may refer you to a grief counselor.
2. Asking for help with your grief. Consider this: reaching out for assistance with your grief is a form of self-care. It is a strong and courageous thing to do, not a sign of weakness.
3. Kindness. Sometimes we forget to be kind to ourselves. Consider this: grief gives you an opportunity to treat yourself with kindness, just as you would others. You can speak to yourself lovingly and listen closely to your needs. Follow through. Being kind to yourself may just mean saying no to someone or going to bed when you are exhausted.
4. Meditating. Consider this: every day try to carve out time for you. Taking even a few minutes to meditate or sit with yourself can bring quiet and inner peace. Meditation is not for everyone, but it allows you to catch your breath and center yourself. Sitting or walking outside in nature can bring calm and can quiet the chaos in your head and heart.
5. Nutrition. Consider this: grief is depleting. You need nutritious food to give you energy and keep you strong through this stressful time. If you have no appetite, consider drinking a meal replacement shake to give you necessary vitamins. Listen to your body and take care of it. Stay hydrated to combat fatigue.

Source: *The Little Book on Grief: Concerns to Consider* by Iris & Kit. Download here: <http://www.theirisbolton.com/thelittlebook/TheLittleBookOnGrief.pdf>