



A LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER ON FATHER'S DAY

by Jim Dixon

I know I was absent for a long time after your brother died. Oh, I was there physically – but not mentally. I missed some time of your life, as I concentrated so much on his. I want you to know that it wasn't because I loved him more than I love you, though at the time it might have seemed that way.

I want to thank you for being so supportive of me for those months, as I mourned your brother. Thanks ...

For being there as I cried what must have seemed like endless tears.

For being there when I was no longer the father you had grown to know and expect.

For tolerating my mood swings and the things I may have said that were hurtful, without realizing what I was saying or doing.

For forgiving what I can't go back and change.

Thanks for being that special person who you have become. Most of all, thanks for sharing your love with me. For I realize that is the most important gift we can give each other. And love is truly all we will leave behind when we are gone.

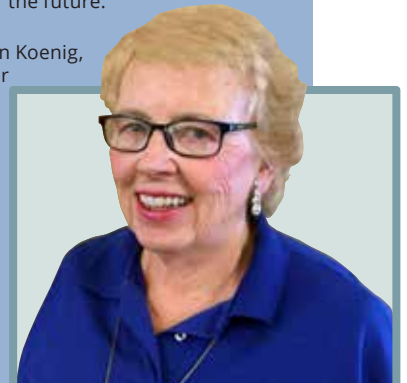
Dad

Source: *The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles*

June: We hope this special Father's Day newsletter offers you a time to reflect on your relationship with your father and also your own fatherhood. There are lessons to be learned even if the history was difficult.

I recently attended a national conference on suicide and had the honor to meet Richard J. Knapp and J. David Pincus, who have authored a new book: *Sons of Suicide – A Memoir of Friendship*. These two men tell of their journey together as they lived out their lives after their mothers died by suicide more than 50 years ago when they were teenagers. We will feature more about this book in a future newsletter. We wish for each of you supportive friends, courage to heal and hope for the future.

Gratefully, Marilyn Koenig,
Executive Director



Support

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

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

The Compassionate Friends
For bereaved parents of a deceased child: www.compassionatefriends.org

The National Center for Grieving Children & Families
The Dougy Center
www.dougy.org/grief-resources

**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).

our angel

by Josh Anderson

We always called you "Angel" never knowing why -
That one day you would look down on us from high
up in the sky.



Your heart was made of gold, you always made us
laugh. All the joyous moments, all the fun we had.

Now just a memory now you've gone away. Why
didn't you talk to me, why didn't you choose to stay?

I could not save my son - am I a bad dad? Or was his
pain too strong, was his life that bad?

I will never know the reasons or why he chose to go.

I hope he knows I love him, how can I show him so?
You will always be my son, no matter how long you
have been gone.

I will never forget you son, your story will live on.

Love,

Dad

For my son Joshua "JJ" Anderson, Jr. 03/08/03 - 03/13/16

Josh and Michelle Anderson formed JJ's Hello Foundation to prevent youth suicide, promote mental health awareness, and create a message of hope for pre-teens, teens and young adults in our community. Josh and Michelle are also our Support Group Meeting Facilitators in Elk Grove, CA. Visit www.hellofund.org

FOR MY HERO

by Pat Dyson

When our son died, I thought you would hold me and comfort me, and make everything right, like you always did.

You never let me down before. When you couldn't fix things, I was furious with you. You wouldn't even talk or cry or throw things like I did.

When you didn't grieve my way, the right way, I thought you loved him less. And said so.

Now I know you didn't let me down. You cried, you cared, you did the best that any man in pain could do. And I forgive you for not being Superman, or me.

Source: *Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles*



Love

By Jamie Anderson

GRIEF, I'VE LEARNED, IS REALLY JUST LOVE. IT'S ALL THE LOVE YOU WANT TO GIVE, BUT CANNOT. ALL THAT UNSPENT LOVE GATHERS UP IN THE CORNERS OF YOUR EYES, THE LUMP IN YOUR THROAT, AND IN THAT HOLLOW PART OF YOUR CHEST.

GRIEF IS JUST LOVE WITH NO PLACE TO GO.

SOURCE: LESSONSLEARNEDINLIFE.ORG





an imperfect father

by Ian C. Howard, ACSW

"I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by the little scraps of wisdom." - Umberto Eco

I miss my father every day. I've grown used to the loss of his life and the inevitable twinge of the pain of grief when I remember and miss him. As I have aged without him, I have had time to reflect on our lives.

He was human, and therefore, imperfect. Dad struggled with heart problems and poor stress management complicated by alcohol abuse and smoking. He struggled to recover from the devastating loss of his family to divorce, and having joint custody of myself and my twin brother Stefan. Dad sought the companionship of other women and sadly encountered more heartbreak, as none ever helped him move on. He was passionate about his work as a jeweler, but struggled to keep afloat the business that he co-founded with my mother. Yet, amongst all of his struggles, he still found time to enjoy the simple things in life.

My father moved out of the suburbs to recreate fond memories of growing up on a ranch in Texas. He bought an acre of land in Northern California and filled it with horses, sheep, and chickens. He enjoyed cooking, especially barbecuing and marinating steaks, and teaching us to ride dirt bikes. I smile thinking about Dad cruising on a country road on a kid-sized motorcycle. By far his favorite things were riding his Harley Davidson around Sonoma County and watching his beloved 49ers, either in his season ticket seats or at home. My twin brother and I cherish these memories.

My brother and I knew that we meant the world to Dad, as it was clearly stated in his suicide note. However, being 12 years old, it was hard to comprehend that love alongside blaming ourselves for the divorce and not seeing him the weekend before he died by suicide. Now as an adult son, and a mental health professional, I have been able to assemble the pieces that contributed to his battles and his hopelessness. Dad tried the best that he could. I realize he was in pain that felt endless. He could not cope with a heart being broken multiple times, heart problems that modern medicine couldn't address, his inability to see his sons as often as he wanted, and struggling to provide financially for himself and pay child support. In his mind, he was causing more pain.

I have forgiven him, even though at first, I felt hurt, angry, and abandoned. In Dad's honor, my brother and

I decided to continue playing baseball and would think about him before every race in cross country and track. I have also used his memory to grieve and think about all he has missed out on in my life and what else he will continue to miss. I'm saddened he never had the chance to meet my wife and future children.

I've genuinely missed having him as my father, but was fortunate that my step-father and grandfather were able to remain as fatherly role models amongst many other men in my life. Where they were not able to, my mother stepped up. They never tried to replace my father -- they just picked up where he left off. Even though, holidays, his birthday, Father's Day, and his suicide anniversary (angel birthday) have been forever changed, I use those times to remember him, to focus on his strengths, reflect on his struggles, learn from his mistakes, value what qualities of his I possess, and remember those who supported me through his death. For me, it's a celebration of his life and can be done by eating his favorite foods, listening to his music, or wearing his jewelry and clothes.

Dad's struggles have motivated me to pursue a career in mental health and Stefan to pursue a career in physical health. We became involved with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to help prevent more suicide deaths, to receive and share support with those experiencing this sudden, traumatic, and inexplicable loss. I struggled with my own problems and some similar to his including depression and hopelessness. Counseling helped me, but grief groups could not understand my type of loss. I then discovered *Friends for Survival* after moving to Sacramento. For the first time, I received empathy like that of my brother, and was able to share that with every other member. This is an unfortunate club to be a member of, but having people who can understand your suffering and loss - though painful - is also cathartic.

We wish we could have helped him. I cannot change the past; however, I can help others with similar personal battles and losses. My Dad has motivated us to help others in ways we wish he had received or would have been willing to ask for. I am my father's son, and my brother is our father's son. We keep his memory alive through rituals and ceremonies, but most importantly through watching the 49ers and getting just as angry at the referees as he once did.

Ian is a Board Member of Friends for Survival and lives with his wife and their dog in Sacramento.

FINANCIAL FACTS

with Kristine Cozine,
Friends for Survival
Finance Director



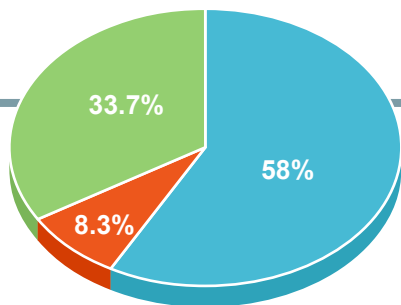
Greetings from the Finance Department. We have had a busy and productive year so far.

Big Day of Giving: A huge “thank you” to everyone who contributed to the first of our two 2019 fundraisers. Thanks to matching funds from an anonymous donor, we raised \$14,324! All of these proceeds will be applied to this year’s newsletter printing costs.

Corporate Matching Gifts: Matching gifts are a type of corporate philanthropy in which companies will financially match donations that their employees make to nonprofits. Check with your employer to see if they match gifts with Friends for Survival. If we are not on the list, let me know how we can be a part of your company’s giving program. Let’s make your donor dollars go further!

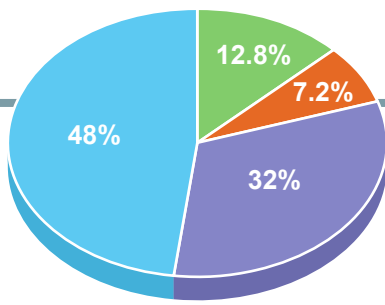
Our 2018 tax returns have been filed. If you would like to review this information, it can be found on GuideStar (www.guidestar.org). Below is a snapshot of our 2018 income and expenses.

INCOME



- Public Support & Fundraisers
- Corporate Grants
- Sacramento County Contract

EXPENSES



- Program Services & Support
- Admin & Clerical
- Operating Expenses
- Newsletter Print & Distribution

Support

N. CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUPS

Our meetings are peer support, not therapy sessions. They are free and you are invited to attend for as long as you need. All locations are drop-in meetings, no RSVP required.

Please call our office for specific meeting locations: 916-392-0664 or 1-800-646-7322

Carmichael (Sacto)
Tuesday, 6/18 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Cameron Park
Tuesday, 6/11 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Chico
Monday, 6/10 @ 4:30pm – 6pm

Elk Grove
Wednesday, 6/12 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Modesto
Monday, 6/17 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Roseville/Rocklin
Thursday, 6/20 @ 7pm – 8:30 pm

Yuba City
Tuesday, 6/25 @ 6:30pm – 8pm

