

# Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2019  
OCTOBER



## JOURNEY

by Robbie Robinson & Bette Miller

We are all on a journey, one which we regret. Down a road that's dark and stormy, I wish we could forget. But we have made a promise, I can see it in our eyes. There will come a better day and for that we will survive.

A heart that has been broken and cast upon the ground, is a heart that yearns for healing, it listens for a sound. A sound of understanding, a sign that someone knows - the grief, the sorrow and the pain, the cold, cold wind that blows.

When the world is upside down and no one seems to care. Your life is gray and hazy and you think that no one's

there. Just reach out beside you and you will find a friend. Someone who knows the emptiness, someone who will help you mend.

There is a ray of sunshine, a light that brightly glows. It beckons us together, it helps us all to know. That we are like a family and we need each other so. Let us all be as one where ever we may go.

So you see we're on a journey, it will take us far and wide. And I hope we'll stay together to face the wind and tide. We'll never know the answer to the question "Why?," but there will come a better day and for that we will survive.

**October:** A Mite of Understanding on Page 4 was written by my dear and long-time friend, LaRita Archibald, who lives in Colorado. We met at a national suicide conference in the 80's. We both had sons who died by suicide and were inspired to start peer support meetings for families and friends after a suicide death. We became pioneers in an effort to bring national attention to the struggle to find comfort, encouragement and hope in the aftermath of a suicide death. LaRita started groups called Heartbeat and wrote her book "Finding Peace Without All The Pieces." We always look forward to seeing each other at these national events. Here we are at the American Association of Suicidology Conference in April of this year.



Gratefully,  
*Marilyn Koenig*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## SUPPORT RESOURCES

**Friends for Survival**  
[www.friendsforsurvival.org](http://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](http://www.allianceofhope.org)

### **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)**

Extensive lists of available meeting support [www.afsp.org/find-support](http://www.afsp.org/find-support)

### **American Association of Suicidology (AAS)**

[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

### **Suicide Awareness Voices of Education**

[www.save.org](http://www.save.org)

### **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)**

For service members, veterans, and their families: [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

### **The Compassionate Friends**

For bereaved parents of a deceased child: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### **The National Center for Grieving Children & Families**

The Dougy Center  
[www.dougy.org/grief-resources](http://www.dougy.org/grief-resources)

## the gift of someone who listens

*by Nancy Myerholts*



Those of us who have traveled a while  
Along this path called grief  
Need to stop and remember that mile  
The first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers  
Who told us of ways to deal.  
It wasn't the one who talked and talked  
That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friend who quietly sat  
And held our hands in theirs  
The ones who let us talk and talk  
And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember  
That more than the words we speak  
It's the gift of someone who listens  
That most of us desperately seek.

*Source: The Compassionate Friends, Cape Cod*



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63, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).*



# a manager's guide

by Suicide Prevention Resource Center

*A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace: 10 Action Steps for Dealing with the Aftermath of Suicide* provides clear steps for postvention, giving leadership a sense of how to: provide an immediate response to the traumatic event; follow a short-term recovery plan; and develop long-term strategies for helping employees cope. The publication provides succinct procedures with checklists and flow charts and serves as a go-to guide for people dealing with the crisis of suicide. The goal of the guide is to help reduce the impact of the suicide event by offering a blueprint for handling these challenging situations. The guide also helps workplaces plan to move from a solely reactive position to a proactive approach, including policy development and employee training. The guide was created through the collaboration of numerous experts and organizations, including the American Association of Suicidology, the Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, and the Carson J Spencer Foundation. Collaborators worked to create a set of guidelines that are useful across varied types of workplaces, and they expect the information to be immediately helpful. This guide can be useful to managers at all levels – from the CEO of a large business to a front-line supervisor at a small organization. Download the guide at [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org) (search for article title above).

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## Healing

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

TO HEAL IN GRIEF IS TO BECOME WHOLE AGAIN, TO INTEGRATE YOUR GRIEF INTO YOURSELF AND TO LEARN TO CONTINUE YOUR CHANGED LIFE WITH FULLNESS AND MEANING. EXPERIENCING A NEW AND CHANGED "WHOLENESS" REQUIRES THAT YOU ENGAGE IN THE WORK OF MOURNING. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN TO YOU; YOU MUST STAY OPEN TO THAT WHICH HAS BROKEN YOU. HEALING IS A HOLISTIC CONCEPT THAT EMBRACES THE PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL REALMS. NOTE THAT HEALING IS NOT THE SAME AS CURING, WHICH IS A MEDICAL TERM THAT MEANS "REMEDYING" OR "CORRECTING." YOU CANNOT CORRECT YOUR GRIEF, BUT YOU CAN HEAL IT.



# a mite of understanding

by LaRita Archibald, Author - *Finding Peace Without All The Pieces*

**LaRita shares:** "The poem A Mite of Understanding summarizes my grief journey to some degree. It was written early in my mourning as I struggled to piece together my son's need to be free, my need to understand his pain, and my emotional responses and reconciliation to his death. Perhaps it will provide other suicide bereaved a bit of solace."

## A Mite of Understanding

I groped along grief's bitter road, rent by sorrow and despair.  
Fear of empty days ahead seemed more than I could bear.  
The throbbing of each heartbeat was an act of agony.  
Relentless questions in my mind fought to torture me.  
I relived unhappy moments, each conflict I retraced.  
I examined every action, invading each private space.  
Oh! I searched so hard for answers to know the reason why  
When he had the choice to live, my son would choose to die.

Wracked by smothering anguish for his death's futility,  
I cried in desolation for the touch of empathy.  
But I found myself an alien, astray in a foreign land,  
Suddenly speaking language no one could understand.

I felt the arms of friendship. I saw others turn away.  
I heard the judging of my child by things that people say.  
I became obsessed with anger, with a need to fault and blame.  
I felt the whip of stigma; tasted the bitter gall of shame.

I felt soul-searching torment for whatever part I'd played  
In the depletion of self-love whence his choice was made.  
I viewed myself a failure. His act diminished me  
For I somehow should have known, been able to foresee.

I felt deep, sharp rejection, assaulted by his choice.  
I tried to think his thoughts; the reasons he would voice.  
All the while I'm searching; so confusing is the quest,  
For a mite of understanding to put my pain to rest.

Yet, could I see his face again and if my arms could hold,  
Would I accept his reasons if this is what he told?

"Mother, please forgive me, but I could not stop to weigh  
The price my desperate choice would leave for you to pay.  
Once I had golden dreams of the promise life held for me  
And I reached with eager hands to grasp their certainty.  
I reached to find fulfillment, to know my place on earth.  
I reached to find achievement, to reinforce my worth.  
I looked to find a purpose to assure my dignity.  
I sought to find the strength to thwart adversity.  
I reached to find the wisdom my faltering steps to guide.  
I sought to find the courage to walk the paths untried.

I reached to find the discipline to lift me toward my goal.  
I prayed to keep the faith to bind my wounded soul.  
I longed to find compassion for the injuries of the climb.  
I tried to have the patience to give my dreams more time.  
I looked from all directions to see my life worthwhile,  
But I found so many viewpoints that ended in denial.

Fear and doubt assailed me, their ghostly shadows haunting;  
Efforts seemed doomed to failure, mistakes forever taunting.  
I felt so trapped and helpless. I lost the strength to cope.  
The future loomed dark and vast, lonely...cold...void of hope.  
Then, spent by the pain within me and its pounding for release,  
I sought a place to rest awhile, to find a moment's peace.  
Please forgive me, Mother, and know these words are true:  
I did not make this choice from lack of loving you."

I screamed my rage at God for deserting my son and me.  
"How could you let this happen? Allow this choice to be?"  
Then I felt His love enfold me; this truth my faith renew;  
God never makes mistakes, but His children often do.

"I hate your futile choice, my child. I doubt it was your right,  
For you took the peace of others with you in your flight.  
I have some understanding now, though it doesn't dry my tears,  
It doesn't fill my empty arms or replace your wasted years.  
But I know God accepted you. He knew your desolate cry.  
And as He extends forgiveness, son, then surely so can I."

I mourn the loss of dimpled smiles, of gentle deed & merry wit.  
His choice becomes my life...in part, but never the whole of it!  
For I, too, have a choice to make. Endless grieving will not serve.  
I'll accept the peace of mind I know that I deserve.  
So I've put aside my searching, my quest for reasons why,  
For reasons will not comfort me, nor answers satisfy.  
I've cast aside self-pity's shroud, forged the hell of black despair.  
I've turned my eyes toward future's plain  
And hope of joy awaiting there.

Yes! I have gained some understanding.  
Oh, how harshly it was earned!  
But I've also gained the strength to use what I have learned;  
To give the touch of empathy when it's solace others seek,  
To lend a listening heart when this grief has need to speak.  
For I have learned of those who know this would I feel,  
And by sharing the pain of others, I help my own to heal.  
So if you must walk my bitter road,  
Your tears mingle with my own,  
Find some comfort knowing, friend,  
You do not walk alone.

# WHAT IS EMDR?

By Kim Johnson, LCSW  
[transformyourlifecounseling.com](http://transformyourlifecounseling.com)



EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) is a type of therapy that enables people to heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences. EMDR utilizes several psychological approaches that provide rapid relief. The client is asked to identify a traumatic memory that is emotionally disturbing. As the client focuses on the memory, the therapist directs eye movements in one of three ways: following a light on a screen, listening to a sound, or feeling a vibration through a hand-held device. As the patient allows the bilateral stimulation through one of the three ways above, simultaneously the patient is focusing on a disturbing memory. The patient is identifying the emotional experience while they are revisiting the trauma. In a short period of time, the patient becomes desensitized to the memory permanently, and then is able to reprocess the experience.

During an initial assessment, it is important to clarify what the problem is and whether or not EMDR would be helpful. Additionally, other significant information is gathered, such as symptoms the client is experiencing, relevant history and the outcome the client is seeking. Once the therapist and client agree that EMDR is beneficial for a specific problem, treatment can begin. Generally, EMDR treatment may take one to four sessions for a single trauma.

EMDR therapy is recognized as an evidenced-based, effective form of treatment for trauma and disturbing experiences. Kim has been in private practice for over 25 years, and has been providing EMDR therapy for clients age 2 and up since 2000. She is certified in EMDR and provides EMDR training and consultation for other therapists. Read more about EMDR therapy at [www.EMDR.com](http://www.EMDR.com).

## 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, 10/15 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

**Cameron Park**  
Tuesday, 10/8 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

**Chico**  
Monday, 10/7 @ 4:30pm – 6pm

**Elk Grove**  
Wednesday, 10/9 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

**Modesto**  
Monday, 10/21 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

**Roseville/Rocklin**  
Thursday, 10/17 @ 7pm – 8:30 pm

**Yuba City**  
Tuesday, 10/22 @ 6:30pm – 8pm

