

Comforting Friends

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

2019
NOV & DEC



HEALING

by Ginny Sparrow

My mother died just before Thanksgiving. So for years, I did something completely out of my normal routine for this day of giving thanks.

I spent it out of the country twice (no one cares about this holiday in other countries!). I spent it with friends only, never family. I then got married and started a new tradition of spending it with my in-laws.

I used to think it was unhealthy of me to be unable to spend Thanksgiving in Kentucky, where I am from, and where she died.

But the suicide of my mother was anything but

healthy. Why would I expect the repercussions to be any different?

I have discovered healing does not always have to be pretty.

Healing will always still hold "not so pretty" remnants, which at first may appear "unhealthy."

I have given up trying to be what society considers completely healed, normal or healthy.

And that is comfort.

*Ginny Sparrow, Program Director,
National Resource Center for
Suicide Prevention & Aftercare.
www.thelink.org*

Nov & Dec: This year has been full of new challenges and wonderful accomplishments. We have expanded our Board of Directors, added extra outreach services to our grieving families and communities, and modernized our newsletter. It can now be sent by email or regular mail to over 4,900 individuals and agencies across this country who have contacted us asking for help. We currently have seven monthly support meetings in No. California, and are in the process of adding two more.

Your on-going financial support enables us to respond to the hundreds of grieving families that contact us every year for the first time. Please consider pledging a monthly or quarterly donation (see Page 7). Your faithful giving and year-end gifts will help us keep our services sustainable.

During this holiday season, it is our wish that each of you find peace in your heart, joy in your loved ones and hope for the future.



Gratefully,
Marilyn Koenig
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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.

Our November & December meetings will focus on coping with the holidays.

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

Carmichael (Sacto)

Tues., 11/19 & 12/17 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Cameron Park

Tues., 11/12 & 12/10 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Chico

Mon., 11/11 & 12/9 @ 4:30pm – 6pm

Elk Grove

Wed., 11/13 & 12/11 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Modesto

Mon., 11/18 & 12/16 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Roseville/Rocklin

Thurs., 11/21 & 12/19 @ 7pm – 8:30 pm

Yuba City

Tues., 11/26 & 12/17 @ 6:30pm – 8pm

New Group Meeting Coming in 2020: Rohnert Park

children, grief and holidays

Years ago, grief was handled differently than it is today. For example, not everyone realized then that children also need to work through and integrate grief. One of the most important things I have learned, both from my own family's experience and from my



research and study, is that each child is unique and handles grief in her or his own way. I have also learned that talking about it helps you heal.

Grieving is probably a new feeling to your children. They don't know what to expect and they may be afraid.

They may be afraid of the actual day and the feelings it may bring for both you and for them. They may be afraid of what other people are going to expect of them. They may be afraid to ask questions that are bothering them.

Will we still have Christmas or Hanukkah?

Will Santa come this year?

Will I get any presents?

Are we still going to Grandma's?

Will we put up a Christmas tree?

Who will light the Menorah?

Is it all right to be happy?

They may feel guilty for looking forward to the holiday. Because you seem sad, they may think they should feel the same way. They may become worried when they don't. They may not know what they want to do, and at the same time, nothing feels right. They may just want to avoid the whole holiday time.

Excerpted from the book *"Not Just Another Day: Families, Grief & Special Days,"* by Missy Lowery Throckmorton. This book is for all those families whose hearts are shattered with loss. This is also for those who try to help them pick up the pieces and mend the holes.

norman rockwell never painted me

by Kathy Hahn

At this time of year, it always seems that I see families of others' dreams.
Everywhere I look, and every ad I see shows the joyful reunions of a family.
With the table laden, goods times abound, while families, reunited, gather round.
But Rockwell never painted an empty chair and a family mourning the one who's not there.

A season that once was celebrated now makes us feel more isolated.

I need my support group so that I can see that there are others just like me -
whose feelings about holidays are mixed at best; whose strength of will is put to the test.
We are loving those who we still hold near - but thoughts of one out of our reach brings a tear.
Even now, amidst the love and gladness, this time of year brings a certain sadness.
I no longer have the "average" family - so that is why Rockwell never painted me.

Source: *The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles*



Just For A Moment

GRATITUDE IS NOT JUST AN EMOTION, BUT ALSO A VIRTUE THAT WE CAN CULTIVATE.
JUST FOR A MOMENT, NOTICE THINGS THAT YOU TAKE FOR GRANTED. CAN
WE COUNT OUR BLESSINGS? CAN WE HEAR THE KIND WORDS? CAN WE
THANK OUR FRIENDS? CAN WE SMILE AT JOYFUL SOUNDS? CAN WE ADMIT
OUR DISAPPOINTMENTS? CAN WE COUNT ON OUR COURAGE? CAN WE
ACKNOWLEDGE GOOD DEEDS?

CAN WE BE GRATEFUL FOR OUR NEW INSIGHTS?





holiday suggestions

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays in grief. You have to decide what is right for you and do it. You have every right to change your mind, even a few times. Friends and family members may not have a clue how to help you through the holidays and you may not either.

Some advance decision making and planning can help you get ready for the season ahead even though the thoughts of "holidays" may be unbearable at this moment. They will come and they will have to be dealt with. The holidays may be hard, no matter what you do. You may hurt, but you will survive.

SOME SUGGESTIONS:

Have a Plan A and a Plan B: Plan A is you go to the Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day dinner with family and friends. If it doesn't feel right, have your Plan B ready. Plan B may be a movie you both liked or a photo album to look through or a special place you went to together. Many people find that when they have Plan B in place, just knowing it is there is enough.

Cancel the holiday all together: Yes, you can cancel the holiday. If you are going through the motions and feeling nothing, cancel them. Take a year off. They will come around again. For others, staying involved with the holidays is a symbol of life continuing. Let the holiday routine give you a framework during these tough times.

Try the holidays in a new way: Grief has a unique way of giving us the permission to really evaluate what parts of the holidays you enjoy and what parts you don't. It is very natural to feel you may never enjoy the holidays again. They will certainly never be the same as they were. However, in time, most people are able to find meaning again in the traditions as a new form of the Holiday Spirit grows inside of them.

Avoid the holidays by going away: Take a cruise, travel to a different city. But keep in mind that the decorations and reminders will probably be everywhere.

Start a new tradition: A winter vacation at a mountain lodge, sledding and skiing, a holiday dinner in the country, or a walk in the woods enjoying nature.

Volunteer: Help serve meals to the homeless, deliver meals or perhaps help decorate the homes of elderly or disabled persons.

Invite friends to your home to share a holiday project: Wrapping packages for children in the hospital, or creating goodie baskets for individuals in a nursing home.

Go to a special holiday celebration: There are many local events where you can enjoy the music and decorations. Plan to be with people you enjoy and avoid depressing situations.

Remember the good times: Include the deceased in your conversations. Others will share memories when they know that you are willing to talk. Tears are an honest expression of love you now miss. To honor your loved one, hang a 'memory stocking,' put out a 'memory box', or designate another special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read and reminisce together.

Purchase yourself a nice journal and writing pen: Write a poem or thoughts expressing your feelings. Practice positive affirmations. Reflect on positive qualities: "I am..." Reflect on your successes: "I can..."

Treat yourself to dinner: See a play, movie, concert or favorite athletic event. Visit a museum or art gallery. Take a trip to your local zoo.

Exercise: Take a yoga class, walk, hike or go for a run. Why not also try a new sport?

Attend a caring support group: Reconnect with family or friends that you have not talked to in a while.

Enjoy a warm cup: Tea, coffee, hot chocolate or cider.

Plan your year-end giving: Donate to your favorite charity in honor of your loved one.

Be honest: Tell people what you DO want to do for the holidays and what you DON'T want to do. Skip holiday events if you are in holiday overload. Don't feel guilty about skipping events. When you go to holiday events, drive yourself so you can leave if it gets to be too much.

Take time to love yourself and be loved.

*Source: Excerpts from Grief & The Holidays
(www.grief.com)*



Remembrances

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

These Friends would be most appreciative of your prayers, love and support during this month. We encourage you to hold them in your thoughts. If you wish to include your loved one in our Remembrances column, please return the form on Page 7.

November

Christopher DOW - Born 09-12-86 Died 11-19-02
parents, Ken & Pauline; sister, Allison Dow, North Highlands, CA

Gary MORALES - Born 11-07-48 Died 03-03-03
wife, Lauri Morales, Pollock Pines, CA

Shaun C. FOSTER - Born 05-10-77 Died 11-03-03
mother, Sherry Foster Whetstone; sister, Lindsay Foster, Rescue, CA

Colleen Ashli BIRCH - Born 01-19-71 Died 11-15-04
mother, Jan Kessler, Manhattan Beach, CA

Mason BAIZA - Born 04-14-88 Died 11-19-16
brother, Eric Baiza, Roseville, CA

Christy BARBER - Born 04-14-70 Died 11-09-94
mother, Judy Jones, Red Bluff, CA

Peter DOWNING - Born 04-27-79 Died 11-24-96
mother, Patricia Downing, Roseville, CA; sister Laury Wedin, Brea, CA

Nathan Carter MORALES - Born 11-28-81 Died 04-23-96
father, Raymond Morales; sister, Elaine Adkins, Placerville, CA

Dana MORAN - Born 09-23-62 Died 11-26-96
mother, Gwenn Moran, Fiddletown, CA

Vince GRILEY - Born 05-15-70 Died 11-07-06
parents, Bob & Mary Griley, Long Beach, CA

Larry SEYFERTH - Born 01-06-55 Died 11-16-96
wife, Cathy Seyferth, Santa Cruz, CA

David Joseph MACALUSO - Born 11-07-78 Died 02-08-99
parents, Joe & Jo Macaluso; sister, Teresa, Brentwood, CA; brother, John, who took his own life, 04-02-17

James Francis SCHWABENLAND - Born 11-24-49 Died 02-09-99
wife, Jacquelyn Schwabenland, Visalia, CA

Debbie GRANET - Born 03-15-58 Died 11-26-89
sister, Eileen Granet, Escondido, CA

Will CARROLL - Born 11-19-80 Died 09-24-11
parents, Tom & Caroline Carroll, Sacramento, CA

Christianne Noel McCREA - Born 12-25-76 Died 11-30-10
parents, Martin & Susan McCrea, Fair Oaks, CA

Benigno (Benny) BRIONES III - Born 04-03-80 Died 11-06-18
mother, Esperanza C. Briones, Valencia, CA

Debbie OLSON - Born 08-25-69 Died 11-10-14
husband, Devin Olson, West Sacramento, CA

Katie THOMPSON - Born 07-18-58 Died 11-08-08
brother, Tim Thompson, Garden Valley, CA

Terry PREUSSER - Born 11-01-48 Died 08-31-90
wife, Harriett Preusser, Sacramento, CA

Maureen "Mo" BEEBY - Born 11-11-82 Died 07-19-08
parents, David & Chris Beeby, Carmichael, CA

Walter NARR III - Born 09-20-65 Died 11-30-10
wife, Walt & Leona Narr, Placerville, CA; sister, Anita Boone; brother, Paul Narr, who took his own life, 08-10-08

Forest WAX - Born 11-12-91 Died 01-21-10
father, Jeff Wax; siblings, Olivia & Sophia Wax, Ryan Oberhansly, Auburn, CA

Brandon DETERS - Born 11-25-92 Died 08-13-11
mother, Karen Leflar, Elk Grove, CA

Marc PINA - Born 11-29-67 Died 03-04-93
wife, Jean Pina, West Sacramento, CA

Mark BATHAM - Born 02-07-73 Died 11-17-93
mother, Jackie Batham, Citrus Heights, CA; sister, Lisa Singleton, Folsom, CA

Trevor Ian SMITH - Born 05-08-82 Died 11-07-97
parents, Bob & Christine Smith, Pensacola, FL

Roger Steve ELLISON, Jr. - Born 05-11-76 Died 11-14-98
step-dad and mother, Curtis & Chae Hinson, Bowersville, GA

Matthew DeWitt THOMASON - Born 11-04-45 Died 08-03-96
parents, M.D. & Jeanette Thomason, Marietta, GA

Warren Clark MERZ - Born 04-02-43 Died 11-28-08
partner, Dr. A. Alan Estock, Rushville, IL

Charles CANISIUS - Born 05-14-49 Died 11-13-13
wife, Ellen Canisius, Elwood, IL

Nicholas Mark HIGGINS - Born 11-29-87 Died 03-15-07
mother, Britt Holmstrom-Salisbury, Benton, ME

Bill J. BULLOCK - Born 08-20-73 Died 11-01-95
mother, Denise Bullock; brothers, Jeff & Kris Bullock, St. Clair Shores, MI

Jeffrey Alan FOESCH - Born 11-24-75 Died 02-07-04
parents, Dick & Sonia Foesch, New Hope, MN

Eric ROBB - Born 11-18-66 Died 11-03-06
mother, Pat Robb, Moberly, MO

Tracy Lee WIRTZ - Born 05-12-70 Died 11-05-12
parents, Ron & Audrey Wirtz, Kenmare, ND

Matthew J. HALL - Born 05-04-83 Died 11-01-04
father, John Hall; sister, Lori, Syracuse, NY

Austin Martin PRICE - Born 07-22-82 Died 11-18-01
parents, Jim & Nancy Price, New Albany, OH; sisters, Carson & Windsor Price-Ferzli

Timothy VAN ORSOW - Born 06-04-59 Died 11-03-03
wife, Kristina Van Orsow; children, Alexis & Chad, Lafayette, OR

James Andrew BERGIN - Born 12-29-64 Died 11-21-04
brother, Jack Bergin, Secane, PA

John P. STENSRUD - Born 11-19-57 Died 08-13-06
sister, Jessica L. Stensrud, Pawtucket, RI

1st Lt Curtis BERENQUER - Born 11-27-92 Died 12-3-2017
parents, Gil & Janet Berenguer, Summerville, SC

Daniel L. BUNCH - Born 01-01-68 Died 11-27-01
parents, Bill & Fran Hulgan, Bend, TX; brothers, David, James & Beau; wife, Michelle and daughter, Hannah

December

Edward F. "Skip" GAUCHER, JR. - Born 09-16-49 Died 12-04-01
sister, Ginny Gaucher, Citrus Heights, CA; nephew, Trenton

Mike KING - Born 12-26-60 Died 03-19-03
mother, Rose King, Sacramento, CA

John Larry JOHNSON - Born 12-05-46 Died 02-04-72
daughter and only child, Lisa Hicks, Anderson, CA

Erik Nunes ROCHA - Born 10-15-71 Died 12-14-15
fiance, Shantell Buethe and son Logan Buethe, Stockton, CA. We miss you everyday.

Harry NELSON - Born 12-22-37 Died 06-04-07
wife, Roberta Nelson, Culver City, CA

Matthew CEVALLOS - Born 04-27-70 Died 12-28-06
mother, Gloria Cevallos, San Francisco, CA

Renee DAVIS - Born 03-09-60 Died 12-05-06
father, Ron Funston and brother Fred, Stonyford, CA

Thomas "Drew" MASSI - Born 12-22-84 Died 06-01-05
grandmother, Barbara Massi, Huntington Beach, CA

Mike B. VILEY - Born 12-07-74 Died 04-23-95
parents, Breck & Sue Viley, Roseville, CA

Robbie DAVIS - Born 12-09-71 Died 01-17-95
mother and step-father, Linda Davis Hawkins, Phil Hawkins; brother, Brian Davis, Auburn, CA

John Michael DOWNING - Born 12-08-68 Died 05-11-95
step-mother, Patricia Downing, Roseville, CA

