

# Comforting Friends

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

2020

JANUARY



## HELPERS ALONG THE WAY

by Kathy Ayling

You will have many helpers  
as you travel on this journey.

You may not even realize who  
they all are until your journey is  
complete.

Be open to accept their help,  
for they've been through this  
with so many others before  
you.

These helpers, I believe,  
are special people...

They know the right words to  
share and when to say them...

You will share with them  
things never mentioned to

anyone before. They'll be  
there when you cry and also  
when you laugh.

They understand exactly the  
depth of what it is you're  
dealing with on this journey of  
yours.

Don't be afraid of what they  
might think, they've probably  
seen and heard it all before.

Just think of where we'd be if  
we had to travel this journey  
alone.

Source: *SOS, Survivors of Suicide*,  
Madison WI

**January:** As we navigate 2020,  
we have another year of missing our loved  
ones, perhaps with more tears and sad-  
ness, but also remembering them for the  
memories of good years with them. I often  
say: "How someone dies is not the sum  
total of their life."

If you are struggling with grief that is  
consuming a great part of your life, allow  
the helpers in your life to hold your hand  
while you cry. Ask them to share their fond  
memories of your loved one. Grief shared  
is grief diminished. I can personally say,  
with the support of "helpers," my life has  
gotten better with each new year.

It is our goal to share the  
comfort and hope that  
each of us received  
when our loved  
one died. I  
look forward  
to sharing with  
you again next  
month.



Gratefully,

Marilyn Koenig  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# 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, 1/21 @ 7pm – 8:30p

**Cameron Park**  
Tuesday, 1/14 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

**Chico**  
Monday, 1/13 @ 4:30pm – 6pm

**Elk Grove**  
Wednesday, 1/8 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

**Modesto**  
Monday, 1/20 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

**Rohnert Park**  
Wednesday, 1/15 @ 7pm-8:30pm

**Roseville/Rocklin**  
Thursday, 1/16 @ 7pm – 8:30 pm

**Yuba City**  
Tuesday, 1/28 @ 6:30pm – 8pm

## permission

*by Doug Manning*

If all the words ever written by the vast army of authors who write about grief were boiled down to one concern, that one concern would be PERMISSION. We need permission to grieve. I verbalize that concern by saying we need safe places and safe people, but the real message is: We need permission.



Permission unencumbered by the unrequested and unwelcome advice of those who have no concept of the pain we are facing. It is hard for people to understand how deep the pain can be, and how debilitating grief really is. They have no idea how hard it is for us to think. How hard it is to eat or sleep. How our emotions are on edge and we cannot seem to find a way to control them. They seem to think all we need is some instructions from them and a new way to look on the bright side of things. Friends and family mean well, but their concern is too great for them to fight off the urge to push us toward their idea of healing.

The answer, then, must be for us to give ourselves permission anyway -- whether they understand or not. No matter what the pressure, no matter what the advice. We must find a way to walk through our own grief at our own pace and on our own schedule. The main thing that I have learned is that people simply need permission to grieve as long and as loud as necessary, until they work through the pain and turn the corner in the way they cope. There are no timetables. There is no "right" way.

Grief is not an enemy -- it is a friend. It is the natural process of walking through hurt and growing because of the walk. Let it happen. Stand up tall to friends and to yourself and say, "Don't take my grief away from me. I deserve it, and I am going to have it."

*Source: "Don't Take My Grief Away from Me," Doug Manning, Author*



# cope with love

by Iris Bolton

"Moving on does not mean forgetting. It means gaining a freedom through the opportunity of closure. It means giving up being a victim. It means having the compassion and the courage to say, 'I don't like being miserable.' It means getting on with our lives, with relationships, with work and play, with living and growing.

"Don't misunderstand me. We are not always efficient or perfect. Nor do we always do well or wisely. Yet, despite our blunders, failures, and mistakes, we manage to cope. And to cope -- with love.

"There! I've said it. To cope with love. Surely that is the secret balm that holds the human family together. With such a plan, we know we are not helpless."

*Excerpt Source: "My Son...My Son...: A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss, or Suicide," Iris Bolton, Author*



# Friendship

by Henri Nouwen

THE FRIEND WHO CAN BE SILENT WITH US IN A MOMENT OF DESPAIR OR CONFUSION, WHO CAN STAY WITH US IN AN HOUR OF GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT, WHO CAN TOLERATE NOT KNOWING, NOT CURING, NOT HEALING AND FACE WITH US THE REALITY OF OUR POWERLESSNESS, THAT IS A FRIEND WHO CARES.

SOURCE: KARA-GRIEF.ORG





# January

by Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D.

Grief is there, always. You don't get over it. You can't hide from it. You can't put it aside until it's convenient. In fact, the more you try to avoid it, the more it catches you. It's a bit like that mysterious gift you once got from some distant relative. The more you try to forget it, the more it stays. Grief is in all the seasons of your life.

But grief doesn't have to be a burden all the time. Like the things you have stored in the basement, it can be sifted through, re-organized and dealt with. It doesn't have to be just stashed in the darkest corner of your heart. Part of grief is learning to live without the person who made your life so incredibly wonderful. But the other side of grief is remembering how wonderful life can be and getting busy with not just surviving, but LIVING!

The snowflakes are still just as lively and mysterious. The spring flowers will bloom again, with their sweet message of life. Summer will bring more warm evenings and fireflies to chase. Fall will turn it's leaves one more time. Winter will come again and another January will be celebrated in the basement...not because it is the only place we can find solace and comfort, but because it is an important part of our process—the sifting and sorting and reorganizing. Your life with your loved one was filled with moments of laughter. Remember them, enjoy them again and again. Don't store them in the basement of your heart.

So, won't you join me this month as I make good my one New Year's resolution? I resolve to keep my basement clean, organized and usable. It will NOT become a repository for cast offs and the no-longer useful in my life. It will be what it really is: a part of my house, my home, my life.

I will be in the basement this month, not escaping the snow (I LOVE that!), but getting ready to heal...

Let the joy your loved one's life brought to you begin to take the place of the hurt and pain of death.

The memories will always hurt, but there also will always be LOVE, and you cannot discard, bury or lose the love you shared.

## THE NEW YEAR

THE NEW YEAR COMES  
WHEN ALL THE WORLD IS READY  
FOR CHANGES, RESOLUTIONS,  
GREAT BEGINNINGS.

FOR US, TO WHOM  
THAT STROKE OF MIDNIGHT MEANS  
A MISSING CHILD REMEMBERED,  
FOR US, THE NEW YEAR COMES,  
MORE LIKE ANOTHER DARKNESS.

BUT LET US NOT FORGET  
THAT THIS MAY BE THE YEAR  
WHEN LOVE AND HOPE AND COURAGE  
FIND EACH OTHER SOMEWHERE  
IN THE DARKNESS

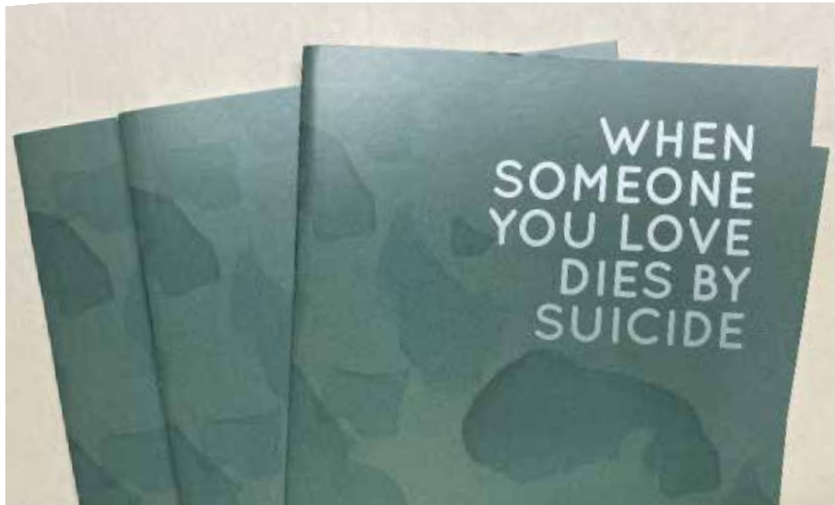
TO LIFT THEIR VOICES AND SPEAK:  
LET THERE BE LIGHT.

Source: Sascha Wagner  
(TCF Des Moines, IA)



# New Resource & Meeting

by Marilyn Koenig, Co-Founder & Executive Director



Survivor and *Friends for Survival* Board Member Stephanie Chandler has authored this amazing resource. Stephanie says: "These booklets are for first responders to provide to families who have experienced a suicide loss. It's what I wish someone had given to me and it's been a personal goal for several years to make this project a reality."

"Special thanks to Susan Reynolds and Traecy Berryman for the beautiful design work and *Friends for Survival* for giving me a place to turn when our world turned upside down, for helping me find my amazing warrior sisters, and for making this project happen. I wish that no family would ever have to go through this, but sadly, many will. My hope is that this little booklet will provide some small amount of comfort and healing."

We need your help getting this resource out into our communities. Currently, *Friends for Survival* has contacted five Law Enforcement Chaplain agencies and several other first responder groups in Northern California. These groups now have over 1,000 of the above noted booklets to distribute. Let us know (or let your first responders know) about this booklet. Email us at [info@friendsforsurvival.org](mailto:info@friendsforsurvival.org) and we will get copies out as requested.

**Rohnert Park:** Beginning January 15, we have a new meeting location in Rohnert Park, CA (see Page 2).

**Webinars:** Please join us for the first of our monthly webinars beginning this month. No matter where you are, you will be able to attend a meeting. Our very special guest will be Ronnie Walker of Alliance of Hope.

For more information and to register, visit our website: [www.friendsforsurvival.org/meetings](http://www.friendsforsurvival.org/meetings)

## Support

### 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)



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**\*Address Correction Requested\***

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63, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).*

For the past year, we hope you have enjoyed our newly formatted newsletter. Did you know that each issue costs just .60 cents each to produce? Your donation of \$7 covers the cost of your newsletter for one year. Thank you for your continued feedback and support.

