

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2020

MARCH



SOMEONE ASKED ME ABOUT YOU TODAY

by Barbara Taylor Hudson

Someone asked me about you today
It's been so long since anyone has done that
It felt so good to talk about you
To share my memories of you
To simply say your name out loud
She asked me if I minded talking about
What happened to you...
Or would it be too painful to speak of it
I told her I think of it every day
And speaking about it helps me release
The tormented thoughts whirling around in my head
She said she never realized the pain
Would last this long
She apologized for not asking sooner
I told her, thanks for asking
I don't know if it was curiosity
Or concern that made her ask
But I told her, "Please do it again sometime soon."

Source: *MayDay SOS, Survivors of Suicide*

March: The latest statistics published by SPRC (Suicide Prevention Resource Center) states: "Among the general population, 51% of people during their lifetime have been exposed to at least one suicide of someone they knew, and 28% have been exposed to two or more suicide deaths. Rates of exposure in current and former military members range from 57% to 65%."

As we try to cope with the aftermath of a suicide death, we can feel scared and overwhelmed and our life may seem out of control. At our March meetings, we will be sharing some coping suggestions and stories of overcoming our fears and finding confidence again.

Your notes of gratefulness confirm that, in time, our grief becomes more tolerable and our pain and fears begin to diminish.



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.

**Please call our office
for specific meeting**

**locations: 916-392-0664
or 1-800-646-7322**

Carmichael (Sacto)

Tuesday, 3/17 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Cameron Park

Tuesday, 3/10 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Chico

Monday, 3/9 @ 4:30pm – 6pm

Elk Grove

Wednesday, 3/11 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Modesto

Monday, 3/16 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Rohnert Park

Wednesday, 3/18 @ 7pm-8:30pm

Roseville/Rocklin

Thursday, 3/19 @ 7pm – 8:30 pm

Yuba City

Tuesday, 3/24 @ 6:30pm – 8pm

on the death of the beloved

by John O'Donohue

Though we need to weep your loss, you dwell in that safe place in our hearts, where no storm or night or pain can reach you.

Your love was like the dawn, brightening over our lives, awakening beneath the dark, a further adventure of colour.

The sound of your voice found for us a new music that brightened everything.



Whatever you enfolded in your gaze quickened in the joy of its being; you placed smiles like flowers on the altar of the heart. Your mind always sparkled with wonder at things. Though your days here were brief, your spirit was live, awake, complete.

We look towards each other no longer from the old distance of our names; now you dwell inside the rhythm of breath, as close to us as we are to ourselves.

Though we cannot see you with outward eyes, we know our soul's gaze is upon your face, smiling back at us from within everything to which we bring our best refinement.

Let us not look for you only in memory, where we would grow lonely without you. You would want us to find you in presence, beside us when beauty brightens, when kindness glows and music echoes eternal tones.

When orchids brighten the earth, darkest winter has turned to spring; may this dark grief flower with hope in every heart that loves you.

May you continue to inspire us:

To enter each day with a generous heart.

To serve the call of courage and love until we see your beautiful face again in that land where there is no more separation, where all tears will be wiped from our mind, and where we will never lose you again.

we change and grow

by Dennis Klass, Ph.D.

There is an interesting discussion in the Talmud, an ancient Jewish writing. Jews had the custom of rending their garments — literally tearing their clothes — to symbolize the ripping apart that death brings.

But the question was asked, after a period of mourning, could you sew the garment up and use it again? The teachers answered yes, but when you mended it, you should not tuck the edges under so it would look as if it had never been torn. This symbolized the fact that life after grief is not the same as before. The rent will show. The next question was, can you sell that garment? The teachers answered no. The rending and mending of our life is ours and others cannot wear it.

No, we don't get over it. We change and grow. Our life has a difference which is ours alone. Perhaps we can help each other make that difference — the kind of difference that increases the world's supply of compassion, love and healing.

Source: *The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles*



This Windmill

THIS WINDMILL IS A SPINNING WHEEL
A MASSIVE METAL FLOWER
THREADING BREEZES THROUGH HER PETALS
WHIRLING HOUR BY HOUR
DIZZYDANCING DAY AND NIGHT
A TURNING CHURNING TOWER
WHISKING WINDS FROM ALL DIRECTIONS
SPINNING AIR TO POWER

Source: *The Poem Farm - Amy Ludwig Vanderwater, Author*



Explosive

by Alan D. Wolfelt Ph.D.

Anger, hate, blame, terror, resentment, rage and jealousy are explosive emotions that may be a volatile yet natural part of your grief journey. It helps to understand that all these feelings are, at bottom, a form of protest. Think of a toddler whose favorite toy is yanked out of his hands. This toddler wants the toy; when it is taken, his instinctive reaction may be to scream or cry or hit. When someone loved is taken from you, your instant reaction may be much the same.

Explosive emotions may surface at any time when someone you have loved dies. You cry out in anguish, "How could this happen! This isn't fair! I hate this!" You may direct these emotions at the person who died, at friends and family members, at doctors, at people who haven't experienced loss, at God.

Unfortunately, our society doesn't understand how normal and necessary these feelings can be to "keep it together." When you are raging or terrified, others may get upset. The intensity of your own emotions may even upset you. Still, you must give yourself permission to feel whatever you feel and to express those feelings. If you collaborate with the well-intentioned but misinformed people around you, your body, mind and spirit will probably be damaged in the process.

Some people may tell you that explosive emotions are not logical. "Anger won't bring him back," they might say. "He didn't mean to die, so don't be mad at him." Watch out. You might find yourself buying into this rational thinking. That is just the problem: thinking is logical; feeling is not.

Another problem is that people oversimplify explosive emotions by talking only about anger. Actually you may experience a whole range of intense feelings such as those listed above. Underneath these emotions are usually feelings of pain, helplessness, fear and hurt.

If explosive emotions are part of your journey (and they are not for everyone), be aware that you have two avenues for expression: outward or inward. The outward avenue leads to healing; the inward avenue does not. Keeping your explosive emotions inside leads to low self-esteem, depression, guilt, physical complaints and sometimes even persistent thoughts of suicide.

Experiencing explosive emotions is normal. They should, however, change in intensity and duration as you do the

work of mourning. Again, I want to emphasize that the key is finding someone who will help you understand what you are feeling and allow you to embrace your grief. Remember, you cannot go around your grief, or over it, or under it, you must go through it. I hope that as you journey through grief you will be surrounded by people who understand, support and love you and will help you explore your explosive emotions without trying to stifle you.

Self-Care Guidelines

Explosive emotions must be expressed, not repressed or worse yet, totally denied. Don't prescribe these feelings for yourself, but do be alert for them. You will need a supportive listener who can tolerate, encourage and validate your explosive emotions without judging, retaliating or arguing with you. The comforting presence of someone who cares about you will help you seek continued self-understanding of your grief experience.

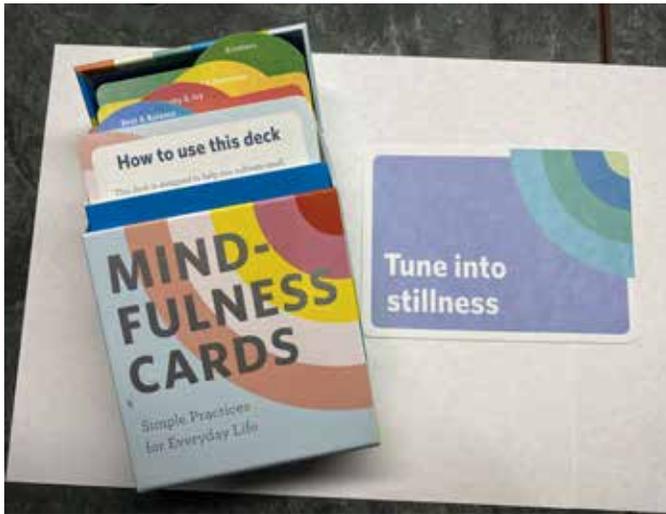
Be aware though of the difference between the right to feel explosive emotions and the right to act out these emotions in harmful ways. It's okay, sometimes even necessary, to feel angry. But if you hurt others or yourself or destroy property, the people who care about you will need to set limits on your behavior. Also, remind yourself that explosive emotions can often indicate underlying feelings of pain, helplessness, frustration, fear and hurt. Listen to your explosive emotions and you may discover the need to embrace what's beneath.

Keep telling yourself that explosive emotions are not good or bad, right or wrong. They just are. They are your feelings and they are symptoms of an injury that needs nurturing, not judging. Paradoxically, the way to diminish explosive emotions is to experience them, even if they feel irrational to you.

About the author: Dr. Alan Wolfelt, is a respected grief counselor, educator, and author. He founded the Center for Loss in 1984 to offer education and support both to grievers and bereavement caregivers. He is known around the world for his compassionate messages of hope and healing as well as his companioning philosophy of grief care. Dr. Wolfelt speaks on grief-related topics, offers trainings for caregivers, and has written many bestselling books and other resources on grief for both caregivers and grieving people. www.centerforloss.com

Helpful Tool

by Susan J. Reynolds, Friends for Survival Board Member



I am always looking for different tools to use for meditation, exercise, and to stay mindful. I found these cards one day while browsing around Amazon.com. The back of my box of cards says:

“Bring awareness, calm, and balance to daily life with this deck of guided cards, each with an inspiring phrase on the front and a bite-size mindfulness exercise on the back. Draw a single card each morning to form an intention for the day, pull several to build a varied practice for the week, or display them around your home or office as inspiring mantras. With color-coded practices for cultivating relaxation, insight, kindness, and joy, *Mindfulness Cards* is an easy, engaging, all-levels way to cultivate mindful moments—anytime and anywhere.”

So who does not want more of that, right? I have started using my cards and love the simplicity. Today's card: Tune into Stillness. The back of the card reads: “An effective way to develop inner calm is to place your attention on something that is already calm - this could be a tree, a cloud, a building, or an item on a shelf. Notice which parts of your experience feel still or relaxed and make the decision to rest your mind there. This is relatively easy if we are in a quiet place but it is just as possible when we are somewhere noisy and busy - you will find moments of stillness everywhere if you look for them. Finding stillness and turning the mind there means you can have access to rest wherever you are.”

Authored by Robert Gunatillake, founder of Mindfulness Everywhere, a company that develops mindfulness products including the bestselling meditation app Buddhify. Take a look and purchase this at www.chroniclebooks.com or AmazonSmile and support Friends for Survival.

Support

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).

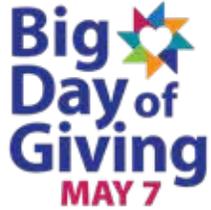




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