

# Comforting Friends

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

2021

AUGUST



## DAYDREAMS

by Stephen A. Wright

Once a day and sometimes more  
You knock upon my daydreams' door  
And I say warmly come right in  
I'm glad you're here with me again.

Then we sit down and have a chat  
Recalling this, discussing that  
Until some task that I must do  
Forces me away from you.

Reluctantly I say good-bye  
Smiling with a little sigh  
For though my daydreams bring you near  
I wish that you were really here.

But what reality cannot change  
My dreams and wishes can arrange  
And through my wishing you'll be brought  
To me each day; A happy thought.

Source: *The Compassionate Friends of Champaign-Urbana, IL*

**August:** The definition of daydreaming is a series of pleasant thoughts that distract one's attention from the present. During a time of intense grief, pleasant thoughts may seem non-existent. Our thoughts seem to be a jumble of words striving to express feelings that are indescribable. We yearn for the time before the suicide death when we thought we had some control. Now our lives are full of heartbreak, and we need breaks from this pain. Daydreaming can temporarily offer you some time to lift the heavy blanket of sadness.

Author Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D., has a small book "*Nature Heals: Reconciling Your Grief Through Engaging with the Natural World*". Take a walk in the park or hike in the countryside near your home. We do know that very gradually your life will get better, and daydreams will become more frequent.



Gratefully,  
*Marilyn Koenig*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## GROUP MEETINGS

Go to our website, click on **Upcoming > Meetings**. Find your virtual meeting date and time, click on **“Register.”** On this same page, you can also check for updates regarding in-person meetings.

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

### Second Monday

August 9 @ 3pm PST

### Third Tuesday

August 17 @ 7pm PST

### Fourth Wednesday

August 25 @ 7pm PST

### Grieving Moms Groups (2)

#1 August 5 @ 6:30pm PST

#2 August 26 @ 3pm PST

### Grieving Spouse & Partner

August 10 @ 6pm PST / 9 EST

### Legacy Survivors (Private Utah Chapter)

Wednesday, August 11 @ 6pm MST

### Modesto (Private Chapter)

Monday, August 16 @ 7pm PST

## IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

### Grass Valley

Thursday, August 19 @ 6pm PST

Hospice of the Foothills

11270 Rough & Ready Highway

Grass Valley, CA 95945

### Cameron Park

Tuesday, August 10 @ 6:30pm PST

Faith Episcopal Church

2200 Country Club Drive

Cameron Park, CA 95682

## WEBINARS:

Available to watch anytime:

FriendsForSurvival.org > Upcoming > Webinars

# apple trees and memories

*by Carol Clum of Medford, OR*

I stand beneath a sky of blue, the August sun warming my back. Apple perfume is in the air, and my grandchildren cannot resist plucking the golden globes from my backyard tree. It is one of those “firsts” that children of 3 and 5 eagerly share with us older folks. We are learning anew that the best apples do not come from a supermarket.

Apple juice drips to the grass beneath bare feet. Giggles float skyward. I close my eyes, lost in the memory of my mother transporting me and 6 siblings down a country lane to the local orchard, where we eagerly fill baskets, then collect 5 cents for each bushel of hand-picked apples. At the end of the day, we are rewarded with ice cream cones all around.

Even at that young age, before I knew that life is not all apple pie and ice cream, I was learning about change. The orchard ritual meant summer was shutting down, autumn was just around the corner, the school bell would ring, and life would change – whether I liked it or not.

I cannot say that growing up with this knowledge of change prepared me for that September when my son died. His death can never be anything less than an unacceptable tragedy. Rather, I learned that the unexpected can and does happen. And when something truly terrible happens, we shut down like the end of summer vacation. I fear there will be no more apples and ice cream for as long as I live. There is no fun in being present for anymore “firsts.”

Fall has always been my favorite season. Now the calendar is cluttered with remembrance dates. I resist the forward movement from the days when he lived to the days after death – as life goes on, but he does not. My life has forever changed. My feelings about life and death have changed. I have changed.

With each leaf that falls to the ground, I feel a loss so deep that, finally, I am empty like the barren trees. When he died, I expected the empty feeling to last for the rest of my life. I had forgotten my childhood lesson: seasons change. While I grieved, I watch six years’ worth of seasons come and go. For me, there is no closure. I am not prepared to say goodbye to the past. But slowly, I have begun to allow change to happen.

If there is anything I can suggest to those who are the “less seasoned” in grieving, it is to remain open to the present. Be awake and aware as grief changes the way you feel and who you are. Seasons change, and the seasons of the heart can change. As I peer into the future, I no longer see only emptiness. Sometimes, I smile at memories of seasons past. Sometimes, I see blue skies and apple trees.

*Source: The Compassionate Friends newsletter, Los Angeles, CA, September 2005*

# had I known

*by Joan Schwartz, Friends for Survival member*

Had I known... I would've listen to you patiently. I wouldn't have taken your harsh words personally. I would have dropped everything.

I would have said "I'm here for you," and "I love you." I would have said, "We'll solve this problem."

I would've tried to put my arms around your tensed shoulders and hugged you.

I would've told you, "It will destroy me if you leave" (even though I am not destroyed).

I wouldn't have left you alone. I would've repeated over and over again, drowning out your rage, "You are the best thing that ever happened to me,"

And even though you may have still left, at least I could say to myself now, "I tried."



*A Gift*

GIVE YOURSELF A GIFT OF FIVE MINUTES OF CONTEMPLATION IN AWE OF EVERYTHING YOU SEE AROUND YOU. GO OUTSIDE AND TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO THE MANY MIRACLES AROUND YOU. THIS FIVE-MINUTE-A-DAY REGIME OF APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE WILL HELP YOU TO FOCUS YOUR LIFE IN AWE. REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE JUST AS MUCH A MIRACLE AS THE LARK AND THE SNAIL.

DR. WAYNE DYER



# Color Therapy

A study published in the *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* 22(2) pp. 81-85 provides support that coloring mandalas or geometric patterns actually does help lower stress and anxiety levels (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ688443.pdf>).



Coloring has the ability to relax the fear center of your brain, the amygdala. It induces the same state as meditating by reducing the thoughts of a restless mind. This generates mindfulness and quietness, which allows your mind to get some rest.

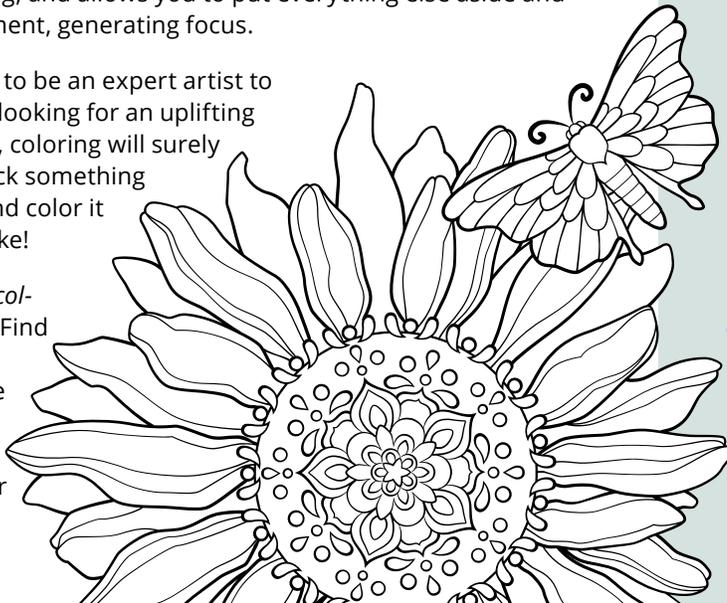
Coloring goes beyond being a fun activity for relaxation. It requires the two hemispheres of the brain to communicate. While logic helps us stay inside the lines, choosing colors generates a creative thought process.

We know we get a better night's sleep when avoiding engaging with electronics at night, because exposure to the emitted light reduces your levels of the sleep hormone, melatonin. Coloring is a relaxing and electronic-free bedtime ritual that won't disturb your level of melatonin.

Coloring requires you to focus, but not so much that it's stressful. It opens up your frontal lobe, which controls organizing and problem solving, and allows you to put everything else aside and live in the moment, generating focus.

You don't have to be an expert artist to color. If you're looking for an uplifting way to unwind, coloring will surely do the trick. Pick something that you like and color it however you like!

Sources: [www.colorit.com/blogs](http://www.colorit.com/blogs). Find coloring books at your favorite book store or on Amazon.com (search for Art Therapy Coloring).



# 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 Nat'l Center for Grieving Children & Families

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



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