

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

February 2025



I Am Closing In On The One Year Mark

*By Becky Brown, Friends for Survival member
and Writing Circle participant*

One year since my partner Joe took his life, rearranging the life I loved like a hurricane. It's still hard to process my experience over the past 11 months. I've been on a roller coaster I didn't plan to ride. Rolling up, down, sideways, back and forth through intense emotions I didn't think existed. I didn't know it was possible to survive this much pain.

But somehow, I do. Each day delivers its version of this larger experience. Often without warning, I am catapulted into the depths of despair and back out into the light, sometimes within hours, days, or even just a few minutes. Tears flow and I wonder if I will always feel this helpless. And then I gather my strength, take a deep breath, and begin again.

Thankfully, two things are helping me weather the storm. The first is to practice living only two hours at a time. When the details of my life become overwhelming, I can slow the freight train of worry and fear with this simple question:

"Does it need to be addressed in the next two hours?"

Most do not. When that is true, I move on to the things that need my immediate attention: Making lunch. Taking the dogs for a walk. Paying a bill. Calling a friend. Forcing myself to stay present and avoid "future tripping" is unfamiliar, but it works wonders when I do. Big life questions about all the aspects of my life that were dismantled when Joe died still loom large:

"Will I ever be able to work and earn a consistent income again?"

"Should I relocate to be closer to family now that my reason for moving across the country is dead?"

"How many more years will I wake up in the morning hating my life?"

"Will the sweet and happy memories of Joe and the love we shared ever outnumber the dark and scary ones that have haunted me since his rapid decline in the months before he violently ended his life?"

Slowing down my thoughts and focusing on what is right in front of me seems to calm my nervous system and make each day more manageable. The big questions are still there. But they don't harass me for attention today.

The second useful tool is forcing myself to memorize the small, fleeting moments when I do feel contentment. Sometimes they are brief, gone in an instant: the first sip of coffee, the sunrise over the ocean on my morning walks, birds visiting the feeder out my window, the sound of the dogs breathing at my feet as I type this on my computer.

It's not easy to slow down enough to allow these moments to imprint on my heart and soul, but when I do, I can string them together to make something that lasts. I imagine each little moment of happiness like a sparkly, twinkling light on a strand stretched out before me, lighting my way down the dark path ahead.

I'm no less afraid of my unknown future. I'm still desperately sad that Joe is gone; angry and resentful for the loss of the life we shared. But thanks to the wisdom of the survivors who share their experience and strength in the support group meetings I attend, the books, online forums, and newsletters on the topic of suicide loss I read, I am hopeful that one day at a time, sometimes two hours at a time, I will string together a new life I love but haven't found just yet.



Dedicated in loving memory of my partner Joe, who left this earth February 14, 2023.



Join us for a virtual 8-week closed group, open to all loss survivors. We will be writing about our grief using thoughtful prompts.

Program fee is \$179 (or \$22 per session). Limited to 10 participants. Attendance at the first session is mandatory. No prior writing experience required. Weekly email with prompts and resources provided.

MT_WC_20250312 Cohort starts March 12: [Registration now open](#)

MT_WC_20250514 Cohort starts May 14: [Registration now open](#)

Don't forget: Our Writing Circle Reconnect is held every third Thursday of the month. More info and register [HERE](#).

**The Writing Circle Welcomes
A Special Guest**

Special guest speaker Carla Fine will be joining us for a **free** Writing Circle on **Thursday, March 27** (3pm PT / 4pm MT / 5pm CT / 6pm ET).

Carla, who lost her husband to suicide, is the author of the widely acclaimed book, [*No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One*](#) published by Broadway Books/Doubleday in 1999 (now in its 28th printing).

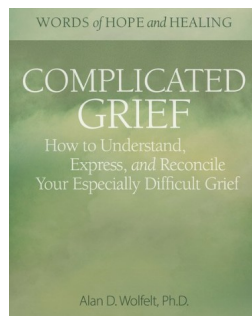


Read more about Carla here www.carlafine.com. Carla will talk about healing through writing, then lead us through a writing prompt.

Register Here : March 27

What is Self-Care? Why It's Important to You

Self-care refers to anything that you do to keep yourself mentally, emotionally, physically socially and spiritually healthy. If you don't practice self-care regularly, you're risking your well-being and inviting burnout. Every month we will bring you new articles and tips for taking good care of yourself.



Self-Care For People Experiencing Complicated Grief *By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.*

As you are actively, intentionally mourning in small doses each day, it's also nonnegotiable that you simultaneously focus on your self-care. You might be reflecting: *How am I supposed to exercise, eat right, etc. when I barely have enough energy and focus to get out of bed, go grocery shopping, or do laundry?* It's a fair question.

The answer is that self-care in grief is about attitude as much or more than it is about a to-do list. If you simply move through your days with the attitude that you need and deserve good care, you are more likely to make small choices that serve you well. When it comes to self-care, it's the little things that are the big things.

Social: In grief, social self-care means finding a balance between allowing yourself to appropriately withdraw when you need to and reach out for connection and hope on a regular basis.

You need others to help you with your grief. When you are actively mourning, you need nonjudgmental listening ears and kindness. And when you aren't actively mourning, you need company. You need to be around other people, and you need to share experiences with other people. All of this is essential to healing in grief and to finding meaning in your ongoing life.

If you're an introvert, you might need to "put yourself out there" more than you normally would. Again, think small. Commit to connecting with at least

one other person once a day by texting, emailing, phoning, or catching up face-to-face. It's even better if you are able to do something together in person. Over time, work on adding social activities to your life that feel meaningful to you. Remember that good relationships don't just happen. They require proximity, repetition, and quality time.

I understand, however, that complicated grief can be socially challenging. If the circumstances of your loss are stigmatized in any way and have thus put a strain on your relationships, or if others don't know how to broach the subject with you, you may need to be the one to reach out and put people at ease. Let them know you're struggling with the loss and that it's good to talk about it.

Excerpt from [Complicated Grief: How to Understand, Express, and Reconcile Your Especially Difficult Grief](#) by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Reprinted with permission.

Support Group Meetings & Other Resources

Our Virtual & In Person
Support Group
Meetings

[Click Here](#)

Helpful Books to
review in our
library

[Click Here](#)

Links and info to
other support
agencies

[Click Here](#)

Read Our Blog Articles

[Click Here](#)

Watch our Webinars

[Click Here](#)

Visit our Website

[Click Here](#)

February Remembrances

When loved ones have to part
To help us feel we're with them still
And soothe a grieving heart
They span the years and warm our lives
Preserving ties that bind
Our memories build a special bridge
And bring us peace of mind.
~ *Emily Matthews*

[Click HERE to Remember](#)

Would you like to add
your loved one's name to
our Remembrances?

Print and return this form
(click on the image for a
printable PDF).

Or you can click [HERE](#) to
submit your information.



Friends FOR SURVIVAL

DONATE & REMEMBER

Enclosed is my donation of:

\$

In memory of:

From:

Name and relationship

☐ Include my loved one in Remembrances.
My loved one's name is:

DOB:

DOD:

My name and relationship:

Please detach and mail to:
Friends for Survival
P.O. Box 214463
Sacramento, CA 95821-4463



Become a Friends for Survival "GEM" With a Monthly Pledge

by Kristine Cozine, Finance Director

We are so appreciative of our **GEMS** (gives every month) members of our Friends for Survival community. There are several ways to establish sustained giving: simply set up an eCheck through your bank, or create a recurring credit card or PayPal donation through our website (just check the "Make this a monthly donation" box).

We can also send you 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes if you prefer to mail in a monthly check. Call or email me if you have any questions or need assistance setting up your pledge.

Kristine Cozine
Office: 916-392-0664
Email: kristine@friendsforsurvival.org

[Click HERE to Donate Now](#)



This program is funded by the Division of Behavioral Health Services through the voter approved Proposition 63, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

**Platinum
Transparency
2024**

Candid.

Our site and newsletter hosts both content that we create and that our collaborative partners create. All material published is either protected by our copyrights or trademarks or those of our collaborative partners. You may not modify, publish, participate in the transfer or sale of, reproduce, create derivative works of, distribute, publicly display or in any way exploit any of the materials or content on our site in whole or in part without our express permission. If you would like to request permission to use or reprint any of the content on our site, either online or in a print format, please visit our website home page [here](#).
