



*Helping grieving parents and families rebuild their lives after the death of a child*

[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org) January – February – March 2019

## Bereaved Parents of the USA Mission:

We, as bereaved parents, help grieving parents and families rebuild their lives following the death of a child.

*Meetings are generally held the first Tuesday of every month, 7:00 – 8:30 PM. Doors open at 6:30 PM for greeting and fellowship.  
First Congregational Church of Western Springs, 1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, Illinois  
Eleanor Byrne (708-485-6160) and Sally Yarberry (708-738-0396), Chapter Co-Leaders*

### The Broken Places

~ Bob Rosenberger, TCF, Burke, VA, May–June 2018

"If I am what I do, and I don't, then I'm not." These words have been spinning around in my head ever since I heard someone comment on how we tend to define ourselves by what we do rather than by who we are. I've thought about those words incessantly, almost to the point where they became nonsensical. But they aren't.

Until the day of my son Bryan's death, I'm afraid I was guilty of defining myself by my roles in life: computer marketer, husband, father...and without really being aware of it, most often in that order. I was caught up with "bringing home the bacon," "making a name for myself" and the tunnel vision that goes with all that. My sense of self-worth was wrapped up with these things. One of my colleagues called me "Rapid Robert" because of my pace in going places ...or was it a treadmill? I was a workaholic, and only too often by the time I'd gotten around to family matters, I'd run out of steam.

Then my son Bryan died. The superficiality of my life smashed headlong into a brick wall. For months I felt I was sitting in the middle of a field scattered with the pieces of my life: job pieces askew here, family relationships trailing off there, dreams piled akimbo here, hopes rent asunder over there.

As I listened to my son's friends at the two remembrances for him, it dawned on me that at 19, a young man doesn't have a long list of credits and accomplishments. Bryan hadn't made a name for himself. Bryan was Bryan, no more, no less. His friends loved him for who he was, not what he was.

*Strange the lessons fathers learn from sons – to care, to share, to be there.* I wrote these words blinded by pain, and I could sense what it was that brought together people from all over in a common bond of shared grief—Bryan cared about them.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

#### Tuesday, January 8 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - General Discussion

#### Tuesday, February 5 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

#### Tuesday, March 5 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - General Discussion

#### Tuesday, April 3 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

I wondered if I were to die suddenly, after more than 50 years of life, how would I be eulogized? "A real professional, a true marketer, a dedicated employee..." I'd settle for two words: *He cared.*

I've tried to put the pieces of my life back together again, but I've tried to be selective. I've left many pieces lying in that field because they don't fit anymore. And I've fashioned new pieces – each in some way inspired by the lesson of Bryan's life.

Hemingway wrote, "Sooner or later life breaks everyone, but afterwards some are stronger at the broken places." I've tried to put the pieces of my life back together selectively. I've fashioned new pieces. Some pieces no longer fit. As bereaved parents, we have a choice: We can fixate on the death or we can affirm life. I know which my son would have wanted for me. 🙏

***Grievors use a very simple calendar:  
Before and After***

## ♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

*In loving memory of*  
**Douglas Scott McCallum**  
*September 23, 1980 until February 21, 2000*

It's hard to believe you have been gone 19 years.  
We still miss you and remember you every day.

Love, your family



## ♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

*In loving memory of*  
**Heather Runge**  
*November 21, 1989 until January 4, 1990*

Happy 29<sup>th</sup> Birthday, sweet angel, Heather!!!!!!

You will always fill my heart with a desire to share kindness and love in the world around us! What a precious gift your loving spirit gave to me the day you were born and it is one I hold dear in my heart and try to honor each and every day!!!

I know you're dancing in heaven as you watch over us and also are smiling in JOY on your beautiful nieces, Delaney and Emmy! They are amazing gifts to our family!

I miss you more than words can express and I'll love you forever and ever!  
Happy Birthday, Heather!

Love,

Mom (Sandy Runge Sand) & Sister Lauryn Runge



## Welcome

Bereaved Parents Chicagoland Chapter extends a warm welcome to the new attendees at our recent meetings. We know it is difficult to come to your first meeting.

New attendees:

- ♥Maureen Fuller, mother of Weston
- ♥Lisa and Eric Miles, parents of Hayden

We are very sorry for the reason you are here, but we are glad that you found us. 🍀



## ♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gifts ♥ ♥ ♥

A Love Gift is a donation to the chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling. A financial contribution in any amount is appreciated. All Love Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in the newsletter accompanied by wording exactly as the donor submits. BP/USA is a national non-profit organization; therefore all donations to the chapter are tax deductible as allowed by law.

When mailing in a love gift, **please include your child's name**, and any other info you would like in your love gift message. Make your check payable to: **BP/USA Chicagoland** and mail it to arrive **by the 10<sup>th</sup>** of the month prior to the upcoming newsletter. **The newsletter is published quarterly.**

Mail your check to:  
**Bereaved Parents of the USA, Chicagoland Chapter**  
**P.O. Box 320, Western Springs, IL 60558**

It is also recommended that you email your love gift message to the newsletter editor and chapter co-leader, Sally Yarberry, at [psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com). 🍀

## ♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

*In loving remembrance of*  
**Nadia Chowdhury**  
*May 14, 1983 until February 21, 2004*

"Short of being twenty-one on twenty-one,  
February will forever carry with it a vacancy,  
though your robe is on your bed,  
your glasses on your nightstand,  
and your pictures still hang on the wall."

Love forever,  
Mom, Dad, & lillebror.



## ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥Love Gift♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

*In loving remembrance of*  
**William "Billy" Collins**  
*November 15, 1965 until December 24, 1989*

"The true measure of one's life is not the present fire of their character, but the flame that continues to burn even after death."

The Collins Family

# NATIONAL GATHERING 2019



## Bereaved Parents USA

August 2-4 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri

Join us in St. Louis, MO for the  
**2019 Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gathering**

Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel  
7730 Bonhomme Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
(314) 863-0400

Start planning now, information is on the national website at  
<https://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/annual-conference/annual-gathering-conference/>

### **SAVE THE DATE**

*Our annual gathering conference provides an opportunity to hear some of the best speakers and workshop presenters in the nation who are experts on many topics related to grief and loss. They will inspire you with their messages of HOPE. They will offer you the tools you need to continue to HEAL as you transition from mourning to living again after the loss of your child, sibling or grandchild.*

*The camaraderie and connections created, as you get to know parents and siblings from across the United States who have experienced similar losses, will touch you in a profound way. You will benefit from sharing stories, tears, hugs, laughter and more as you bond during workshop sessions, shared meals, remembrance ceremonies and creative activities. Let the "Spirit of Love" fill your heart in 2019.*

***Our Children, Loved, Missed and Remembered*** – Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents and families. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and send our prayers, love and support to their parents and families

**Breanne Conterio – 21**  
Feb 27, 1990 - Jan 09, 2012  
P.E.  
Teri & Steve Conterio

**Bryce Stack – 30**  
Jan 26, 1979 - Jul 24, 2009  
Accidental Overdose  
Trish DeBauche

**Dana Samuel – 32**  
Apr 07, 1970 - Jan 23, 2003  
Asphyxiation  
Lana Samuel

**Denise Dubois – 38**  
Feb 12, 1960 - Jan 02, 1999  
Cancer/Suicide  
Janet & Bernie Finnigan

**Gerrick Davies – 18**  
Jan 21, 1986 - Feb 09, 2004  
Murdered  
Diane Davies

**Heather Runge – 6 Weeks**  
Nov 21, 1989 - Jan 04, 1990  
Neuroblastoma  
Sandy Sand

**Jeffrey Anderson – 17**  
Jan 28, 1981 - May 25, 1998  
Asphyxiation  
John & Irene Anderson

**Jeffrey Scott Caccavari – 34**  
Jan 16, 1967 - May 10, 2001  
Unknown  
Dominic & Karen Caccavari

**Jennifer Roley – 22**  
Nov 26, 1989 - Jan 15, 2012  
Drug Overdose  
Lynn Gantner

**Josiah Steven Weiberg – 10 Mon**  
Jan 16, 2009 – Dec 03, 2009  
Spinal Muscular Atrophy  
Alesha & Jim Weiberg

**Journee Marie Weiberg – 5**  
Jan 13, 2011 – Mar 05, 2016  
Spinal Muscular Atrophy  
Alesha & Jim Weiberg

**Daniel F. (Dan) Schmid – 50**  
Jan 27, 1966 – Oct 11, 2016  
Heart Failure  
Wm. (Bill) & Jeanne Schmid

**Ryan Vesely – 17**  
Oct 03, 1974 – Jan 18, 1992  
Auto Accident  
Stan & Val Vesely

**Martin K. Adams – 42**  
Dec 11, 1960 - Jan 06, 2003  
  
Marge & Bill Adams

**Matthew Gavin – 32**  
Jan 22, 1981 - May 17, 2013  
Cancer  
Mary Ellen & Glenn Gavin

**Matthew Swett – 25**  
Jan 07, 1979 - Jan 25, 2003  
Accident  
Keith & Jean Swett

**Patrick Vincent DeMauro – 19**  
Jan 28, 1982 - Aug 29, 2001  
Car Accident  
Vincent & Debbie DeMauro

**Ryan James Moravcik – 21**  
Jan 07, 1980 - Dec 31, 2001  
Suicide  
James & Lucille Moravcik

**Brian Schrader – 13**  
Feb 18, 2003 – Jun 03, 2016  
Traffic Accident  
Melissa Schrader

**Eric Robisch – 22**  
Jun 28, 1970 – Feb 08, 1993  
Auto Accident  
Sue and Lou Robisch

**Douglas McCallum – 19**  
Sep 23, 1980 – Feb 21, 2000  
Accident  
Reg & Marcia McCallum

**Alyssa Dabrowski – 22**  
May 20, 1979 - Feb 03, 2002  
Car Accident - Hit & Run  
Allen & Rosemary Dabrowski

**Donna Hark – 48**  
Oct 28, 1961 – Feb 08, 2010  
Pulmonary Hypertension  
Geraldine Ploskonka

**Casey Cox – 27**  
Dec 17, 1985 - Feb 14, 2013  
Asthma  
Cynthia Cox

**Dan Parmenter – 20**  
Oct 15, 1987 - Feb 14, 2008  
NIU Classroom Shooting  
Gary Parmenter

**Daniel Meyer – 7**  
Feb 21, 1977 - Sep 21, 1984  
Hit by Car  
Kenneth & Olivia Meyer

**Deborah Gilligan Main – 35**  
Mar 18, 1965 - Feb 13, 2001  
Melanoma  
Margaret Gilligan



**Brian Yracheta – 50**  
Feb 03, 1968 – Feb 19, 2018  
Cancer  
Peggy Yracheta



***Our Children, Loved, Missed and Remembered (continued)*** – Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents and families. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and send our prayers, love and support to their parents and families

**Colt Grabowski – 20**

Feb 21, 1993 – May 16, 2013  
Car Accident  
Meg Iorfida

**Dennis Rich – 37**

Feb 11, 1971 - Apr 01, 2008  
Cancer  
Karen Rich

**Melissa Juergensen – 19**

Feb 24, 1989 – May 03, 2008  
Auto Accident  
Ruth Juergensen

**Joseph Ross – 23**

Jun 09, 1985 – Feb 05, 2009  
Asthma  
Pat Ross

**Emily Rose Ford –**

Feb 23, 2010 - Feb 24, 2010  
Prematurity  
Jeremy & Jaime Ford

**Henry J Ford –**

Feb 25, 2010 - Feb 26, 2010  
Prematurity  
Jeremy & Jaime Ford

**Evan Holmes – 20**

Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010  
Unknown  
Irene Gangemi  
Mason Holmes

**Nancy Inamine – 47**

Apr 15, 1967 – Feb 07, 2015  
Cancer  
Joyce Connolly

**Foly Phillips – 26**

Feb 18, 1982 - Feb 26, 2008  
Sickness  
Yinka & Grace Phillips

**Keya Sansquiri - 5**

Apr 07, 2010 – Feb 13, 2016  
Cardiac Arrest  
Nella Sansquiri

**Glenn Patrick Beach – 31**

Nov 07, 1960 - Feb 16, 1992  
Murdered  
John & Grace Beach

**Mark Susong – 21**

Jun 05, 1990 – Feb 10, 2012  
Drug Overdose  
Jill Susong

**Ian McDonald-Shumaker – 17**

Feb 06, 1989 - May 11, 2006  
Suicide  
Stacia McDonald-Shumaker

**Jamie Mitchell – 31**

Feb 28, 1978 - Sep 19, 2009  
Suicide  
Lance & Kristie Mitchell

**Steven Glosky – 23**

Feb 16, 1972 – Nov 13, 1995  
Suicide  
Judy & Danny Glosky

**Kate Pranno – 24**

May 19, 1977 - Feb 22, 2002  
Liver Failure from Drugs & Alcohol  
Suzi Scott

**Katherine Lacewell – 41**

Feb 27, 1969 - Oct 16, 2011  
Alcoholism  
Allen Lacewell

**Kimberly Ann Olson – 15**

Feb 14, 1983 - Aug 20, 1998  
Histicytic Disorder  
Larry & Danita Olson

**Michael Patrick Gordon – 30**

Feb 20, 1974 - Aug 08, 2004  
Killed by Drunk Driver  
Robert & Carol Gordon

**Mike Seaney – 44**

Feb 24, 1951 - Sep 23, 1995  
Medical Misdiagnosis  
Vernadene Tolman

**Nadia Chowdhury – 20**

May 14, 1983 - Feb 21, 2004  
Hit & Killed by Drunk Driver  
Nasrin & Shamsul Chowdhury

**Nancy R. Lyell (Sue's Sister) – 35**

Feb 14, 1961 - Sep 10, 1996  
Cancer  
Sue & Garry Fink

**Roseanne Strick – 22**

Feb 27, 1969 - Oct 14, 1991  
Brain Aneurysm/Heart Attack/Car  
Accident  
Ilse Strick

**Sean Howard Anderson – 17**

Feb 22, 1983 - Dec 05, 2000  
Suicide  
Maureen Anderson

**Amy Elizabeth Gales – 19**

Jul 18, 1975 – Mar 08, 1995  
Auto Accident  
Ron & Sandy Gales

**Thomas (Tommy John) Adams – 35**

Feb 01, 1966 - Nov 01, 2001  
Marge & Bill Adams

**Tim Schiefelbein – 18**

Dec 07, 1989 - Feb 24, 2007  
Car Accident  
Diane Grabowski



***Our Children, Loved, Missed and Remembered (continued)*** – Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents and families. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and send our prayers, love and support to their parents and families

**Timmy Ciametti – 5**

Feb 12, 1985 - Mar 18, 1990  
Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome  
Vince & Gloria Ciametti

**Tony Jurkas Jr. – 23**

Feb 26, 1983 - Apr 16, 2006  
Suicide  
Laurie Jurkas

**Jacob Kowalik – 10**

Feb 26, 2004 – Apr 15, 2014  
Heart Attack  
Mike & Jennifer Kowalik

**Amanda Coughlin – 10**

May 11, 1991 – Mar 15, 2002  
  
Cathy Coughlin

**Sarah Jane Melton – 27**

Mar 19, 1969 – Jul 09, 1996  
Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma  
Jack & Jane Larson

**Brendon Anderson – 22**

Jul 18, 1976 - Mar 16, 1998  
Murdered  
Rob Anderson

**Carl Alan Vuillaume – 16**

Mar 14, 1989 - Jul 21, 2005  
Accidental Drowning  
Rob & Charleen Vuillaume

**Dan Woods – 29**

Mar 12, 1978 - Aug 22, 2007  
Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy  
Mary Woods

**Daryle J. "DJ" Hall – 22**

Mar 10, 1984 - Sep 11, 2006  
Accidental Drug Overdose  
Bob and Sherry Hall

**Timothy Kuzmicki – 16**

Mar 07, 1986 - Nov 13, 2002  
Motorcycle/Auto Collision  
Kathy Kuzmicki

**Eric-Alan Gottung – 24**

Oct 10, 1986 - Mar 04, 2011  
Suicide  
Nancy & Eric Gottung

**Frank Knapczyk, Jr. – 25**

Mar 28, 1967 - Oct 24, 1992  
Electrocution  
Barbara & Frank Knapczyk

**Garrett Joel Zaagman – 7**

Mar 04, 1976 - Dec 09, 1983  
Spinal Meningitis  
Dirk & Florence Zaagman

**Gianna (Gia) Ugartechea - 18**

Mar 21, 1998 – Mar 09, 2016  
Unknown  
Kimberly Baber & Henry Ugartechea

**Jennifer Lynn Kirwan – 17**

Mar 10, 1981 - Sep 20, 1998  
Auto Accident  
Linda Kelley

**Jessica Louise Lang – 23**

Mar 03, 1980 - Dec 12, 2003  
Heroin Overdose  
Kristine Lang

**Katie Evans – 35**

Mar 24, 1978 - Jul 16, 2013  
Heroin Overdose  
Anne & Ed Evans

**Mia Lozano – 13**

Jul 04, 2002 – Mar 11, 2016  
Diabetes / Cardiac Arrest  
Augustine Lozano

**Matthew Lane – 27**

Mar 08, 1978 - Oct 10, 2005  
Car Accident  
Joylin Lane

**Michael Werth – 24**

Mar 18, 1978 - Mar 22, 2002  
  
Janey Reed

**Natalie Anne Ragusa – 27**

Oct 24, 1975 - Mar 04, 2003  
Car Accident  
George Ragusa

**Nicholas Palumbo – 21**

Jul 10, 1981 - Mar 05, 2003  
Snowmobile Accident  
Debbie Palumbo

**Robert Joseph Gentilini, Jr. – 25**

Mar 20, 1964 - May 18, 1989  
Brain Infection  
Bob & Mary Gentilini

**Ron Buccieri – 42**

Mar 22, 1961 - Aug 31, 2003  
Unknown  
Carol Polich

**Russel Witek – 14**

Jun 16, 1994 - Mar 29, 2009  
Leukemia/Brain Tumor  
Dan & Helen Dennett

**Ryan Paul – 15 1/2**

Jul 06, 1988 - Mar 09, 2004  
Hit by Car  
Roy & Melody Paul

**Cory Payne – 39**

Mar 27, 1978 – Oct 17, 2017  
Accidental  
Don & Terri Liebenritt

***Our Children Remembered (continued)....*****Sarah Lynn Moore – 5**

Dec 18, 1998 - Mar 31, 2004  
Surgical Complications  
Susan Moore

**Scott Saville – 42**

Mar 29, 1969 - Jul 30, 2011  
Brain Aneurysm  
Mary Saville

**Vincenza – 47**

Jul 30, 1966 – Mar 08, 2014  
Cancer  
Margherita Arrowsmith (Sister)

**Kevin O'Malley – 25**

Mar 04, 1990 – May 30, 2015  
Murder  
Brian & Sharon O'Malley

**Nicky Angone – 57**

Nov 13, 1958 – Mar 26, 2016  
Cancer  
Diane Angone

**Hudson Colwell – 1**

Mar 28, 2014 – Apr 24, 2015  
Virus  
Megan & Chris Colwell

**Kevin Jon Ryeczyk – 8**

Mar 29, 1972 – Apr 15, 1980  
Lung Ailment  
Jack & Karen Ryeczyk

**Patricia Strick-Hawkins – 54**

Oct 31, 1959 – Mar 18, 2015  
Ovarian Cancer  
Ilse Strick

**Patrick McNaughton – 2**

Mar 27, 2014 – Apr 28, 2016  
Viral Meningitis  
Sheila & Ryan McNaughton

***Once Again, Thumbuddy Special Found Happy Homes for Our Donated Toys!***

"On behalf of Thumbuddy Special and the hundreds of children who were able to receive Christmas presents, I would like to thank you and your organization for your generosity. The toys that your group provided were amazing. We had over 20 social workers come to our event with wish lists from children in underprivileged families. With the toys that your group donated we were able to make Christmas morning a joyful one for many children. It is organizations like yours that help us spread the Christmas spirit.

Thank you so much for once again thinking of us during the Christmas season!

Best regards,

Cheryl McCulloch

Board Member

<http://www.thumbuddyspecial.org/>

**Young Life Cut Short**

Do not judge a song by its duration  
Nor by the number of its notes  
Judge it by the richness of its contents  
Sometimes those unfinished are among the most poignant...

Do not judge a song by its duration  
Nor by the number of its notes  
Judge it by the way it touches and lifts the soul  
Sometimes those unfinished are among the most beautiful...

And when something has enriched your life  
And when it's melody lingers on in your heart.  
Is it unfinished?  
Or is it endless?



## “I should have known....”: Understanding Hindsight Bias in Grief”, *What’s Your Grief*,

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/known-understanding-hindsight-bias-grief/>

People have a natural tendency to sift through the ashes of tragedy in search of explanations. To quote Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist Viktor E. Frankl, *“Man’s main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life.”*

The search for sense in the seemingly senseless is one of the most instinctual coping skills a person can employ in the face of hardship. The idea that life and death is random creates a dissonance so sharp one simply can’t allow it to linger; so you search...and you sift...and you piece irreparably broken things back together, desperate for it all to make sense.

It’s common to ask questions after a loved one dies, because sometimes you want answers. You may look into your memory and ask questions like...

*“Why did this happen?”*

*“How could this have happened?”*

*“Could I have seen this coming?”*

And through a shattered but enlightened lens, you suddenly see the signs. You see things you could have done differently, you see turning points, and you say to yourself...

*“I should have done something”*

*“I should have known.”*

*“I knew.”*

It may be hard for you to believe, because you now know how things turned out, but in the past you really didn’t know as much as you *think you knew*. You may have worried or had your suspicions, but you didn’t *know*. Or if you knew, the things you think you could have done differently weren’t quite as obvious to you then as they seem now. The reason I know this is because you are looking at things in hindsight, and hindsight is biased.

Hindsight bias is a normal and common psychological phenomenon that causes people to believe that outcomes were predictable. When looking at events *after* the outcome is known, people have a tendency to notice information that is consistent with what they *now* know to be true. The same tendency causes them to ignore neutral or contradictory evidence, so that when a person goes to piece together a meaningful narrative, as people are wont to do, they often wind up with a story that goes – this was the beginning, here were the signs, here’s where things went wrong, and this is the outcome.

For some, it is comforting to create a narrative that brings order to the confusing chaos of death and grief, and many people find reassuring answers to questions like *“why?”* *“what went wrong?”* *“could it have been changed?”* and *“what could have been done differently?”* Others, on the other hand, are left with a narrative that causes them to feel unpleasant things like guilt, blame, shame, regret, and personal responsibility. If you’re still with me, let’s throw one more concept into the mix. In an effort to construct a narrative around one’s experiences, people often engage in *counterfactual thinking*. Counterfactual thinking is thinking things like *“What if?”* and *“What might have been?”*. It is the act of coming up with alternative outcomes that are counter to (or different than) the facts. Many times our counterfactual thinking follows an “if-then” pattern. Some examples:

*“If I hadn’t slept late, I wouldn’t have missed the bus.”*

*“If I had gone to that party like I wanted, then I wouldn’t have aced my math test.”*

Researchers Kray et al (2010) note that counterfactual thinking is actually, *“an essential feature of healthy cognitive and social functioning and also a ubiquitous part of life.”* While they acknowledge that this type of thinking can certainly lead to negative thoughts and emotions like guilt and regret, they also suggest that counterfactual thinking can lead to positive emotions like relief and gratitude.

In grief, though, one can see how counterfactual thinking could have negative implications when combined with hindsight bias. Through a narrative constructed using hindsight bias, one can easily see the part they play in various counterfactual realities. Knowing what they know, one might come to believe that *if* they had been paying attention or *if* they had acted differently *then* a better counterfactual reality might actually *be the reality*.

Some examples:

*“If I had been paying attention, then I would have noticed that my mother was sick and urged her to go to the doctor.”*

*“If I hadn’t gone to work that day, then I would have been home and could have prevented the accident.”*

*“If I hadn’t been so caught up in my own life, then I could have gotten him the help he needed.”*

*“If I hadn’t left her bedside when I did, then I would have been with her when she died.”*

So, now that you know how your tricky brain works, some of you may decide to take a step back and reassess your narrative. 🌱



## The Power of 'And': How One Word Changed the Way I Grieve

By Rachel Whalen, <https://unexpectedfamilyouting.com/2017/09/27/>

Five weeks after our baby Dorothy died, my nephew was born. I remember going to our weekly therapy session and sharing this news with our therapist. Of course she wanted to know how I was feeling about his arrival. I replied that I was so happy that he was safely here but I was also happy that he lived across the country so I didn't have to see him yet. "And," she replied. I looked at her puzzled. She continued, "And. You are happy he is here AND you are happy that you don't have to see him right now. Rachel, you don't have to choose."

After we left our session that day, I couldn't stop thinking about that one little word. Ever since Dorothy's death, I had found myself trying to separate my reemerging feelings of happiness from the steady depression I was in. Much like a child trying to keep their peas from touching their mashed potatoes, I wanted my feelings of devastation to be untouched by any glimmers of joy I might be feeling. I didn't think it was possible for them to co-exist. Three simple letters changed that.

I began testing out this powerful little word. Whenever I had been feeling differing emotions, I had used the word 'but' to keep them distant. What if I used 'and' to bring them together? It's a beautiful day outside AND I just can't face the world today.

That new picture of my nephew is so adorable AND it reminds me of how much I miss Dorothy.

I'm looking forward to seeing my family AND I'm anxious to be around them.

I want to talk about Dorothy AND I'm nervous about what others will have to say about her.

'And' was slowly changing my world. That one word was giving me the freedom to experience the storm of emotions that had been quietly raging inside. I didn't have to wait for each feeling to pass over me completely, I could start feeling them in connection. Before 'and' there had been so much guilt about the happiness that was sneaking its way back into my life. Now, I had permission to let happiness start to color the darkness of my grief.

Over the next weeks and months, I exercised the power of 'and.' With the recent birth of my nephew, I found many opportunities to use my new magic word.

I'm so happy that my sister-in-law is a mother AND I wish that was me.

I want to send my nephew this cute new outfit AND I wish I could be buying clothes for my own child instead.

I want to be included in my nephew's life AND sometimes it's just too hard.

I'm so excited to be an aunt AND I'm so worried that Dorothy is going to be forgotten.

It wasn't a solution or a remedy, but it was a tool. The burden of Dorothy's death was a heavy one. I was struggling under the weight of the emotions I had been trying to ignore and I needed help. My grief for Dorothy was never going away, but I needed something to help me carry the load throughout my life. Without a tool, I was going to be crushed. 'And' helped alleviate some of the pressure. I felt like I could breathe again. I felt like I was remembering how to live AND love.

My husband and I recently "graduated" from therapy. (To be clear, I will probably go back to therapy many times in my life because it is extremely important for my family and our well-being.) At our last session, my therapist asked us if we had any feedback for her. I thanked her for 'and.' She smiled and said that was glad I found it helpful in my healing.

"I have found it helpful." I replied. "And I still have a lot of healing left to do." ❄️❄️❄️



## Challenge and Change

~ Sherry Mutcheler, BP/USA Baltimore Chapter,  
November/December 2018

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve too for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun-loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the old us too, and their comments show it. "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?", "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again. Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when our child dies. We wonder – our families wonder – when will we come out of it? Will we make it through the long sleep? What hues will we show when we emerge?

If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of the cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy, but worth the effort. We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the new us. When our priorities become different and people become more important than things; when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from the cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge, then we can say proudly: "I have survived against overwhelming odds." Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and the challenges give me hope that I can feel fulfilled again.

I can love again. 🌱

## Something You Get Through

~ Willie Nelson

Songwriters: Buddy Cannon / Willie Nelson

When you lose the one you love  
You think your world has ended  
You think your world will be a waste of life  
Without them in it

You feel there's no way to go on  
Life is just a sad, sad song  
But love is bigger than us all  
The end is not the end at all

It's not somethin' you get over  
But it's somethin' you get through  
It's not ours to be taken  
It's just a thing we get to do  
Life goes on and on  
And when it's gone  
It lives in someone new  
It's not somethin' you get over  
But it's somethin' you get through

It's not somethin' you get over  
But it's somethin' you get through  
It's not ours to be taken  
It's a thing we get to do

Life goes on and on  
And when it's gone  
It lives in someone new  
It's not somethin' you get over  
But it's somethin' you get through  
It's not somethin' you get over  
But it's somethin' you get through

🌱

## BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA CREDO

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives.

We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

## A New Year

*Still Standing Magazine, Lexi Behrendt, January 1, 2016*

A new year. Another one without you. Another one without breathing in your scent, running my fingers through that soft tuft of hair, without watching you toddle down the hall.

A new year. Another year that goes on while my heart still beats and yours has long since stopped. The cruelest trick nature can play, to steal the one I love.

A new year. It won't be filled with your big blue eyes, your silly laugh, or the smile that made me melt in to the ground whenever your eyes met mine.

A new year. Missing you. Aching you. Longing for you.

A new year. Wanting to make you proud. Wanting to carry out a legacy. Wanting to show the world that you were here, you still are mine. You still matter.

A new year. Another chance to live, not because I always care much about life, but another year to live, because you would want nothing more than for me to take all this love and spread it around.

A new year. One year more of making you proud. One year more of saying your name. One year more of living a life inspired by the boy who stole half of my heart and carried it with him as he left.

A new year. And even with the heartache, it's another year of living more richly because you were here. Another year in the "after", when my life has been defined by love and purpose, because that's what happens when you lose someone you love with your whole heart. You break and then you mend, and your soul becomes richer than ever before.

A new year. One year closer to you. 🕯



### *Heartfelt Gratitude to Everyone Who Contributed to the Success of Our Annual Candle Lighting Program!*

Sunday, December 9 was our annual Candle Lighting Program, and once again it was a special, memorable evening of remembrance of our children.

We sincerely thank everyone who participated including Donna Corrigan, Sally Yarberry, Eleanor Bryne, Carol Zimmerman, Bob Gordon, Rose Martino-Krueger and Nicole Krueger, Marilyn Dano, Jerry Schulman, Jennifer Vlazny, and Bryan Yarberry. And of course we couldn't do it without everyone who brought a snack to share, and/or helped with set-up and clean-up!

#### *Donations:*

Kay & Philip Barrett, in memory of Elizabeth Barrett  
Trish DeBauche, in memory of Bryce Stack  
Barbara Piegat, in memory of Andre Piegat  
Frank Vlazny, in memory of Peter Vlazny

*If people truly knew how much I missed you,  
they would wonder how I am still breathing.*

Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Chicagoland Chapter  
P.O. Box 320  
Western Springs, IL 60558



January – February – March 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
January	
January 8	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM – General Discussion
February	
February 5	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM – Topic to be determined.
March	
March 5	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM – General Discussion.
April	
April 2	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM – Topic to be determined.

**BP/USA Chicagoland on the Web:**

<http://www.bpusachicagoland.org/index.html>

Like us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Bereaved-Parents-of-the-USA-Chicagoland-Chapter-706510502840344/>

*“There are no words, not in English, Spanish, Arabic, or Hebrew, that have been invented to explain what it’s like to lose a child. The nightmarish heartache of it. The unexplainable trepidation that follows. No mother loses a child without believing she failed as a parent. No father loses a child without believing he failed to protect his family from pain. The child may be gone, but the years the child were meant to live remain behind, solid in the mind like an aging ghost. The birthdays, the holidays, the last days of school—they all remain, circled in red lipstick on a calendar nailed to the wall. A constant shadow that grows, even in the dark. As I was saying...there are no words.”*

~ D.E. Eliot, *Ruined*

