



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

www.bereavedparentsusa.org July – August – September 2019

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; psyrbrry@hotmail.com), Chapter Co-Leaders

Let Me Tell You Who I Am Now.....

I am still a person like you, with a life like yours, yet not. I am still a mother like you, yet not at all like you, all at the same time. I wish there were some way you could understand me, without becoming who I am now. You see, there's a pain I carry, unlike any pain you carry, unless you are a bereaved mother too.

This pain I have is always there. It doesn't nap during the day or get safely tucked into bed at night. It follows me everywhere; it never leaves my side— like my son used to do, only grief is not cuddly, nor sweet.

No, a mother's grief is a torturous life sentence, that no one wants to live. It's bargaining for a different ending, over and over, one where no one dies.

It's the panic of it happening again, any time, anywhere... It's the toxic self-blame that never turns its finger around to blame itself.

It's the spiraling of obsessive thoughts, (what if... if only?) seeping its poison through every crevice of my mind.

It's the regret, so convincing that I failed as a mother, powerless to protect my child from death.

Yes, grief's emotions are as unpredictable as the ocean tide, crashing down on me to drown me alive.

I have three kids, not two. My first son died.

There, I said it. 🌸

<https://stillstandingmag.com/.../let-me-tell-you-who-i-am-now/>



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

REMINDER: Butterfly Release Picnic is Sunday, July 14. Please RSVP by July 10.

Tuesday, August 6 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Our "Wishing Pond" will be set up outside, near the north entrance (by tot lot).
School Supplies: We will be collecting donations of new school supplies for needy children.

Tuesday, September 3 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Still time to donate school supplies.

Tuesday, October 1 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Open discussion

The physical space that you used to occupy

Remains empty and tangible

At every holiday

Vacation

Special occasion

Or quiet family time

Your absence is felt

Like a solid entity

I will honor

That space as

A constant reminder

Of the love that we

Continue to share

~ Tanya Lord, www.thegrieftoolbox.com

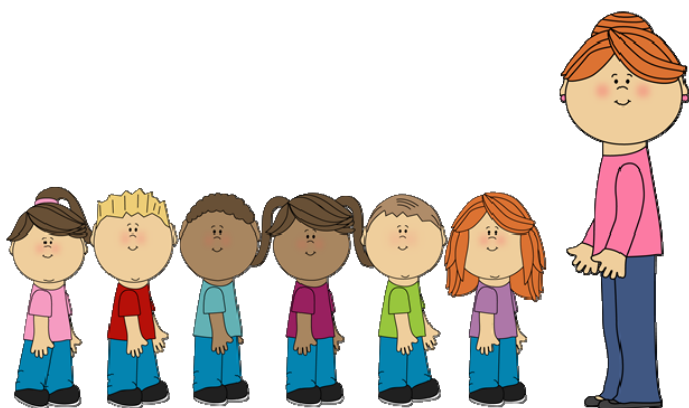
Welcome

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:

♥ Dominic & Christine Colantuono, parents of Kara

We are very sorry for the reason you are here, but we are glad 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 10th** 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

Please email the wording of your love gift message to the newsletter editor Sally at psyrbrry@hotmail.com.

Thank You!

Annual School Supplies Drive

For the last several years our chapter has donated school supplies to needy children at a local public school, in memory of our children.

Here is a list of needed supplies (brand names last much longer than generic!):

- Crayola Classic 8 Color Magic Markers
- Fiskars scissors
- Elmers glue sticks
- Pencils #2
- Pink erasers
- Dri-erase markers
- Post-it notes
- Kleenex (they use a lot of boxes)

If you would like to participate in this optional charitable project, please bring your donation to the August or September meetings.



In loving memory of

Matthew Corrigan

July 4, 1977 until August 12, 1991

Matt,

The pain of losing you has gentled through the years, but the joy of the kid you were brings never-ending smiles. You would have been so excited to be an uncle for the first time – Mattie and Oscar!

Love, Mom & Dad

Donna & Mike Corrigan



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.

Adam Schar – 33

Nov 23, 1976 – Jul 18, 2010
Accidental Death
Janet Schar

Aidan Samuel Wood - 4

Jul 17, 2003 - Nov 30, 2007
House Fire
Michelle & Ian Wood

Amy Elizabeth Gales - 19

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

Anthony Brattoli – 21

Apr 28, 1997 – Jul 18, 2018
AVM – Brain Hemorrhage
Tamara & John Brattoli

Anthony Neri – 21

Jul 03, 1973 – Jun 24, 1995
Accidental Drug Overdose
Diane Neri

Brendon Anderson – 21

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

Bryce Stack – 30

Jan 26, 1979 – Jul 24, 2009
Accidental Overdose
Trish DeBauche

Carl Alan Vuillaume – 16

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

Elizabeth Nelson – 23

Jul 27, 1980 – May 31, 2004
Auto Accident
Tom & Kathy Nelson

Emily Rose Snyder – 23

Jun 16, 1994 – Jul 08, 2017
Traffic Accident
Debra Garozzo & Lloyd Snyder

Jamie Lee Hoebble – 21

Jul 26, 1983 – Sep 23, 2004
Karen & John Pech

Jennifer Erin Morris – 16

Jul 15, 1982 – Aug 10, 1998
Auto Accident
Wendy & Dan Morris

James G. Frale – 14

Jul 11, 1967 – Sep 13, 1981
Electrocution
John & JoAnn Frale

Katie Evans – 35

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

Katie Satkamp – 7

Jul 12, 1974 – May 12, 1982
School Bus Accident
Ronda & Steve Satkamp

Maria Elena Nudell – 14

Apr 17, 1981 – Jul 07, 1995
Horseback Riding Accident
Marilyn Cocogliato Dano

Mariana Tunstall – 8

Dec 29, 1999 – Jul 16, 2008
E-Coli
Keith & Kristena Tunstall

Matthew Corrigan – 14

Jul 04, 1977 – Aug 12, 1991
Auto Accident
Donna & Mike Corrigan

Matthew Lukaszczyk – 19

Jul 04, 1999 – Jun 11, 2018
Accident
Anna Lukaszczyk

Mia Lozano – 13

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

Nicholas Palumbo – 21

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

Nicholas Carl Pica – 21

Dec 12, 1984 – Jul 13, 2006
Sudden Cardiac Death
Jane & Jerry Pica

Rob Funston – 25

Aug 22, 1955 – Jul 30, 1981
Pneumonia
Bob & Fran Funston

Ryan Paul – 15 1/2

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

Sara Jane Melton – 27

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

Scott Saville – 42

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

Tamaron "Tami" Racky – 21

Jul 08, 1975 – Sep 12, 1996
Accidental Drug Overdose
John & Debbie Racky

Thomas A. Walsh Jr. – 32

Oct 16, 1970 - Jul 20, 2003
Unknown
Karen Richards

Trudy Boskey - 47

Jul 06, 1953 - Aug 03, 2000
Cancer
Rose Conway

William Kavanaugh – 3

May 24, 1992 – Jul 04, 1995
Hit by a Van
Maribeth Kavanaugh

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Zachary "Zach" Pfingston – 12

Sep 20, 1996 - Jul 31, 2009
Seizure
Manjula & Jack Pfingston

Branden Martinez – 6 weeks

Jun 26, 2011 – Aug 08, 2011
Infection
Kyle Martinez & Missy Babyar

Brandon Hardy – 22

Aug 13, 1980 – Dec 28, 2002
Auto Accident
Don & Celeste Hardy

Brian Sirotzke - 26

Aug 03, 1982 - Sep 05, 2008
Anne Sirotzke

Casey Reiter – 25

Aug 11, 1984 – Dec 15, 2009
Heart Attack
Sandy Tummillio

Corrine Naumann – 23

Aug 14, 1986 – Apr 14, 2010
Cheryl Nauman

Dan Woods - 29

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

Danny Golden - 22

Aug 26, 1975 - Aug 24, 1998
Suicide
Janet Mallo

Frank Gianfortune Jr. – 19

Aug 01, 1968 - Dec 06, 1987
Auto Accident
Adel Gianfortune

Gino Grandenitti – 20

Aug 14, 1990 - May 30, 2011
Cancer
Vic Grandenitti

Gregory Michael Humbert – 30

Aug 31, 1961 - Oct 31, 1991
Struck by Van
Mary (Marge) Humbert

Hayden Miles – 15

Aug 21, 2002 – Mar 05, 2018
Accident
Eric & Lisa Miles

Jason Matthew Bill – 13

Aug 17, 1981 – Jun 14, 1995
Water Sports Accident
Nancy Stein

Kimberly Ann Olson – 15

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

Mark Thomas Fornek - 6

May 16, 1992 - Aug 04, 1998
Floodwater Drowning
Greg & Wendy Fornek

Megan Elizabeth Peters – 23

Nov 26, 1980 – Aug 31, 2004
Drug Overdose
Kathleen Peters

Michael Patrick Gordon – 30

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

Michael Knorps – 51

Aug 17, 1957 – May 30, 2009
Mary Ann Knorps

Patrick Vincent DeMauro – 19

Jan 28, 1982 - Aug 29, 2001
Car Accident
Vincent & Debbie DeMauro

Patrick Dore – 12

Aug 08, 1990 – Aug 25, 2002
Meningitis
Lois McDonald

Patrick Dore – 12

Aug 08, 1990 – Aug 25, 2002
Meningitis
Phil & Linda Dore

Ron Buccieri – 42

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

Brian Eck – 39

Sep 08, 1971 – Nov 08, 2010
Enlarged Heart
Kathy Eck

Daryle J. "DJ" Hall – 22

Mar 10, 1984 – Sep 11, 2006
Accidental Drug Overdose
Bob & Sherry Hall

Christopher Kavanagh – 25

Sep 23, 1984 - Nov 15, 2009
Undetermined
Sherri Kavanagh

Daniel Meyer – 7

Feb 21, 1977 - Sep 21, 1984
Hit by Car
Kenneth & Olivia Meyer

Phillip G. Dore - 21

Nov 11, 1988 – Sep 02, 2010
Suicide
Phil & Linda Dore

Douglas McCallum – 19

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

Eric Byrne – 44

Sep 04, 1960 – May 09, 2005
Pulmonary Embolism
Eleanor & Joe Byrne

Frank P. Amelio – 27

Apr 25, 1980 – Sep 13, 2007
Drug Overdose
Helen Amelio

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Richie Chow – 27

Dec 22, 1983 - Sep 30, 2011
Unknown
Joyce Chow

Mia Bella Meiszner – 9

Sep 15, 2008 – Dec 04, 2017
Organ Failure
John Meiszner

Jamie Mitchell - 31

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

Jennifer Lynn Kirwan – 17

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

Jill Kathleen Ebert – 6

Jun 24, 1984 - Sep 03, 1990
Brain Tumor
Michael P. Ebert

Jimmy Lekas - 18

Sep 10, 1969 - Jun 14, 1988
Cancer
Stephanie Lekas

Johnny Hurley – 28

Apr 15, 1977 - Sep 11, 2005
Motorcycle Accident
John & Pat Hurley

Joshua Burkett – 27

Sep 14, 1982 - May 04, 2010
Car Accident
Dan Burkett

Kelly Ann Meicrotto - 23

May 25, 1980 - Sep 01, 2003
Lenore Robinson

Kerri L. Gartner – 22

Sep 09, 1981 - Oct 24, 2003
Auto Accident
Ervin & Kathleen Gartner

Laura Ryeczyk -

Sep 03, 1965 - Sep 03, 1965
Cord Strangulation
Jack & Karen Ryeczyk

Lily C. Domagala - 16 mon.

May 11, 2002 - Sep 12, 2003
Heart & Lung Defects
Lisa Domagala

Marty Sobanski (Brother) – 28

Dec 08, 1961 - Sep 05, 1990
Seizure Disorder
Helen Sobanski-Hennessey

Mike Seaney – 44

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

Nancy Lyell (Sue's Sister) – 35

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

Rachel Krueger – 21

Dec 29, 1986 - Sep 23, 2008
Pulmonary Embolism
Jim Krueger & Rose Martino-Krueger

**William E. Barth – 20 ½**

Sep 23, 1965 – Jun 05, 1986
Suicide
Karen Barth

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.

I AM MORE

By Lexi Behrndt, www.scribblesandcrumbs.com, April 15, 2017

You are not the struggles you have faced.

At least, that's what I've been trying to discover and teach my own heart. I am not the things I've seen, the things that have happened to me, the scars I wear. Trauma and loss and grief are such complex beasts that while I've experienced them, I am not going to even pretend to understand them. Our hearts weren't made to be splayed open, but they sometimes are, and it's our job to figure out how to carry our stories, bruises and breaks and all.

What I've learned is simple. No matter how many awkward conversations I've had, how many times I've had to share about myself with a new person, I stumble around the conversation. No matter how many people may view me differently, no matter how differently I may view myself, the truth is this: I am more than all of that. I am more than the suffering, the grief, the pain. I am more than any circumstance. I am not defined by my struggle, though I am certainly shaped by it.

To free myself, I needed to learn that I am not those things.

I am not the pain I carry.

I am not the suffering I've endured.

I am not the shame that I feel sometimes at having a life that doesn't fit neatly in the lines.

I am not bitterness, anger, or woundedness— those things I'm currently healing from.

I am not the girl who X, Y, or Z (fill in the blank with any experience).

I am not the strength it has taken me to get here.

I am not the seconds, minutes, hours, days, or years I've endured pain.

I am not my mistakes, my failures, or my shortcomings.

[The list could keep going.]

Why am I sharing this? Why is there a need to? Because I'm not the only one who forgets there is a heart behind the scars. I'm not the only one who is navigating the muck to free my heart from all the layers. I'm not the only one.

Last week, I spoke at a retreat with others who also had a child die. Every time I show up to speak somewhere, it never fails— my own inadequacy always hits because hello— I am not someone who has special knowledge or who understands life or who really knows what she is doing. So I did the only thing I could do— I shared my heart and I asked them to share theirs.

We talked about identity. We talked about healing. We talked about dreaming and growing and purpose in life.

It's an awkward thing, navigating life when yours has been turned upside down, rediscovering who you are in the midst of it all, dreaming again and realizing that you have purpose even through the pain. When we shared about our hoping and dreaming and wishing again, I was finally able to put into words this transformation that has happened in the midst of healing.

I am not defined by my struggles (I have to remind myself of this sometimes daily).

I am also not defined by my goals, my accomplishments, or any other fleeting thing.

My dream is this and the woman I want to be is this: a woman who, in whatever she does, is not marked by her scars, any bitterness or anger or pain, but who is marked by love, by grace, by deep, steady joy, no matter the circumstance.

Continued on next page....

I don't want to know myself as my struggles. I don't want others to know me as that either. I want them to know me and see a heart that loves deeply and purely, wherever it's at, whatever it's doing, in big ways and small.

I am not the struggles I have faced.

I am not a broken story.

I am marked by love, the love I've received from God, the love I have for the ones I hold so close, and the love that I want to wrap the world with.

And in that, I am being set free.

You are not the struggles you faced. You are more. 🕊️

I Am Missing the Future Too

By Gary Roe, <https://thegriefftoolbox.com/article/2019-06-06-i-am-missing-future-too>, June 5, 2019

When a loved one dies, our lives are altered forever. This includes the future we anticipated.

FROM THE GRIEVING HEART:

I have been missing the past. Now, I'm missing the future.

I'm missing my future with you in it. You won't be there. You won't be here on your birthday. Or my birthday.

You'll be absent at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and every other holiday. Every special day we had will now consist of just me and my memories of you.

I've not only lost you, I've lost the future I was anticipating. Everything is different, and so is the future.

I thought I knew what I was doing and where I was going. Now, I'm not so sure. You were in the picture before.

Now there is only empty space where you would have been.

Sounds strange to say I need to grieve a lost future. Yet, that's reality. I miss what I had. I miss what I anticipated. I miss you.

I know I will somehow make it through this, but I don't like it at all.

When someone leaves us, our world changes, and that includes the future. What we anticipated might be significantly altered. In some cases, what we planned on may be no more. The closer the relationship, the more deeply our lives will be affected going forward.

When hit with loss, we not only grieve what we had but also what we will not have in the future.

Unfortunately, along the way we discover other losses that are also connected to our loved one – relationships, activities, holidays, traditions, etc. It's never about just the one loss but includes all the other strands of our life-web attached to that person.

People are important. Life is about relationships. When someone we love exits, the future we had envisioned changes. With each holiday or special event, we become hyper-aware of who's missing. Our grief surfaces, and powerful emotions can hijack us at a moment's notice.

Though the future is now different, it can still be good. We can help make it good by taking our hearts seriously and grieving well. Of course, we miss them and wish they were here. Perhaps we can't imagine the road ahead without them. That's okay. The answers we need will come when our hearts are ready for them.

Affirmation: It's hard to imagine a future without you in it. I will focus on grieving well and celebrating you along the way. 🕊️

A blessing for those broken-hearted

Let us agree for now
that we will not say
the breaking makes us stronger
or that it is better to have this pain
than to have done without this love.

Let us promise
we will not tell ourselves
time will heal the wound
when every day our waking opens it anew.

Perhaps for now
it can be enough to simply marvel
at the mystery of how a heart so broken
can go on beating,
as if it were made for precisely this—

as if it knows the only cure for love is more of it

as if it sees the heart's sole remedy for
breaking is to love still

as if it trusts that its own stubborn and
persistent pulse
is the rhythm of a blessing
we cannot begin to fathom
but will save us nonetheless.

- Jan Richardson

The Keepers of Memories

You make friends because you have things
in common. We are friends because of our
children – the older ones, the younger ones,
the ones who never had a chance to breathe.
They are our reason for being – our heartbeat,
our life's blood. Whether we have lots of
memories or only a few, we are joined by an
unbreakable bond.

We are the ones left behind, to remember and
carry the torch for those we remember so
lovingly. We are there for ourselves and each
other, because we understand the pain of loss.

We must also be there for those who
unfortunately join our ranks. Because we are the
parents of lost children, the bruised hearts, the
keepers of memories.

*"This will likely be the hardest thing you'll ever do.
Survive this. And eventually maybe even thrive
again. At times it will feel virtually impossible. You'll
wonder how a human being can survive such pain.
You'll learn you know how to defy the impossible.
You did it from the moment your child's heart
stopped, and yours kept beating. You do it with
every breath and step you take. You're doing it now.
And now. And now."*

~ Angela Miller, <https://abedformyheart.com/>



SELF-CARE: WELCOMING HAPPINESS

The moments when I began to feel happy again during my grief journey took me by surprise. Whether it was an evening out with friends, or goofing around with my boys, happiness started to slowly seep back into a life that was so black and cold.

But why would happiness be so disconcerting, especially when you are already so unhappy? We should welcome happiness in, not reject it, right? It's a sign that the grieving parent is healing, right? It's a good thing, right? Wrong.

For many grieving parents, happiness in the wake of our loss can cause us to feel guilty. We feel as though we shouldn't be happy again, after suffering such a profound loss. Staying in the dark, dank sadness, shutting out the sunshine and warmth of happiness, makes us feel closer to our deceased child. We loved them so much that we can't possibly ever be happy again. These are the things we feel and think, and they are perfectly normal.

These conflicting emotions were a challenge for me, and in conversations with many grieving moms, I've discovered that this is a common occurrence. But, truly, any emotional state is unsustainable on a permanent basis. We can't stay angry or sad or disappointed forever, and we won't always be happy, either. After all, sad times help us to appreciate the happy times that much more. The contrast of our emotions gives our life depth and breadth. With that in mind we must realize that in order to take care of ourselves, we must allow ourselves to be happy.

One of the things that helped me most to understand this was to think about how sad my children were when they saw me sad. When they caught me crying, they would be on the verge of tears. I realized that my boys didn't like to see me unhappy. By extrapolation, it would follow that Colin wouldn't want me to be sad all the time either. I know my children won't always be happy, but I hope they are happy, or at least content more often than not. I had to consider whether or not I would want Colin to see me so unhappy, considering my unhappiness was a result of his death. I had to consider whether or not I would want him to see so much sadness within me as a result of his death.

My conclusion? I didn't want that at all. I wouldn't want to burden my son with my darkness. I gradually started to accept the light as it wedged its way into my life. My being happy didn't lessen my love for Colin, not even a little bit. In fact, I like to think that when he looks down and sees us smiling, he is smiling, too.

P.S. Smiling actually makes you feel happier—biologically! When you smile, your body releases endorphins, serotonin and natural pain killers. So take a chance and smile. It doesn't make your loss any less important. It doesn't make you insensitive. It makes you human. Welcome happiness. 🌻

From Still Standing Magazine



Helping Yourself Heal When Your Child Dies

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., <https://www.batesville.com/child/>

Allow Yourself to Mourn

Your child has died. You are now faced with the difficult, but important, need to mourn. Mourning is the open expression of your thoughts and feelings regarding the death of your child. It is an essential part of healing.

With the death of your child, your hopes, dreams and plans for the future are turned upside down. You are beginning a journey that is often frightening, painful, and overwhelming. The death of a child results in the most profound bereavement. In fact, sometimes your feelings of grief may be so intense that you do not understand what is happening. This article provides practical suggestions to help you move toward healing in your personal grief experience.

Realize Your Grief is Unique

Your grief is unique. The unique child you loved and cared for so deeply has died. No one, including your spouse, will grieve in exactly the same way you do. Your grief journey will be influenced not only by the relationship you had with your child, but also by the circumstances surrounding the death, your emotional support system and your cultural and religious background.

As a result, you will grieve in your own unique way. Don't try to compare your experience with that of others or adopt assumptions about just how long your grief should last. Consider taking a "one-day-at-a-time" approach that allows you to grieve at your own pace.

Allow Yourself to Feel Numb

Feeling dazed or numb when your child dies may well be a part of your early grief experience. You may feel as if the world has suddenly come to a halt. This numbness serves a valuable purpose: it gives your emotions time to catch up with what your mind has told you.

You may feel you are in a dream-like state and that you will wake up and none of this will be true. These feelings of numbness and disbelief help insulate you from the reality of the death until you are more able to tolerate what you don't want to believe.

This Death is "Out of Order"

Because the more natural order is for parents to precede their children in death, you must readapt to a new and seemingly illogical reality. This shocking reality says that even though you are older and have been the protector and provider, you have survived while your child has not. This can be so difficult to comprehend.

Not only has the death of your child violated nature's way, where the young grow up and replace the old, but your personal identity was tied to your child. You may feel impotent and wonder why you couldn't have protected your child from death. Such thoughts are normal and will naturally soften over time as you explore and express them.

Expect to Feel a Multitude of Emotions

The death of your child can result in a variety of emotions. Confusion, disorganization, fear, guilt, anger and relief are just a few of the emotions you may feel. Sometimes these emotions will follow each other within a short period of time. Or they may occur simultaneously.

As strange as some of these emotions may seem, they are normal and healthy. Allow yourself to learn from these feelings. And don't be surprised if out of nowhere you suddenly experience surges of grief, even at the most unexpected times. These grief attacks can be frightening and leave you feeling overwhelmed. They are, however, a natural response to the death of your child. Find someone who understands your feelings and will allow you to talk about them.

Be Tolerant of Your Physical and Emotional Limits

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you fatigued. Your ability to think clearly and make decisions may be impaired. And your low energy level may naturally slow you down. Don't expect yourself to be as available to your spouse, surviving children, and friends as you might otherwise be.

Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Nurture yourself. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. Lighten your schedule as much as possible. Caring for yourself doesn't mean you are feeling sorry for yourself. It means you are using survival skills.

Continued on next page....

Talk About Your Grief

Express your grief openly. When you share your grief outside yourself, healing occurs. Ignoring your grief won't make it go away; talking about it often makes you feel better. Allow yourself to speak from your heart, not just your head. Doing so doesn't mean you are losing control or going "crazy." It is a normal part of your grief journey.

Watch Out for Clichés

Clichés—trite comments some people make in an attempt to diminish your loss—can be extremely painful for you to hear. Comments like, "You are holding up so well," "Time heals all wounds," "Think of what you have to be thankful for" or "You have to be strong for others" are not constructive. While these comments may be well-intended, you do not have to accept them. You have every right to express your grief. No one has the right to take it away.

Develop a Support System

Reaching out to others and accepting support is often difficult, particularly when you hurt so much. But the most compassionate self-action you can do at this difficult time is to find a support system of caring friends and relatives who will provide the understanding you need. Seek out those people who encourage you to be yourself and acknowledge your feelings, whatever they are.

A support group may be one of the best ways to help yourself. In a group, you can connect with other parents who have experienced the death of a child. You will be allowed and gently encouraged to talk about your child as much, and as often, as you like.

Sharing the pain won't make it disappear, but it can ease any thoughts that what you are experiencing is crazy, or somehow bad. Support comes in different forms for different people — support groups, counseling, friends, faith—find out what combination works best for you and try to make use of them.

Embrace Your Treasure of Memories

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of a child. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring these memories, share them with your family and friends.

Keep in mind that memories can be tinged with both happiness and sadness. If your memories bring laughter, smile. If your memories bring sadness, then it's all right to cry. Memories that were made in love — no one can take them away from you.

Gather Important Keepsakes

You may want to collect some important keepsakes that help you treasure your memories. You may want to create a memory book, which is a collection of photos that represent your child's life. Some people create memory boxes to keep special keepsakes in. Then, whenever you want, you can open your memory box and embrace those special memories. The reality that your child has died does not diminish your need to have these objects. They are a tangible, lasting part of the special relationship you had with your child.

Embrace Your Spirituality

If faith is part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you are angry at God because of the death of your child, realize this feeling as a normal part of your grief work. Find someone to talk with who won't be critical of whatever thoughts and feelings you need to explore.

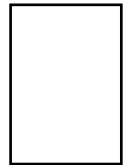
You may hear someone say, "With faith, you don't need to grieve." Don't believe it. Having your personal faith does not insulate you from needing to talk out and explore your thoughts and feelings. To deny your grief is to invite problems to build up inside you. Express your faith, but express your grief as well.

Move Toward Your Grief and Heal

To restore your capacity to love you must grieve when your child dies. You can't heal unless you openly express your grief. Denying your grief will only make it become more confusing and overwhelming. Embrace your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself. Never forget that the death of your child changes your life forever. It's not that you won't be happy again, it's simply that you will never be exactly the same as you were before the child died.

"The experience of grief is powerful. So, too, is your ability to help yourself heal. In doing the work of grieving, you are moving toward a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in your life." — Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. 🌿

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

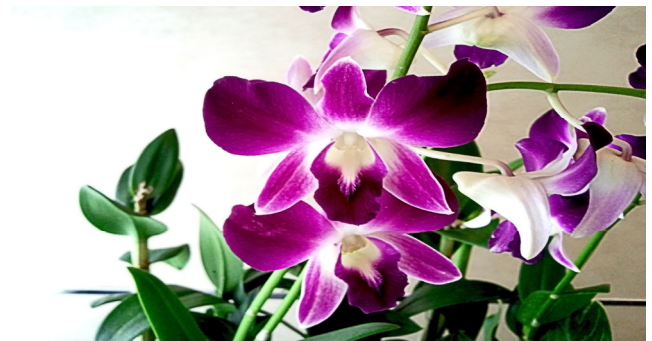


July - August - September 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
July	
July 14	Butterfly Release Picnic: Katherine Legge Memorial Park - 12:00 noon.
August	
August 6	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - "Wishing Pond" and Annual School Supplies Drive.
September	
Sept. 3	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Still time to donate school supplies.
October / November	
Oct. 1	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Open Discussion.
Nov. 5	Monthly Chapter Meeting & Pot Luck Dinner: 7:00 PM - Guest Speaker

The death of a child conveys with it a grief in a category all its own – deep, wide, long and abiding."

~ Amy Dickinson



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