



# MID HUDSON NEW YORK CHAPTER

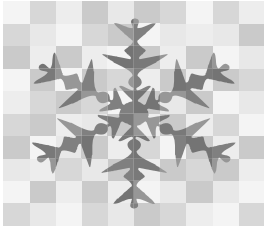
## Newsletter

together we remember... together we heal...

Kathy Corrigan Chapter Leader

[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014



### Please join us for our next meetings

Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> -- Topic: "Grief as a Journey"

Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> -- Topic: "Living with a Broken Heart"

7:00 at The Children's Home, 10 Children's Way, Poughkeepsie, NY

Call Kathy (845) 462-2825 for information



May Peace Be  
With You In  
The New Year

## THE HOLIDAYS ARE BEHIND US

By Marie Andrews

It is the New Year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of each, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there amongst all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out on a winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the great energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb; a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard; our throats tight from the muscles pulled by tears, shed or unshed; our chests banded tightly by the muscles of a mourning heart. If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days.

Yet, as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we, too, in our searching, find places of warmth and change and love and growth, deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be warmed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved one, to talk about even the first time shape of new hope, or of new acceptance, or of new understanding, or of new love. These are the new

roots, born of our love of our child, forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

Tears have a  
wisdom all  
their own. They  
come when a  
person has  
relaxed enough  
to let go and to  
work through  
his sorrow.  
They are the  
natural  
bleeding of an  
emotional  
wound,  
carrying the  
poison out of  
the system.  
Here lies the  
road to  
recovery.  
F. Alexander  
Magoun

- [sayinggoodbye.org](http://sayinggoodbye.org)

## GETTING THROUGH THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR LOVED ONE'S DEATH

You have gotten through one year of those "awful firsts." For example, your first birthday without your loved one being present, or the first Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, your wedding anniversary, or some special day that was unique for both of you.

Getting through the first year is hard, and each of these first occasions may bring up the sadness of living without your loved one. After these special days have passed, you may feel that the worst is behind you. But these feelings may continue to arise in future years on special days.

You cannot know what is in store for you during your grief journey. It is different for each of us. After making it through the "year of firsts," you begin to see and know that you will survive. You made it through the funeral or memorial service, read all the condolence notes, and took a flood of calls. Then the quiet times settled in, when the calls and the notes stop coming, and the visits from well-wishers are fewer and farther apart. You have faced some of the difficult milestones. You have gotten this far with courage and perseverance. Now you may be asking yourself, "Isn't this enough?"

Unfortunately, grieving does not "turn off" after one year. Time does not erase the past, but it does provide the space to think about your loved one, heal from the loss, and find meaning. Anniversaries and other reminders, although painful at first, do become easier. These important dates can become opportunities to revisit the happy memories that made your loved one special, and to create memorial traditions. It may be helpful to be prepared for the first anniversary of your loved one's death.

With the first anniversary of your loved one's death on the horizon, it may be helpful for you to keep in mind that your grief may return with intensity. There are no hard and fast rules regarding grieving, and not everyone will experience intense grief at the anniversary of the death of a loved one. Yet it may be helpful to be prepared for what grief counselors refer to as "anniversary grief." The anniversary of the death of your loved one can be a powerful reminder of your loss. It can be a reminder of all those special days that you had with your loved one. It may also bring up memories of unresolved issues or conflicts.

Before, during, and after the first anniversary of your loved one's death, you and your family and friends may experience a reawakening of the sadness, emptiness, and pain that you experienced when your loved one died. It is not unusual for people to

experience behavioral changes for several weeks before and after an anniversary.

Withdrawal, angry outbursts, crying spells, overwhelming sadness, lack of attention to detail, loss of interest in school or work activities are fairly common. You may be wondering, "How will I deal with it? If the stress and sadness today is this bad, how horrible will I feel on the actual date?"

You can get through this anniversary, and heal from experiencing it. Being prepared for the anniversary, and being open to the feelings the event brings, can be a healing opportunity for both you and your family.

Here are some suggestions for how to approach the first year anniversary experience:

- Plan for the anniversary. It may be helpful to know that many people find that the anticipation of the anniversary day can be worse than the actual day. As you anticipate the anniversary, you can bring comfort and healing into this day. Plan what you are going to do ahead of time, even if you plan to be alone, and set yourself up for a "good day." Let your friends and relatives know in advance what your needs are and how they may be able to help.
- You can celebrate the life of your loved one. The first anniversary of the death is a special day for recognizing your loss. You have not only lost the presence of your loved one, but all of their gifts: the laughter, the love, the shared past and qualities you treasured. Perhaps you are asking yourself how you can celebrate the life of your loved one on the death anniversary. One family took balloons to the high school track where their son had competed, and released them, each with a written personal message. One widow picnicked by the lake where she sprinkled her husband's ashes. Another family had an annual dinner in memory of their daughter. Creating a positive ritual, either alone or shared with others, can give support, healing and meaning to the death anniversary.
- You can celebrate what you have accomplished together. The death anniversary is also a day for acknowledging the living. This certainly includes you. The last 12 months have been demanding. You have handled your loss in the best way you could in order to survive. Take time to acknowledge the hard journey you've been on. Then look ahead to the new life you are creating for yourself. Do something special for yourself – perhaps schedule a massage, a special dinner or a trip to a nurturing place.

- Handle your memories with care. You can choose which parts of the life you shared that you wish to keep, and which parts you want to leave behind. The happiness you experienced with your loved one belongs to you forever. Hold on to those rich memories, and give thanks for the life of the person you've lost. It may be easier to cope with memories you consciously choose to keep, rather than to have them emerge when you are not prepared to cope with them. Perhaps you may decide to create a special place to honor your treasured memories, using photos, mementos and a candle. Journaling your memories will also help you in the healing process.
- Letting go doesn't mean forgetting. Letting go of what used to be is not being disloyal, and it does not mean you have forgotten your loved one. A part of that person will remain within you always. Letting go means leaving behind the sorrow and pain of grief and choosing to go on. It means you can take with you only those memories and experiences that enhance your ability to grow and expand your capacity for happiness.
- Plan for special support. It may be helpful to join a support group before and after the death anniversary of your loved one. Your local hospice will have support groups that you are welcome to join. Also, if you are accustomed to the Internet, there are special support groups suited to your exact needs. You may feel that you will never be finished with grief after the loss of your loved one. Feelings of grief may resurface during many special days for the rest of your life. Each time you will face your sadness on new terms, but may notice that it doesn't seem as intense or difficult. Hopefully, you will be able to affirm how much you have grown and healed in the ongoing journey of your grief.

## NONE WHO WANDER ARE LOST

By Sarah Treanor

It's been 16 months now since Drew died. It feels like 16 minutes and 16 years at the same time. I've spent the past year and a half pretty much lost. In that time, I've done the only thing I knew to do... create. A LOT. Art and writing have all but consumed my days and filled them with some deep meaning and beauty in the midst of brutal pain. I've also spent a lot of time beating myself because I wasn't committing myself to any one single new direction. Despite having the talent and skill to likely have a very successful career as a writer or a photographer, and despite my deep love for both, I have been unable to commit fully. But lately there's been a shift in how I've looked at this – a bit of hindsight I suppose.

You have to be careful about listening to that voice that tells you that something is wrong because you haven't found THE thing you should be doing with your life – or because you haven't found a way to see past a significant loss or trauma in your life yet. If you're one of those people who hasn't found their forward place yet, then you may just be in a place like I've been.... lost. But lost really isn't a bad place – it's an absolutely necessary place to allow ourselves to be.

In our search, we have to try on a lot of different shoes and hats and gloves to begin to find what works. This is especially true after a significant loss. We have to question everything. Some of us navigate through the worst of it quicker than others. Most of us will spend years in the lost place, years that are necessary and yes, have purpose. It's up to us to pay close attention and see the value in the lost places.

I've tried dozens of creative and healing avenues in the past 16 months (and many even more before that). I've made jewelry, painted with wax, taken welding, made painting as big as me using only my hands. I've taken thousands of photos and written countless words around my feelings of being lost both in my career and in my grief. I've gone to therapy, I've seen psychics, read books on grief and spirituality and creativity. I've done some art shows and considered being a published writer and what kind of writer I would be if I were one. I've gone in circles feeling my emotions and working through my grief while simultaneously going in circles with the big question: what on earth was I put here to do? For Drew, it was flying, and sharing that love of flight and the many ways it changed his life for the better. Since he died, I've been searching for my own version of flight I guess.

After 16 months of following the winding path that my intuition has led me on, I'm beginning to see that this is how we get there. It is never a straight road is it?



*In every winter's  
heart lies a quivering  
spring, and behind the  
veil of each night  
waits a smiling dawn.*

*Kahlil Gibran*

## Oeness

But we're never truly lost... we're always every second in the process of finding our way, even if it doesn't feel like it. My inability to commit wasn't because I'm lazy or because I'm not trying hard enough or because something is inherently wrong with me (despite countless times I have convinced myself of all three of those). It wasn't even because I've been too debilitated by my grief to take action. All this time spent feeling lost and like I'm "getting nowhere" turns out to be just listening to my intuition. All along I've been taking action in one direction I just didn't see: helping others. I write and I make art not only to help me, but also to help someone else out there. Helping them to not feel alone in their pain and doing so using the language I know best of all: creativity. With that in mind, I'm now working on creating a grief art workshop as a first step into this new direction. It's scary for sure, but it fits me in a way nothing else ever has.

It's nearly impossible to see how such things will fit together when we are in the middle of it – life, death, grief, purpose, change. But that's the great thing about intuition – it's not down there in the thick of it with you. Our intuition, I like to believe, is somewhere above us, able to see our life and our path from a higher vantage point. Eventually, if we listen to it long enough, we get to higher ground ourselves and can begin to see what was going on. We can see that every single twist and turn was an important piece of the way forward. It takes a huge amount of faith though, to continue to wander without knowing your exact course or direction. It takes an incredible amount of trust that forces outside of yourself can and do help you on your journey. It takes letting go, and then letting go again, and then letting go even more. I guess that's why I'm writing this, to say to someone else out there to keep having faith. Keep trusting and keep moving in the directions that excite you, heal you, and help you express yourself. Even if the fog is so thick you can't see... remember that your intuition is above all that and it is there to help you, if you will let it. Just follow the sound of it... ten more feet and then listen again, and follow the next sound it gives you (even if it takes you back in the direction you just came). It will still feel like you are going in a million directions, but your intuition will know all along exactly where to lead you. Trust that it can see the bigger picture and just listen.

*The moment I die,  
I will try to come back to you  
as quickly as possible.  
I promise it will not take long.*

*Isn't it true  
I am already with you  
in every moment?  
I come back to you  
in every moment.*

*Just look,  
feel my presence.  
If you want to cry,  
please cry.*

*And know  
that I will cry with you.*

*The tears you shed  
will heal us both.*

*Your tears are mine.*

*The earth I tread this morning  
transcends history.*

*Spring and Winter are both present in the moment.*

*The young leaf and the dead leaf are really one.*

*My feet touch deathlessness,  
and my feet are yours.*

*Walk with me now.*

*Let us enter the dimension of oneness  
and see the cherry tree blossom in Winter.*

*Why should we talk about death?*

*I don't need to die  
to be back with you.*

*~ Thich Nhat Hanh*



*Comfort comes from  
knowing that people have  
made the same journey.  
And solace comes from  
understanding how others  
have learned to sing again.*

Helen Steiner Rice  
Out of the Ashes/FB

*The grief of child loss is lonely and terrifying and steals the only anchors you think you have. It unhinges you, flings you into this vast space that few others have seen, let alone walked through. Child loss is disorienting, isolating, foreign, vast, unending, transformative, impossible. The parent that survives this grief is not the same parent, not the same person. You know things about yourself and the world that can never be unknown, ever again. Your eyes are opened; your heart is exposed, worn outside your body for the rest of your days, your capacities tested in ways you never imagined were possible. You are different, stronger, knowing, fierce, changed.*

*From: Mary Tyler Mom Blog*



*All that we can know about those we have loved and lost is that they would wish us to remember them with a more intensified realization of their reality. What is essential does not die, but clarifies. The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude.*

*~ Thornton Wilder*



**IN LOVING MEMORY**

**BRYAN CANTER**

**September 4, 1984 ~ January 25, 2010**

*I love you son and that's forever.*

*"All in all is all we are"*

*~ Kurt Cobain....Nirvana*



**IN LOVING MEMORY**

*ON YOUR FIRST  
ANGEL ANNIVERSARY*

**GLORIA  
ELENA  
SANTIAGO**

*October 28, 1985 ~ December 4, 2012*

As I sit in heaven  
And watch you everyday  
I try to let you know with signs  
I never went away  
I hear you when you're laughing  
And watch you as you sleep  
I even place my arms around you  
To calm you as you weep  
I see you wish the days away  
Begging to have me home  
So I try to send you signs  
So you know you are not alone  
Don't feel guilty that you have  
Life that was denied to me  
The Heaven is truly beautiful  
Social Butterfly Just you wait and see  
So live your life, laugh again  
Enjoy yourself, be free  
Then I know with every breath you take  
You'll be taking one for me...SHARE

## **BECAUSE OF LOVE**

*It's a privilege,  
dare I say an honor  
to have the opportunity  
to love that child.*

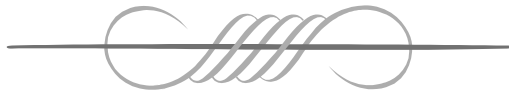
*I willingly bear the burden  
of my grief because the intensity  
of my sorrow bears witness  
to the intensity of my love.*

*A child as dear as him  
will never truly leave.  
As time passes, the blessing  
of his life fuels my soul.*

*There is no past tense to love,  
for it is eternal and endless.  
Love is beyond understanding  
and without boundaries.*

*Because of my son,  
because of his life,  
I know love  
and am filled with him.*

*From Heartbreak to Healing*



## **LEGACY**

*So often the legacy of those who have left  
the physical plane is not just the memory  
of their laughter and warmth, but a  
spiritual ripple that expands concentrically  
and infinitely... a ripple whose circular  
waves remind us of their positive  
contribution to our lives here on earth.  
The circle of life does not end with the  
physical. We are part of their legacy as  
we carry their joy with us while adding our  
own positive energy to those rings...  
Marsha -- A New Journey Blog*

How did I survive this year  
without you?  
How will I survive next year  
without you?  
The answer is the same:

**Love.**  
**And grief.**  
Both essential, now,  
to my survival.



-Dr Joanne Cacciatore

## ♥ **LOVE GIFTS** ♥

A Love Gift is a donation given in memory of your child. These donations help the Mid Hudson Chapter of BPUSA meet expenses and, more importantly, reach out to those in need. A donation can take the form of a book for our library, stamps for the newsletter, time on a committee, refreshments for a meeting or a check. If you wish to contribute, e-mail Kathy (kjc@verizon.net) or send your donation to: Patti Tucker, 11 Trails End, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- ♥ Charlie and Janet Powers for their donation in honor of **Michael Corrigan's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.**
- ♥ Zoe Tice in memory of her daughters **Nomi and Hope**
- ♥ Linda Schaff in memory of her child and to thank us "for faithfully sending the Newsletter."
- ♥ Dorothy Sedock "in honor of **Brian and Bobby** and all children who have left us too soon."
- ♥ Patti Tucker in memory of her son **Kevin**
- ♥ All who generously donated time, energy, food and money to support our beautiful **CANDLE LIGHTING**, especially **Anthony Scarrone, P.J. Devine and Graeme McEneany, Michelle Kosilla and Rombout Fire Company**