



# MID HUDSON NEW YORK CHAPTER

*Bereaved Parents of the USA*



## Newsletter

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

Kathy Corrigan Chapter Leader

[www.mhbpusa.com](http://www.mhbpusa.com)

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019



*Please join us for our next meetings*

Thursday, Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> -- Topic: **Endings/Beginnings: Creating a Vision Board for 2019**

Thursday, Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> -- Topic: **Qi Gong Healing Sounds with Lorraine Hughes**

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

Call Kathy (845) 462-2825 for information



### A WARM WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS

We understand how difficult it is to attend your first meeting. Feelings can be overwhelming; we have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Our stories may be different but we are alike in that we all hurt deeply. We cannot take your pain away but we can offer friendship and support. Bring a friend or relative to lean on if you wish.

### A NEW YEAR, A NEW START [www.coastalhospice.org](http://www.coastalhospice.org)

A new year is a new beginning. It is a time when many people make plans and formulate resolutions designed to improve their lives. But when we are grieving, our tendency is to stand at the threshold of a new year looking back rather than forward. Our loss defines our life and obscures thoughts of the future. We fear that walking through the door into a new year means leaving our loved one behind. Moving forward may seem to be an act of betrayal or abandonment. We may fear forgetting or letting go. And yet, we stand on the precipice of 2019 and our life moves on. Though we might not be ready to embrace it, one undeniable offering of a new year is hope. One writer said, "Hope is hearing the music of the future. Faith is having the courage to dance to it." Each breath is an acknowledgement that the last chapter in our life story has yet to be written. Each day is another opportunity to grow and move toward healing. Each new moment is pregnant with hope. The decisions we make in those moments shape us and our future. Ironically, the things that most often fill our resolutions are the very things that help us most in our grief: getting plenty of rest, eating healthy, exercising regularly and connecting more closely with others. Yet, change is not easy, especially change weighed down by our grief. How do we move forward? One word: Courage.

Webster defines courage as "the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty." The journey of grief is difficult beyond measure. We hope that as you venture into 2019 you find the courage to embrace the new opportunities that are before you, persevere in spite of the challenges you face, and seek help from fellow travelers when you need it. For many of us, the last thing we feel now is courageous. Yet, as Mary Ann Radmacher writes: "**Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, I will try again tomorrow.**"



# Dream

for yourself once more,  
while carrying your dear one  
close to your heart.

HEATHER STANG

## *I NEVER KNOW WHEN I'M GOING TO MISS YOU AND IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME*

[www.unexpectedfamilyouting.com](http://www.unexpectedfamilyouting.com)

I never know when I will miss you.

I can't ever predict just what will grip my heart with the reminder that you are gone. It could be anything. Anytime. Anywhere.

Because I am reminded of you everywhere.

I remember you are gone when I'm in a room full of people and I notice you are missing when I'm all alone. I feel your absence in joyful melodies and I hear your memory when the music is imbued with melancholy. You are everywhere and nowhere all at once.

When the days are bright, I am blinded by your presence and even when the world is dark, I still manage to find you. In laughter, I hear the echo of losing you. Your presence is overflowing in the tears that fall. Now that your body is gone, everything holds your being.

I miss you in the cold depths of winter and I long for you in the thick summer breeze. You are my first rising thought in the morning and my last notion as I sink into the heaviness of the night. I thought we ran out of moments together, but every moment seems to belong to you.

How can you be everywhere when you are nowhere to be seen?

I used to worry about facing the world because I didn't know what would trigger my heartache. I used to be afraid of every feeling, every memory, every moment because I didn't know which ones held you. Now I know you are everywhere and I think that I know why.

You're everywhere because you're somewhere inside of who I am. I am the bearer of your life and your memory. I am the keeper of your existence. Even though you're gone, I never really have to search for you. I never know where I'll find you but you are always there.

I never know when I will miss you and it happens all the time.

---

## *GRIEF IN THE NEW YEAR, HOPE TO HEAL*

By Rhonda O'Neill

...There is hope to HEAL your broken heart enough to find some joy again.

***H - Honor your pain and your loss.*** Give yourself permission to grieve regardless of how long it's been since your loved one died. By honoring your loss, the unsettled emotions that are involved in your grief will become more manageable. Allow yourself to feel your loss and the emotions it brings. Remember the love you shared and know that it is always with you. This love will always belong to you. This love can never be lost.

***E - Engage actively in the process of healing.*** This process looks different for each of us. Start engaging in healing by becoming aware of any patterns of grieving that may keep you stuck in the pain. If you have inadvertently isolated yourself do your best to attempt to get back out among friends and family. They won't necessarily understand what you're going through, but they can still provide some companionship.

Try a support group, or possibly seeing a grief therapist. Sometimes just being able to talk about what you are feeling and going through can bring some relief and enable you to make small steps forward.

Journal your thoughts and feelings. For me, allowing my feelings to flow from me and through the pen out onto paper, provided a sense of comfort for me. My thoughts and feelings were no longer locked up inside me with no place to go.

**A – Acknowledge the emotions that demand to be felt.** The reality is that grief will drag you through a huge range of emotions, ranging from guilt to fear to despair to anger. The scope of possible emotions is almost endless. Each one of us will experience different emotions as we grieve, at different intensities and lengths. You should be aware that the emotional ups and downs that you are experiencing are normal. Healing your grief is a process. Don't feel guilty that you are experiencing all of these emotions. These emotions are what you must experience to eventually heal your broken heart.

If you need to cry, cry. Your body is telling you that it needs the release that only tears can bring. If you need to scream, scream. If you keep the screams inside, they will eat at you, undermining your ability to mend your broken heart, and the repression of these emotions may eventually make you physically ill. Let your emotions do what they are meant to do...Heal.

**L – Look for small things that can bring some joy back into your life.** When I was lost in my grief, I discovered small things that brought me happiness:

- Spending time with the young children in my family made me smile. Their innocent joy in life was infectious and I found happiness sharing time with them, bringing me hope that I could feel joy again.
- I intentionally sought out the few friends who could make me forget about my pain for a moment and laugh. I did my best to limit the amount of time spent around those people who brought me negative energy.

These are just a few of the ways that I eventually created a path that would lead me to a place where I was able to live with my losses and start to experience some joy again. Find what brings you some joy.

After millions of steps on my grief journey, I finally realize that every step I take is a step closer to being with my loved ones again. But, I also realize that it is my choice whether these steps are taken with sorrow, or whether I attempt to find some joy in the remainder of my journey. Finding joy in life again doesn't mean you will ever forget your loved one. It does mean that you honor the place they had in your life and the love you shared...allowing love and loss to walk side by side into 2019. **Pain and loss will change you, but they don't have to define you.**



## **10 Things Everyone Should Know About Siblings & Grief**

*By Dr. Christina Hibbert*

There are many things people need to learn about siblings and grief. Here are ten I would like everyone to know.

**1) Sibling grief is often misunderstood**—by parents, families, friends, and counselors, even by the siblings themselves. So much focus is given to the parents of the lost child, to the children of the lost parent, to the spouse of the lost adult sibling. And, rightly so. But, what about the siblings? What about the ones who, like me, have grown up with the deceased? Who believed they would have a lifetime with their sister or brother? Who now face that lifetime alone?

**2) Sibling grief “has been almost entirely overlooked in the literature on bereavement.”** It's no wonder, therefore, that even mental health providers misunderstand sibling grief. How are families supposed to know how to help siblings through grief if even the research on the subject is lacking?

**3) Common emotions siblings may feel when a brother or sister dies include:**

- Guilt
- Abandonment
- Loss of Innocence
- Fallout from the Family
- Somatic Symptoms
- Fears and Anxiety

**4) Siblings may feel “trumped” by the grief of other family members.** I sure felt this way, and it’s common, since the focus is usually on the parents if a young sibling dies and on the surviving spouse or children if an older sibling dies. This may lead to minimizing a sibling’s own loss.

**5) Young siblings lose innocence when a brother or sister dies, which may lead to fears and anxiety; “Survivor guilt” is also common.** Experiencing death as a child becomes a lifelong experience of processing and understanding the loss. Children grow up with grief, understanding more as they get older. Fear of death or dying is common. Anxiety or worry about getting sick may become prevalent. In young siblings, guilt for provocative behavior or for unacceptable feelings (jealousy) is common. Young children may think, before the death, “I wish my brother were dead!” then believe they somehow caused it to happen. Older siblings may wonder, “Why them and not me?” Because siblings are usually similar in age, it can bring up many questions about the sibling’s own life and death, and guilt along with it.

**6) Surviving children do, unfortunately, end up taking the fallout from parents’, siblings’, or other family members’ mistakes, emotional blowups, or neglect.** In many ways, siblings often experience a double loss: the loss of their sister or brother, and the loss of their parents (at least for a time, but sometimes, permanently). I know this from experience. Though my parents did the best they could, after my youngest sister died, our entire family was different. My mom retreated into her own grief, staying in her room, depressed and sick for years. My dad retreated into work and anything to take his mind from his pain. Luckily, I was already on my own, in college, at the time; my younger siblings weren’t so lucky. At 9, 11, 14, and 17 years old, they grew up with a completely different set of parents than I had. I tried to step in as a “parent” figure over the years, but the separation from my parents in their time of need profoundly influenced their lives. It profoundly influenced *my* life. It profoundly changed our family.

**7) Siblings may manifest somatic symptoms of grief, including symptoms that mimic the deceased sibling’s symptoms.** Especially in young children, symptoms like stomachaches, headaches, nightmares, body pain, digestive symptoms, and trouble sleeping are common. These should be seen as symptoms of grief, and hopefully, an adult in the [family can help](#) siblings work through their feelings and show them [how to grieve](#).

**8) Having someone explain the loss to younger siblings, to be there for them and help them grieve, is ideal.** Little children don’t comprehend death in the same way adults do. It is therefore important to have somebody who can walk them through the loss and the grief process, to explain it wasn’t their fault, to validate what they feel. If parents aren’t able to do so, another family member or friend may, and hopefully will, step in.

**9) Even adult siblings will feel the loss deeply.** The pain isn’t less simply because you’re older. In fact, in many ways, it’s harder. You understand more. You know what it means to die, and you will feel the pain of the loss in a different way than young children, who still haven’t developed abstract thinking and understanding, will. Grieve your loss. If you’re not sure how, [here are some ideas](#).

**10) My best advice for siblings in grief: Feel the loss as long as you need to and give yourself time to heal.** Because sibling loss is so [misunderstood](#), you may receive messages that make you feel like you should be “over it by now.” They don’t know sibling loss. Now, you do. It takes time. Lots of time. It’s not about “getting over” the loss of a sibling. You don’t get over it. You create your life and move on, when you’re ready. But you will always remember your brother or sister—the missing piece of your life.

I once heard someone say, “When a parent dies, you lose the past. When a child dies, you lose the future. When a sibling dies, you lose the past *and* the future.” That is the grief of a sibling—grief for what was past, and grief for what should have been the future. Just remember these things, my friends. Remember to be there for siblings in grief. You can be the difference in helping them create a bright future, even if they now must do so without their beloved sibling.



# Dear Newly Bereaved Parent by Angela Miller of [\*A Bed For My Heart\*](#)



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. Your fingernails will become bloodied from clawing your way from the depths of despair. Your spirit will grow weary from fighting to survive. Your eyes will cry more tears than you ever thought possible. Your arms will ache an ache for which there aren't words. For a *lifetime*.

Your heart will break into a million tiny pieces. You'll wonder how it will ever mend again.

But with every morsel of unspeakable pain, there is love. An abundance of love. A love so strong, so powerful, it will buoy you. You will not drown.

Others will say things that are intended to be helpful but aren't. Take what is, leave what isn't.

Still, you'll meet others along the journey who will get it without ever saying a word. Kind souls who will breathe you back to life again. Let them.

Years down the road you'll tire of hearing the same advice and clichés, over and over again. Advice you don't want or need. Everyone will try to tell you how to best "fix" your broken heart. The trouble is, you don't need fixing.

There is no fix for this.

Eventually, you'll learn how to carry the weight of this pain. At times it will crush you. At other times you'll learn how to shoulder the burden with newfound grit and grace. Either way, you'll learn how to bend with the weight of it.

It will not break you. Not entirely.

And even if you don't believe in hope— not even a little— hope will light the way for you. At times you won't realize your path is lit. The darkness feels all-consuming when you're in it. But know the light is there. Surrounding you now. And now. And now.

Know you're being guided, by all of us who have survived this impossible hell. You may not hear us, or see us, but we are with you. Beside you. Hand in hand, heart to heart. Always. Just like your child still is.

Above all else, know that no one can save you but yourself. You are the heroine/hero of this sad story. You are the one who gets to decide how, and if, you'll survive this. You are the one who will figure out a way to survive the sleepless nights and the endless days. You are the one who will decide if and when you'll find a purpose again that means something to you. You are the one who will choose how you'll live with the pain. You are the one who will decide what you'll cling to, what will make your life worth living again. You, and only you get to decide how you'll survive.

No one else can do this for you.

People will speak of "closure," or "moving on," or "getting over it," of grief coming to an end. Smile kindly, and know, anyone who says these things hasn't lived this thing called grief.

To lose a child is to lose the very heart and soul of *you*. It is overwhelmingly disorienting. It takes a long, long time to find yourself again. It takes a long time to grow new life around the chasm of such grave loss. It takes a long time to grow beauty from ashes.

There will always be a hole in your heart, the size, and shape of your child. Your child is absolutely irreplaceable. Nothing will fill the void your child left. But your heart will grow bigger— beautifully bigger— around the empty space your child left behind.

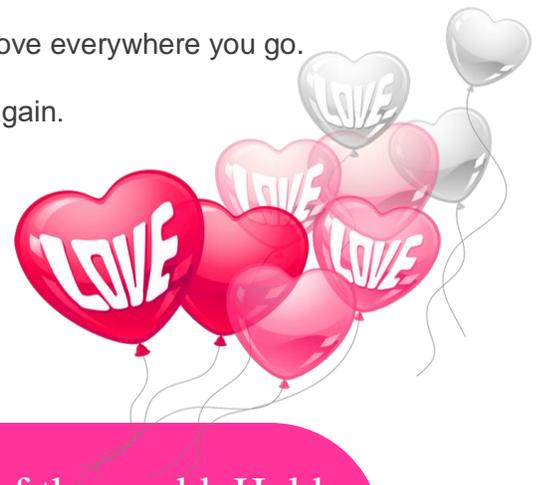
The love and pain you carry for your precious child will be woven into every thread of your being. It will fuel you to do things you never dreamed you could do.

Eventually, you'll figure out how to live for both of you. It will be beautiful, and it will be hard.

But, the love you two share will carry you through. You will spread this love everywhere you go.

Eventually, you'll be able to see again. Eventually, you'll find your way again.

Eventually, you'll realize you *survived*.



The grief we carry is part of the grief of the world. Hold it gently. Let it be honored. You do not have to keep it in anymore. You can let go into the heart of compassion; you can weep. Releasing the grief we carry is a long, tear-filled process. Yet it follows the natural intelligence of the body and heart. Trust it, trust the unfolding. Along with meditation, some of your grief will want to be written, to be cried out, to be sung, to be danced. Let the timeless wisdom within you carry you through grief to an open heart.

~ Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield



## Valentine's Day

*A day to honor and remember the gift of love.*

## 15 Ways to Beat the Winter Blues

©2017 Sharon Martin, LCSW

1. Get out of the house.
2. Laugh.
3. Say "no" to something you don't want to do.
4. Give yourself a treat.
5. Clear the clutter.
6. Don't sweat the small stuff.
7. Put on your favorite playlist.
8. Spend time with your pets.
9. Eat a healthy lunch (and an afternoon snack).
10. Mindfully use your senses to increase enjoyment of everyday life.
11. Move your body.
12. Buddy up.
13. Write it out.
14. Open the curtains and turn on the lights.
15. Anticipate a fun-filled activity.

*"No winter lasts forever;  
No spring skips its turn."*



HAL BORLAND

## Make plans to attend the National Gathering Conference in 2019!

Join us for a weekend of inspirational speakers, informative workshops on a variety of grief topics and special ceremonies to honor and remember our children. Spend time with fellow bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

Find us on Facebook: [2019 Gathering Conference](#)

### ANNOUNCING OUR 2019 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



GLEN LORD



SUSAN TOLER-CARR



PAULA STEPHENS



GARETH WILLIAMS

# NATIONAL GATHERING 2019



## Bereaved Parents USA

August 2-4 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri

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