



MID HUDSON NEW YORK CHAPTER

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Newsletter

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

Kathy Corrigan Chapter Leader

www.mhbpusa.com

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022



Please join us for our next monthly meeting

All in-person meetings have been canceled until further notice. In the meantime, we will meet via zoom on the first Thursday of every month.

For more information, please email Kathy kjcorrigan5@gmail.com or call her at (845) 462-2825



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.

GRIEVING IN THE NEW YEAR

<https://clairebidwellsmith.com>

If you're like me, the new year always brings an opportunity for renewal and a fresh start. Except when you're grieving. When you've lost someone you love – recently, or even years ago – the new year can bring on a tidal wave of emotions and expectations. The idea of starting over in the new year can feel unwanted or even just overwhelming.

New Year's Resolution: Be less sad.

Impossible.

If you have this one on your list strike it out right now! I've heard so many clients tell me stories of trying to "quit" grieving at the beginning of the year, only to have this resolution fall flat on its face.

New Year's simply looks different for those who are grieving. You may find yourself feeling more alone than ever as you watch your friends and loved ones carry on celebrating and making resolutions to embrace the year ahead. Because when you're grieving there is a poignancy that comes with the passing of time, and nothing feels like more of a reminder of this than the new year.

I'll never forget the first new year after my mother died. She had been gone for almost a year but when the clock struck 12 that night and the minutes carried forth into a year in which she was not alive, I literally sank to my knees in pain in the back hallway of a nightclub.

The intense pain I felt in that moment was unexpected for me. For most of that first year, I had felt numb. But when the hands of the clock began to move forward and I realized I was entering a year in which she would not be a part of, I felt overcome with searing grief. The club patrons carried on celebrating around me and I curled into a corner of the hallway sobbing into my hands, missing my mother more than I could stand, and not knowing how I would get through an entire lifetime without her.



Allow Grief to be Part of Your New Year

Be kind to yourself in the new year. You don't have to make the traditional fresh start, embrace diets, work out regimes, or start a daily gratitude list. Whether this is your first year without your loved one or whether it's been many years since the loss, it's important to honor your feelings and give yourself the proper time you need to grieve. There will be other years in which you can feel celebratory again. But this year be gentle with yourself.

Let your resolution be one of vulnerability. So many of us are afraid to feel all the big emotions that come after a loss. These feelings can be overwhelming and also make you feel like you are not functioning like everyone else around you, but let that be okay for now.

I've had many people tell me years after a loss that they feel they missed an opportunity in their grief – that they did not let it in when given the chance, and that it hardened something about their relationship with their loved one.

Use the new year to take a deep breath and to embrace who you are in this moment. We change so much more than we realize. So, remember that you will not always be in this space, but while you are, allow yourself to feel all that comes with loss.

There is undeniably an identity shift that comes with losing someone close to you. Be it a friend, family member, spouse, or child, their absence in your life will force change upon your soul. Most of us try to resist that change, thinking that the answer to getting through the pain is to try to remain exactly the same, to try to retain the person you were before the loss. But in fact, the opposite is true.

When we can allow ourselves to let the loss shape us and change us, we will grow *with* experience, rather than *against* it. And whenever we stop resisting something then we can give ourselves the opportunity to heal.

The Year of Letting Go

Let this be the year of letting go. Not of your loved one, but of your expectations of yourself. You will never *get over* your loved one and you do not ever need to let go of them, but in order to heal you do need to release the idea that you can remain unchanged.

Each time you find yourself judging your grief process – whether it's thinking you are too sad or too angry or simply too consumed by it all – let go and know that whatever you are feeling right now is normal and natural. You will eventually reach a state of less pain and sadness and anxiety. You will find a *new normal*. Until then, be gentle with yourself.

Meditation for the New Year

I want to walk you through a simple meditation that you can do anytime you have a quiet and private space for 5-10 minutes. Don't worry if you've never meditated before. Just give it a try.

First lie back in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Then take a moment to simply breathe and become attuned to your body. When you are ready, I want you to imagine that you are rising up above yourself and looking down.

Take note of everything that you are experiencing in this moment in time. Do not resist what you see. If you think you are too sad, or too heavy or too scattered or too *whatever* I want you to let yourself see it and accept it anyway. This is who you are in this moment.

Take another moment to imagine reaching down and stroking your own head in a loving way. Forgive yourself for anything you think you are doing wrong and just for this one moment, during this meditation, let yourself feel real love and compassion for who you are, right here and right now.

Give yourself a message of reassurance and love. See yourself as you would see a friend or a child, and meet yourself with true compassion.

When you are ready, return to your body and take some slow, deep breaths before you open your eyes.

Do this meditation as often as you need. It will help keep you present and balanced in the new year. And remember, the path to healing starts with giving yourself space to grieve.

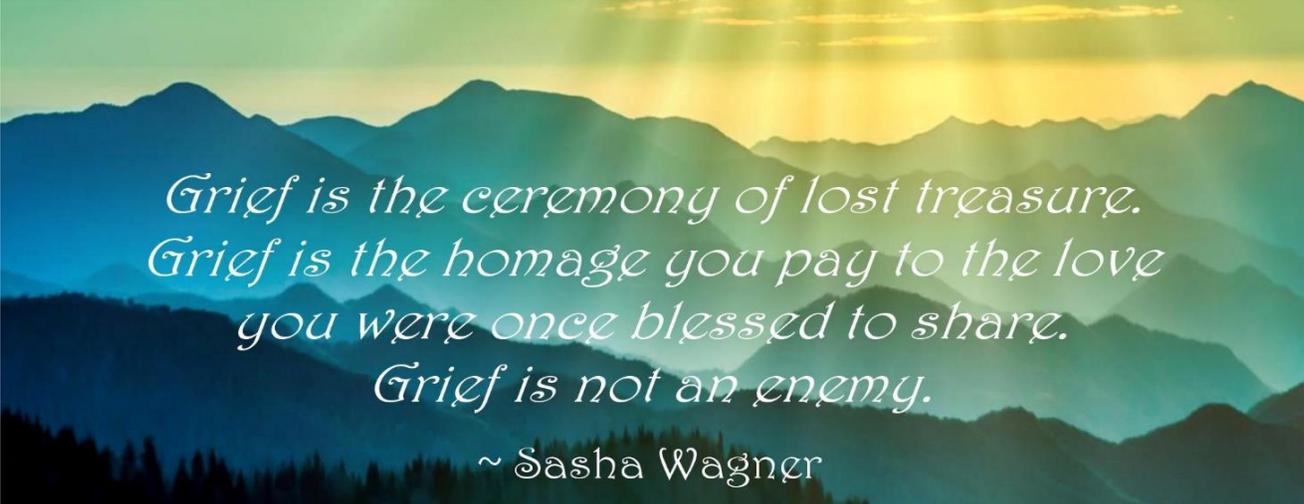
Thoughts to ponder as we navigate our way through the New Year...

maybe it's up to us
to fill some of the hole they left behind
with all the beauty that we can.

maybe we can carry them not only
in our hearts,
but in our way of living as well.

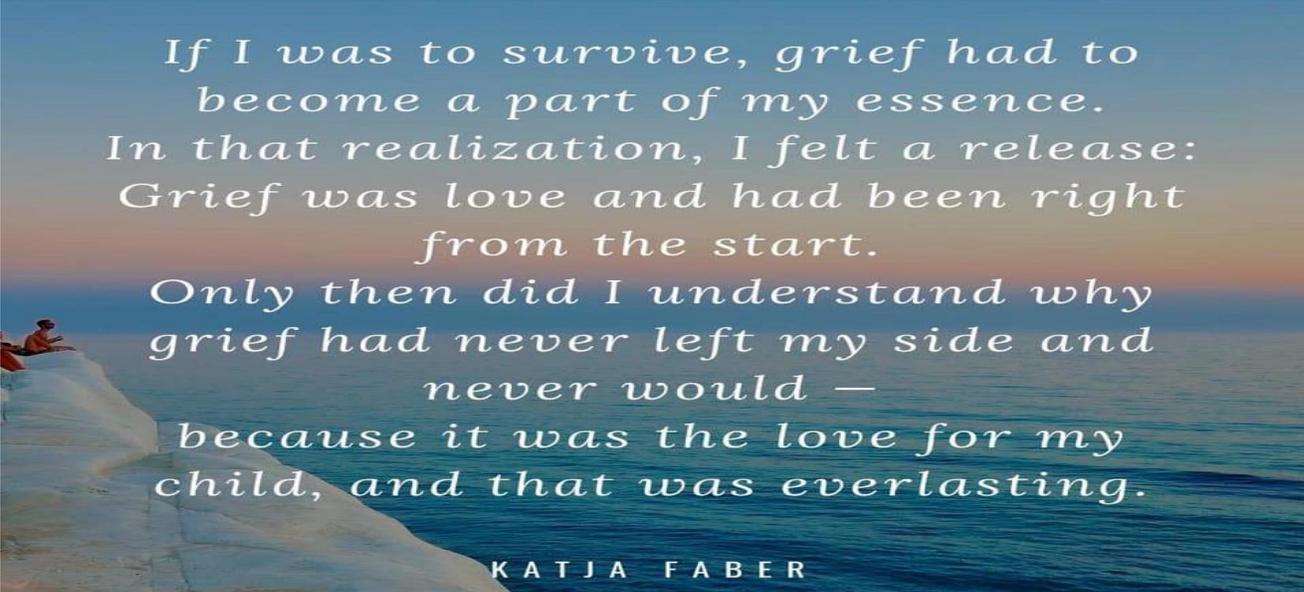
as if the love that we create
is a vessel of their spirit.

www.bonesigharts.com



*Grief is the ceremony of lost treasure.
Grief is the homage you pay to the love
you were once blessed to share.
Grief is not an enemy.*

~ Sasha Wagner



*If I was to survive, grief had to
become a part of my essence.
In that realization, I felt a release:
Grief was love and had been right
from the start.*

*Only then did I understand why
grief had never left my side and
never would —*

*because it was the love for my
child, and that was everlasting.*

KATJA FABER

ENTER 2022 WITH COMPASSION FOR YOURSELF...

By David Kessler

Stepping into the new year when we're in grief can bring up so much pain. As we move into the new year without our loved ones, the pain only intensifies. In the new year, there can also be pressure around resolutions and our culture's quest for self-improvement.

Enter 2022 with compassion for yourself. I know this is easier said than done. I wanted to share these New Year's resolutions for grievers. I invite you to choose the ones that speak to you.



Allow space for your feelings - Grief is a natural process. Your grief will guide you where you need to go. Let yourself experience your feelings without struggling to resist or edit them.

Rest when you are weary - Grief is exhausting. Give yourself the time and space you need to be still to restore your body, mind, and spirit.

Give yourself permission to say no - No is a complete sentence. Choose to be with people you want to be with. Engage in activities that feel right for you.

Give yourself permission to say yes - Say yes to nurturing yourself. Say yes to listening to your heart.

Engage in a community - We all need to be seen and to be with people who get it. Seek out people who understand you and your grief. Expressing your feelings and sharing your experience with others can be transformative.

Spark curiosity - Challenge yourself to try new things or take a different approach. Is there something you've been interested in but have been waiting to try? Step outside of your habits. Meet a neighbor for a cup of coffee, visit a different park, learn something new.

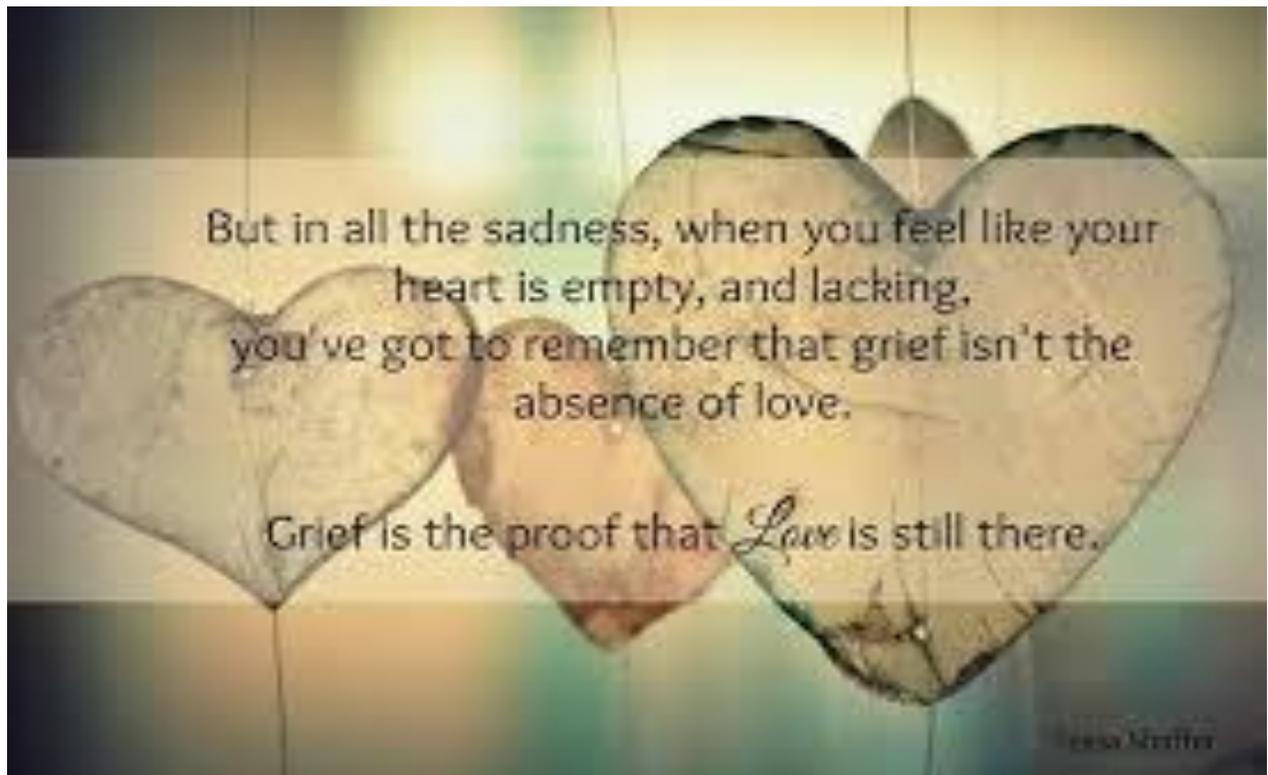
Move - Grief lives in our bodies. To connect back to our physical body, move a little. Walk, dance, swim, stretch, connect your mind and your body by embracing a little movement each day.

Spend time in nature - When we are in grief, we can get stuck in our own minds. Nature is a powerful reminder of the world around us. We were designed to be able to handle grief, just as the tides of the sea rise and fall, as a tree reaches towards the sun, as a squirrel knows how to reserve resources through the winter. Give yourself the gift of time spent in the natural world. Let the wind touch your skin, listen to the sea, admire the vastness of the mountains, nurture a plant on your balcony or windowsill.

Breathe - I often remind people to let the day be the day. When people are in intense emotions such as crying, I often remind them to take a deep breath. Inhale acceptance and peace, exhale expectations and struggle. Connect with your breath and your body.

Wishing you peace in the new year.





Here are some practical tips on managing Valentine's Day grief:

- Write a letter to your loved one.
- Light a candle or buy a bouquet of roses in honor of him or her.
- Gift yourself with a special Valentine's present, maybe flowers or chocolates.
- Make a special meal with someone where you can share memories of your loved one.
- Look at photo albums and reminisce.
- Soothe yourself with music, prayer, uplifting literature, tears, and laughter.
- Make a list of the ways your loved one enriched your life and continues to influence you.
- Visit favorite places from your life with your loved one and savor the memories. Do something your loved one enjoyed.
- Surround yourself with people who love and support you.
- Draw comfort from doing for others. Consider giving a donation or gift in memory of our loved one.



There will be Winter

THERE WILL BE WINTER
IN WAITING FOR SPRING
SOME WILL LEAVE

STILL THE GRASS GROWS
IT BENDS TO YOUR STEP
ARRIVING OR DEPARTING

THE WIND THAT RESTS
PATENTLY ON QUIET HILLS
WILL RISE TO GREET YOU

THERE IS A LIGHT
EVEN IN
THE DARKEST SEASONS
IT STILL SHINES

WAIT

Cindy Smith

Like snowflakes,
your words fall silent.
But my heart still
hears your voice.

Angie Weiland-Crosby



10 Winter Affirmations for Emotional Healing

By Jennifer Williamson



It's that cold and quiet season in my corner of the world. May it be a season of rooting, if not blooming -- of acceptance and faith and sweet, sweet rest.

Use these winter affirmations to help you better appreciate the season you're in, whatever the weather outside or in your heart.

Oh, and these affirmations aren't just for winter. They're for your emotions, the ones that are hard to love. The ones that, when you sit with them and let them breathe and be, will teach you to see the beauty in almost anything.

1. Even if my life is not in full bloom, I am exactly where I'm supposed to be.
2. I give my feelings room to breathe and be because they contribute to my wholeness as a person.
3. No matter the weather outside, I keep a little sunlight always in my heart.
4. If there's ever magic to be found, it's in the subtleties of the season I'm standing in now.
5. No matter how old I grow, no matter how much I've seen, things can still be new if I'm willing to look at them differently.
6. I am strong with the strength of the earth. I am colored by the light of the sky. My heart is as soft and as pure as snow. My soul is open like a window and I see that everything around me is part of me.
7. Every snowflake reminds me that even I am a thing of wonder -- I am a world, I am a miracle, I am my own masterpiece.
8. I don't believe in bad weather, only different kinds of weather. I don't believe in wrong emotions, only different kinds of emotions.
9. I am allowed to rest.
10. I believe there's beauty to be found in just about anything. (Even, within me.)



A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity.



HEALTHY GRIEVING: SEVEN WAYS TO GRIEVE MINDFULLY IN A NEW YEAR

By Victor M. Parachin, M. Div.

Mounting scientific evidence from scores of universities strongly suggests that mindfulness not only reduces stress, but also gently builds an inner strength so that future stressors have less impact on our happiness and physical well-being.

Simply stated, mindfulness is the natural human ability to be pay attention and be aware of what is happening around us, to us and within us. When we are mindful, we are more able to respond rather than react to issues, events and people. Mindfulness is an important quality to bring into the bereavement process.

Here are seven ways to grieve mindfully:

1. **Mindful breathing.** Grief produces stress; and when you are stressed, there are physical changes such as increased heart rate, fast breathing, and high blood pressure. The shortest route to reducing this stress is to breathe deeply and slowly. When you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. Here is a simple breath exercise to do when feeling stressed, called CPR. First, inhale slowly and say, "I am" then exhale slowly and say "calm." Second, inhale slowly and say, "I am" then exhale slowly and say, "peaceful." Third, inhale slowly and say, "I am" and exhale slowly and say "relaxed." Do this for several minutes until you feel more calm, peaceful and relaxed.
2. **Mindful thoughts.** When grieving, it's easy to let the mind gravitate toward negative, catastrophic thinking. However, it doesn't need to be that way. Rather than have your mind manage you and your feelings, flip the switch and manage your mind, training it to think positively and optimistically. Whenever negative thoughts emerge replace them with positive ones.
3. **Mindful words.** Pay attention to the way you speak. Is your vocabulary positive and uplifting or does it tend to focus on the negative and pessimistic? Use words, phrases and sentences which build up, encourage, inspire and applaud yourself and all those you come in contact with.
4. **Mindful action.** Take steps necessary to educate and inform yourself about the grief process. Read books and magazine articles, take workshops, join a grief support group. Some of the many benefits of being in a self-help group include:
 - Emotional, psychological and spiritual support in a safe and non-judgmental environment.
 - Sympathy and understanding from others who have experienced a similar loss.
 - Coping skills to help you through the most difficult days of your grief journey.
 - New friendships with people who "get it" and understand first-hand what you're going through.
 - Permission to grieve and permission to live a happy productive life.

(Editor's Note: This describes what happens when attending a Mid Hudson BP support group. Next meeting is 1/6 at 7:00. KC)

5. **Mindful eating.** Grief disrupts appetite. Some grievers eat too little, while others overeat. Practice mindfulness at meals. Be sure to mindfully eat fresh, healthy foods to keep your body strong.
6. **Mindful exercise.** To offset the shock and sadness of grief, engage in regular exercise most days of the week. Studies reveal that exercise is just as effective for reducing depression as are anti-depressant drugs. Even if you feel you can't possibly drag yourself out of bed, get up and get moving. Think carefully about an activity that appeals to you—hiking, biking, swimming, yoga, group fitness classes, dancing, kayaking—and do it.
7. **Mindful possibilities.** As grief eases and days become lighter and brighter, begin to be mindful about your future. One chapter of your life has concluded, and now is the time to begin writing a new chapter. Be mindful about your ability to tap into inner strength, move forward and reinvent yourself.