



MID HUDSON NEW YORK CHAPTER

Newsletter

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

Kathy Corrigan Chapter Leader

www.mhbpusa.com

MARCH/APRIL 2015

March

In like a lion,
out like a lamb!



Please join us for our next meetings

Thursday, March 5th -- Topic: OPEN – led by the Steering Committee

Thursday, April 2nd – Topic: Film viewing “Space Between Breaths”

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

Call Kathy (845) 462-2825 for information



April

April Showers
bring
May Flowers!



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.

“IT’S OKAY”

It’s okay to be afraid of the things we don’t understand.

It’s okay to feel anxious when things aren’t working our way.

It’s okay to feel lonely...even when you’re with other people

It’s okay to feel unfulfilled because you know something is missing.

It’s okay to think and worry and cry.

It’s okay to do whatever you have to do, but just remember, too...

That eventually you’re going to adjust to changes life brings your way,

And you’ll realize that it’s okay to love again and laugh again

And it’s okay to get to the point where the life you live is full and satisfying and good to you...

And it will be that way because you made it that way.

Anonymous

“How do you bear it all?”

The cry came from a mother whose son had died only weeks before. We were in a circle looking at her, looking around, looking away. Tears in our hearts, in our eyes. How do we bear it? I don’t know, but the circle helps.

~ Eva Lager

HOW TO CURE A BROKEN HEART: A RECIPE

By Will Donnelly

“What is the cure for a broken heart?” someone asked.

“You want a cure for a broken heart?” I replied. “And you think I can come up with it?”

Well, I guess I should know it, shouldn’t I? I mean, it’s been 4 1/2 years since the Great Loss, and I have survived thus far, and not just survived, but at times also thrived. So I guess I can come from somewhere other than intellectual curiosity. But do I know what has “cured” me? Not exactly, so let’s explore it a bit.

First, this cure requires a recipe. For this recipe, we will need to start with the most bitter ingredient right up front (but have faith, sweeter ingredients will be added later.)

Start with one part **acceptance**.

I would accept that a broken heart is a broken heart, and that its essence will be with me forever. I'd feel it entirely, learn what it feels like, where I can feel it in my body, and what it does to my mind. I'd let the feeling move through me like a river - sometimes a torrent and sometimes slow, like an eddy swirling around and around and around, making you feel like you might go under. "Swim out, to the current," I'd say, "and get into the real flow of acceptance."

Next, I'd add more than a pinch of **trust**.

Trust that the current is going somewhere and that we don't really need to know exactly where that is. There's a saying, if you want to make God belly laugh, just explain to him your plans for your life. Note: If you are broken hearted, trust is like stepping out onto a ledge overlooking a deep, unknowable canyon, with a blindfold. You're not quite sure how far to go with it. So add Trust wisely.

Then, to round out the recipe a bit more, add several tablespoons of raucous **laughter**.

Laughter, like baking soda, really helps to lighten things up. Laughter can seem hard to find these days, but don't be fooled. It's really closer to you than you might imagine. You'll need laughter because chemically, in your body, it helps. It sends all sorts of fantastic hormones surging through your body so you feel lighter, happier. When I laugh really, really hard, it's like I took a pain-numbing drug, or a drug that might be called ecstasy (and this one has only positive side effects!) Don't skimp with the laughter.

For a firm foundation to the recipe, mix in a cup of gritty **courage**.

Courage isn't about being fearless, it's about feeling your fears and moving through them. So Acceptance and Trust mix well with this ingredient of courage. On many days, after your heart has been broken, just getting out of bed feels like an epic journey and commitment, so you'll definitely need this is the mix. Shopping tip: I've found courage often on the pages of books — so you may want to look there for this ingredient.

To create a better emulsion, generously pour in free-flowing **tears**, as needed.

Somehow, tears seem to water the fertile elements of release. They don't really wash away the pain, as some might suggest, but rather they seem to be a blessing of water onto dry soil, soil that has forgotten Who It Really Is, in its natural ability to be fecund, fertile and constantly providing the perfect environment for more growth. Tip: These tears can come from laughter, too!

In my grandmother's day, I am aware they discouraged adding tears into this recipe, which I am also aware makes the recipe very dry and bitter tasting. Tears are alchemical in nature, and they mix really well with the above-mentioned elements, so let it flow, baby!

Finally, it is said that there can be no cure without this next, mercurial ingredient: **Love**.

This is the trickiest, most exotic ingredient in the entire recipe. And yet, it is the most simple and sweetest, so I know you'll love adding it. You may be tempted to skimp on this one because it can seem so hard to find, or it seems to cost so much. But don't be fooled. It is readily available absolutely everywhere. It's not *where* you look, but *how* you look that will help you find it. Hint: to find the best quality, start looking from within first.

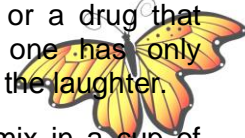
But how much love must be in the recipe? Once you are able to love others as much as or more than you loved the person you lost, you will have found the perfect amount for this recipe. (But you really can't add too much!)

Well, there may be more to this recipe, but this is a start. Oh, I almost forgot! You must use a specific container to hold all the special ingredients for this elixir: **Time**.

The best part about this container is that it works naturally to allow you to see all the ingredients - how they mix together and dance endlessly in swirling, beautiful patterns.

As you look at these mystical ingredients through the container of time, much like a soufflé rising, you'll notice that within this recipe, **Wisdom** is a natural by-product, too. There are some who use this container for their recipe but fail to see the wisdom rise. I think they shake it too much. I don't recommend this oversight, as wisdom is the icing on the cake, so to speak, and makes for a heaven on Earth, a recipe for which we all are very hungry.

"Once you are able to love others as much as or more than you loved the person you lost, you will have found the perfect amount for this recipe."



SIBLING CORNER

DENIAL AND DISBELIEF IN GRIEVING

By Sarah Kravits

(Editor's Note: Sarah will be a Workshop Presenter at BPUSA National Gathering, July 24-26, Hartford, CT)

I was in denial from the first moment. And for a while thereafter.

On a sunny Saturday in June, I had just finished a mud run with my son, and we were walking back to our car in late morning, covered with mud and laughing. My husband called my cell, from our home phone, I assumed, since as far as I knew, he was home with our other two children. I answered, and he said, "Where are you?" When I told him I was heading to the car, he said no, he needed to know exactly where I was located at that moment. Confused, I gave him a description of where I was on the sidewalk.

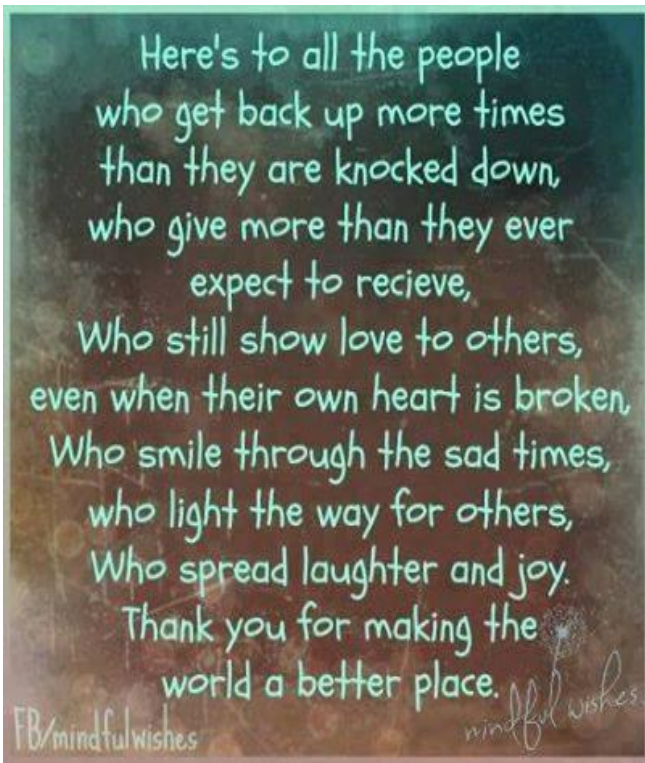
The next thing I knew, he was running across the street to me. He told my son and his friend to walk ahead. He grabbed me by the shoulders and looked me in the eyes and somehow choked out the words: There was a car accident, he told me, and my sister-in-law and niece were in critical condition, and my brother did not make it.

I don't recall all the details of how I reacted. What I do remember is crying, screaming, "No, NO, NO, not Frank, NO, NOT FRANK..." The only thought in my mind was that this had not happened. It was not possible. I denied it totally, utterly, completely. Denial was not something I chose; it was something that instantaneously ignited inside me and radiated out like a force.

I soon found that my experience had little to do with what I understood as the "stages" of grieving, because for whatever reason, perhaps due to the particular set of circumstances of my loss, denial dominated my every thought. I hadn't been given a chance to bargain. I had no time to be angry, not then anyway, occupied as I was with a flood of tasks.

But amazingly, in my heart I could continue to deny that this had happened, even as I sat at a funeral home, handled auto insurance claims, received condolences, wrote an obituary, gave a eulogy at a funeral service, and was basically deluged with every possible proof that my brother was no longer physically present on this earth.

Then several weeks ago, about six months after the accident, I realized that denial had changed into



A THOUGHT TO PONDER...

We waste so much energy trying to cover up who we are, when beneath every attitude is the want to be loved, and beneath every anger is a wound to be healed, and beneath every sadness is a fear that there will not be enough time.

When we hesitate in being direct, we unknowingly slip something on, some added layer of protection that keeps us from feeling the world, and often that thin covering is the beginning of a loneliness which, if not put down, diminishes our chances for joy. It's like wearing gloves every time we touch something, and then, forgetting that we chose to put them on, we complain that nothing feels quite real.

In this way, our challenge each day is not to get dressed to face the world, but to unglove ourselves so that the doorknob feels cold, and the car handle feels wet, and the kiss goodbye feels like the lips of another being soft and unrepeatable.

As you breathe, let each breath undress your being-- of attitude, of mood, of history. ~ Mark Nepo



something different. As I listened to myself in various conversations with friends and family, I noticed I was saying over and over again: "I don't believe it, still." "I still can't believe it." "It doesn't make sense." Somehow the roaring fire of denial had transformed into the embers of disbelief, which to me feels quite different. I understand what happened in a way that I could not when in denial, and yet I am baffled by it. In denial, I rejected the truth. In disbelief, the truth is accessible to me, but I can find no logic to support it.

With their more tolerable yet still insistent heat, the embers of disbelief stay close. It is as if I carry them in my hand. I set them down just before I fall asleep. Then when I wake up each morning, wondering for a moment why something doesn't feel quite right, I notice them by my bedside and remember. I pick them up and go about my day. I'm not sure how long they will burn.



"All sorrows can be borne if you put them in a story or tell a story about them," said the writer Isak Dinesen. When loss is a story, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is no pressure to move on. There is no shame in intensity or duration. Sadness, regret, confusion, yearning and all the experiences of grief become part of the narrative of love for the one who died.

Excerpt from "Getting Grief Right (New York Times)
by Patrick O'Malley

seasons of HEALING

Bereaved Parents of the USA
2015 NATIONAL GATHERING
HARTFORD, CT • JULY 24 - 26

Our Mid Hudson Bereaved Parents Group is actively involved in the decision-making and planning for this national event. If you would like to help out on this committee, contact Kathy – kjcor@verizon.net or Linda - Indlmck23@gmail.com

Go to www.bereavedparentsusa.org to register for the Gathering and to book your special rate hotel room.

Sign up today at AmazonSmile.com – select Bereaved Parents of the USA Mid Hudson Chapter as your charity.

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NIGHT BLINDNESS by Susan Strecker

We grieve - we react to grief - in different ways.

Some of us withdraw, some of us act out, some of us run away. Some reach out for love and try to cling to it.

When Will Reilly dies, each of those he left behind has a different response.

Even now, over a dozen years later, those varied griefs remain.

Jensen, bereft over having lost her brother, ran away from the family's New England home and headed first to Colorado, then to Arizona, where she lives with her flamboyant artist husband. Her marriage is not quite the stuff of dreams and fantasies, but she feels it's the marriage she deserves. Something happened the night Will died, and Jensen is unable to let go of the memories. Partly due to self-preservation, partly to guilt, and partly to a lingering disconnect with her mother, Jensen has avoided her family. She returns only when she must.

Such an occasion arises when her beloved father is diagnosed with a brain tumor. She leaves Nic behind - or rather, she leaves Nic to travel to the Grecian isles without her - and comes home, where she nearly immediately must see her first love and Will's best friend Ryder. He's a doctor now, and he refers Jensen's father to an oncologist specialist.

As the Reillys and Ryder feel their way through the cancer, Jensen is forced to come to terms with what happened the night Will died. Ryder is, too. Just as the cancer from her father must be excised in order for him to live, so must the events of Will's death be excised from Jensen and Ryder's memories in order for them to live the lives they should be living.

The titular condition refers to something Jensen has battled for most of her life, but it also is a metaphor for how she's chosen to face Will's death. Darkness hides so many things. Secrets, sins, susurrations. To be blind to the night is to be completely unable to see

even the most obvious obstacles. Jensen willfully refuses to see what's in her way, whether regarding her marriage, her mother, or Ryder. She thinks she knows; she thinks she can still see, even with night blindness.

But she can't until she is fully, completely willing to accept the truth.

This is a moody, engrossing book, one that is difficult to say goodbye to when you finish reading it. There are scenes that will rip your heart out and leave you as grief stricken as the Reilly family, just as there are scenes that give you a little bit of hope.

Susan Strecker writes in a way that compels you to keep reading, drawing characters that force you to care about them. You can picture them as surely as if they are right there in the room with you.

Published on VoxLibris.net

(Editor's Note: Susan will be a Workshop Presenter at BPUSA National Gathering, July 24-26, Hartford, CT)



FALLING APART

Eloise Cole

*I seem to be falling apart
My attention span can be measured in seconds
My patience in minutes
I cry at the drop of a hat
I forget things constantly
The morning toast burns daily
I forget to sign the checks
Half of everything in the house is misplaced
Feelings of anxiety and restlessness
are my constant companions
Rainy days seem extra dreary
Sunny days seem an outrage
Other people's pain and frustration seem insignificant
Laughing happy people seem out of place in my world
It has become routine to feel half crazy
I am normal I am told
I am a newly grieving person.*