



MID HUDSON NEW YORK CHAPTER

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Newsletter

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

Kathy Corrigan Chapter Leader

www.mhbpusa.com



Please join us for our next monthly meeting on 3/3

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

MARCH/APRIL 2022



A WARM WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS

We understand how difficult it is to attend your first meeting. Feelings can be overwhelming; we've 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 with you to lean on if you wish.

HOW LONG WILL THE PAIN LAST?

"How long will the pain last?" a broken-hearted mourner asked me. "All the rest of your life," I answered truthfully. No matter how many years pass, we remember. The loss of a loved one is like a major operation; part of us is removed, and we have a scar for the rest of our lives.

This doesn't mean that the pain continues at the same intensity. There is a short while, at first, when we hardly believe it. It is rather like when we have cut our hand, we see the blood flowing, but the pain has not yet set in. So, when we are bereaved, there is a short while before the pain hits us. But when it does, it is massive in its effect. Grief is shattering.

Then the wound is healed, so to speak, the stitches are taken out. The scar is still there, and the scar tissue, too. As the years go by, we manage. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface.

We see a face that looks familiar, hear a voice that has echoes, see a photograph in someone's album, and it is as though the knife were in the wound again. But not so painfully and mixed with joy, too. Because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow; it brings back happiness with it.

But the thing to remember is that not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are the proof of life. The more love, the more tears. If this be true, then how could we ever ask that the pain cease altogether. For then the memory of love would go with it. The pain of grief is the price we pay for love.

~ Author Unknown ❤️



BLESSING IN THE CHAOS

*To all that is chaotic in you,
let there come silence.
Let there be a calming
of the clamoring,
a stilling
of the voices that
have laid their claim
on you,
that have made their
home in you,
that go with you
even to the
holy places
but will not
let you rest,
will not let you
hear your life
with wholeness
or feel the grace
that fashioned you.
Let what distracts you cease.
Let what divides you cease.
Let there come an end
to what diminishes
and demeans,
and let depart
all that keeps you
in its cage.
Let there be an opening
into the quiet
that lies beneath
the chaos,
where you find
the peace
you did not think possible
and see what shimmers
within the storm.*



~ Jan Richardson
from *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*



I AM A BEREAVED MOTHER by Dr. Joanne Cacciatore

I am a mother. I am a bereaved mother. My child died, and this is my reluctant path. It is not a path of my choice, but it is a path I must walk mindfully and with intention. It is a journey through the darkest night of my soul and it will take time to wind through the places that scare me. Every cell in my body aches and longs to be with my beloved child.

On days when grief is loud, I may be impatient, distracted, frustrated, and unfocused. I may get angry more easily, or I may seem hopeless. I will shed many, many, many tears. I won't smile as often as my old self. Smiling hurts now. Most everything hurts some days, even breathing.

But please, just sit beside me. Say nothing. Do not offer a cure. Or a pill, or a word, or a potion. Witness my suffering. Don't turn away from me. Please be gentle with me. And I will try to be gentle with me too.

I will not ever "get over" my child's death so please don't urge me down that path.

Even on days when grief is quiescent, when it isn't standing loudly in the foreground, even on days when I am even able to smile again, the pain is just beneath the surface. There are days when I still feel paralyzed. My chest feels the sinking weight of my child's absence and, sometimes, I feel as if I will explode from the grief.

Losing my child affects me in so many ways: as a woman, a mother, a human being. It affects every aspect of me: spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. There are days when I barely recognize myself in the mirror anymore.

Grief is as personal to me as my fingerprint. Don't tell me how I should or shouldn't be grieving or that I should or shouldn't "feel better by now." Don't tell me what's right or wrong. I'm doing it my way, in my time. If I am to survive this, I must do what is best for me. My understanding of life will change and a different meaning of life will slowly evolve. What I knew to be true or absolute or real or fair about the world has been challenged so I'm finding my way, moment-to-moment in this new place.

Things that once seemed important to me are barely thoughts any longer. I notice life's suffering, more hungry children, the homeless and the destitute, a mother's harsh voice toward her young child or an elderly person struggling with the door. There are so many things about the world which I now struggle to understand: Why do children die? There are some questions, I've learned, which are simply unanswerable.

So please don't tell me that "God has a plan" for me. This, my friend, is between me and my God. Those platitudes slip far too easily from the mouths of those who tuck their own child into a safe, warm bed at night: Can you begin to imagine your own child, flesh of your flesh, lying lifeless in a casket, when "goodbye" means you'll never see them on this Earth again.

Grieving mothers and fathers and grandparents and siblings won't wake up one day with everything 'okay' and life back to normal. I have a new normal now.

As time passes, I may gain gifts, and treasures, and insights but anything gained was too high a cost when compared to what was lost. Perhaps, one day, when I am very, very old, I will say that time has truly helped to heal my broken heart. But always remember that not a second of any minute of any hour of any day passes when I am not aware of the presence of my child's absence, no matter how many years lurk over my shoulder, don't forget that I have another one, another child, whose absence, like the sky, is spread over everything as

C.S. Lewis said ... *"My child may have died; but my love - and my motherhood - never will."*

IF GRIEF COULD SPEAK, HERE ARE FIVE THINGS IT WOULD SAY

By Monique Minahan -- Creator of The Grief Practice: Trauma-informed yoga that welcomes grief.

I am not a sickness, I am grief. I am a valid experience and emotion and there is no right way to hold me. There is just your way. No two people receive me the same way. Let's find our own way to dance together, to cry together, to break together, to heal together.

If grief could speak it would say, *I'm sorry.*

I'm sorry it's me that arrived at your doorstep instead of love. But I am made of love too. In fact, it's because I love so much that I hurt so much when I lose the people I love.

If grief could speak it would say, *You can survive.*

I know you may not want to. I know life may not be worth living without them. I know the earth collapsed beneath your feet. I know a part of you died with them. And I know you can survive, one breath at a time, one moment at a time, one day at a time.

If grief could speak it would say, *Please don't hide me away.*

I know when people see you with me, they get uncomfortable. I know your friends don't know what to say to me. I know it's easier to hide me away when you have company over for dinner.

But I'd like a seat at the table. Will you let me speak? Will you listen to me? I can't promise I'll be polite or calm. I may raise my voice because I'm angry or I may collapse in a pile of tears, but if I can let it out then I don't have to hold it in here, in you. I'd like to create some more space inside you for all of us to coexist. You, me, love, anger, laughter, peace, hope, joy... there's enough room for all of us in your heart.

If grief could speak it would say, *I love you.*

You may not love me, but I love you. I love how you love so big. I love how you keep taking care of your babies who lost their papas or their mamas. I love how you keep taking care of that space your loved one took up even though they're gone. How you leave their favorite book in the same place, how you leave their clothes folded, how you let them live a little longer in the things left behind. I love how you don't let the world forget they were here, that they mattered, that they were a part of you. I love you.

If grief could speak it would say, *Find your own way.*

There seem to be a lot of "experts" out there about me. They say I work in stages and they make it sound like I'm something to get over, like the flu. What I can tell you is there is nothing wrong with me and there is nothing wrong with you. I am not a sickness, I am grief. I am a valid experience and emotion and there is no right way to hold me. There is just your way. No two people receive me the same way. Let's find our own way to dance together, to cry together, to break together, to heal together.

Let's find our own way through this brief and beautiful life.

Monique Minahan writes about grief, loss and being human. She offers Yoga & Grief classes to bereavement groups. She believes in standing up to live before sitting down to write and listens to her heart to keep her words alive and authentic. Connect with her at moniqueminahan.com

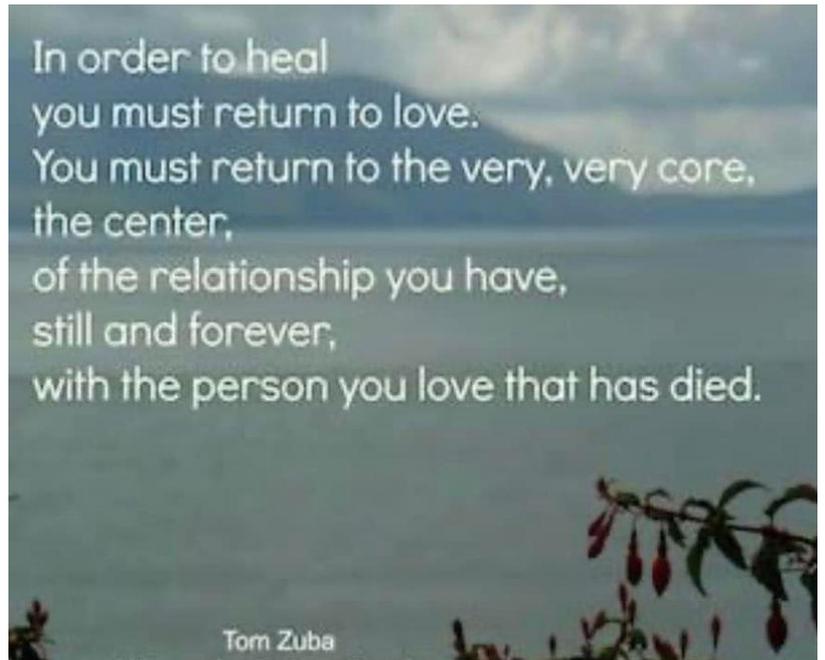
"Sometimes we take heart. Sometimes we lose heart. Either way, we human on." MM

"It's hard to talk about it. It's harder not to talk about it." MM



*When someone you love dearly dies,
your task is to find that person again.
Where is he?
Where did she go?
Search
search
search.
Do not give up.
When you find your beloved
you find yourself.
You return to love.
Again
or for the first time.*

Tom Zuba - Permission to Mourn



if you are dealing with a lot, read this:

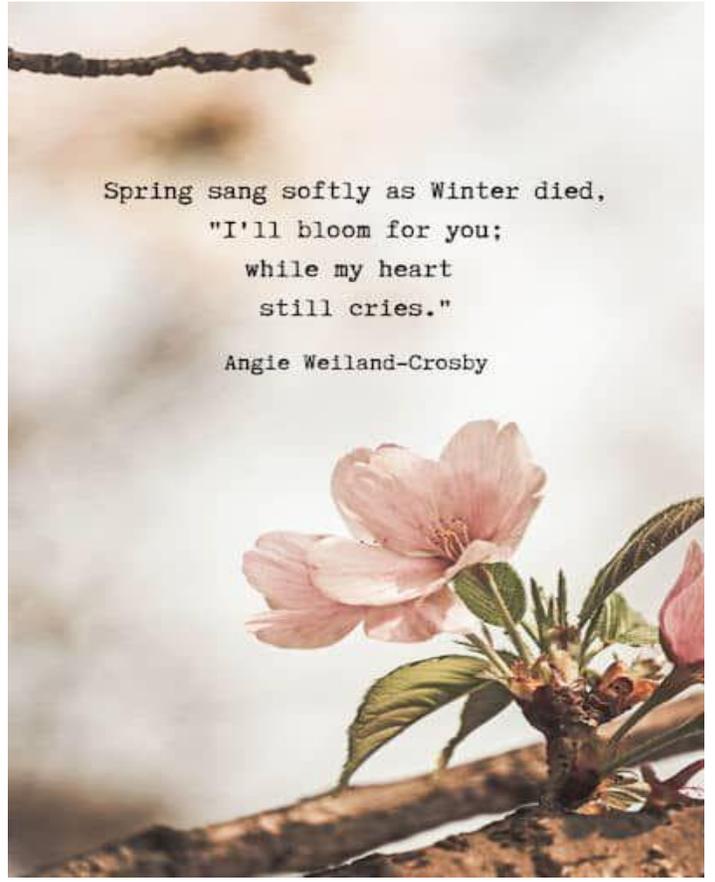
i know it is difficult, the heaviness you carry inside and the inner battles that no one sees. the smiles you force to cover how you truly feel. the tears you hold back when someone asks if you are okay. i know we must be strong but there are times when we need to come undone. naked and vulnerable. let the weights of our emotions flow. let them be heard. we are not meant to carry all of it alone so please, see that there is hope around you. find the connections that make you feel alive, cared for, and valued. do not drown yourself in limiting beliefs. i know it is easier said than done but you have come a long way. if you were to look back right now, i know you will recognize your strength. i see you. i feel you. i understand you.

dhayana alejandrina



"THE CHANGING
SEASONS OF
GRIEF NEVER
STOPS CYCLING,
FORCING THE
EMOTIONAL
MIND TO
RESETTLE TIME
AND AGAIN."

- Janice Bell



Spring sang softly as Winter died,
"I'll bloom for you;
while my heart
still cries."

Angie Weiland-Crosby

In the lilt of Irish laughter you can hear the angels sing!



We hope you might be interested in learning more about attending the BPUSA Annual Conference. Many find the grief journey more bearable when shared with those who understand. At the Gathering, some have been on this journey for years while others have barely begun. Hand in hand we walk this road together, offering one another support and hope. We are honored to share this weekend with you, knowing you will be touched in some way through your experience, whether by a speaker, a workshop, a song, or a "fellow traveler" seated next to you at a meal. Please join us the weekend of July 22-24, 2022 to experience *Reflecting and Connecting* in memory and honor of our children, our siblings, and our grandchildren gone too soon. During the conference mealtimes, you will have the privilege of hearing from four **keynote speakers**, all bereaved parents themselves. Two of those speakers are authors of the following blog posts. **Beth D'Angelo** describes her journey through grief and **Angela Kennecke** tells us about her dance with grief. Both are powerful articles... Visit our website: www.bereavedparents.org

NATIONAL GATHERING 2022



Bereaved Parents USA

JULY 22-24 ♥ ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI



MY JOURNEY THROUGH

by Beth D'Angelo www.healingthroughhope.net

"The day my child died, part of me died, too".

I recently read this post on Facebook and immediately recognized the familiar emotions I once held onto as a life line. Part of me died when he did. That was my truth. That was my sentiments. The sentence was the way I moved and held my grief. It is where I was for a long time. This statement kept me in my much needed container, the space I cultivated for survival. The grief was unbearable, dark and suffocating. What

tangled me up more than anything was the fact that I was powerless to change the outcome. My child had been so injured that his body could not hold him any longer and I was not there. I thought the most important role as a parent was to keep their children safe. If this is true, I failed as a mother. He was hurt and I was thousands of miles away. My grief container also held false narratives I told myself; "If only - I should have - Why didn't I - How come - My fault - I failed - I wasn't - I hadn't - I didn't".

For a very long time I felt that if I released some of this sadness, I would lose more of my son and that terrified me. Loosening up the tightly wrapped container was a very slow process and there were times I fought to keep the wrapping in place. It was my belief, that life made a decision and I would not let it take away my broken heart without a fight. The journey through a life changing event is a "learn as you go" process. Some would say there are no guidebooks through a significant loss, and although this appears to be true, there is a navigational system that is in place. This system is the irrevocable connection of love a mother or father has to their child. My son was present to help me out of the tangled mess, however slowly and methodically the process was. We learned together that grief was manageable and that his presence would outshine his absence. Before that was to be my life line, I would have to release false narratives that I clung to.

Today, I find myself in a place that I never imagined possible. It's one of genuine joy and openness to what all life has to offer. I clearly remember looking into the future through tearful eyes, knowing that there was a light somewhere but not wanting to move towards it. What once was a room of despair and darkness, became a room that held my heart with tenderness. The journey through gave me the courage to redesign my healing room, the place I go to whenever I want to feel, to remember and be with all that I feel connected to. I first had to create a door to walk in and out of; then a window and then exchange that for an opened window. I remember the day I removed the lock on the door. Then, the awareness that I didn't need a barrier so I removed the door and just allowed an opening to be in place. What I noticed in the processing of my experience, is my loss was still intact but it was surrounded by more love and light and breathing room. The suffocating separation had eased up as I chose to allow walls, and barriers to be replaced with openness and space.

My journey through has been lined with more hope and courage than I could ever imagine. I have softened the edges of my story and have changed much of the narrative that I kept in place as I nursed my wounded heart. There is no barrier to the connection with those I danced with in this life. My child still exists, always will - he did not cease to be, nor did part of me. What was necessary at the time, has been replaced with the truth that "all of my child lives within me and all of me lives within him".

We have continuation of what we shared together in the here and now, even if the Earth Suit no longer holds him. Every step of this journey was necessary and as in every journey, there are discoveries along the way; detours, awarenesses and the never-ending packing and repacking; discarding and collecting and allowing and receiving.

I am in a place I never imagined possible and I like the way it fits.

THE DANCE BETWEEN GRIEF AND JOY

By Angela Kennecke www.emilyshope.foundation

“Sorrow prepares you for joy. It violently sweeps everything out of your house, so that new joy can find space to enter. It shakes the yellow leaves from the bough of your heart, so that fresh, green leaves can grow in their place. It pulls up the rotten roots, so that new roots hidden beneath have room to grow. Whatever sorrow shakes from your heart, far better things will take their place.” ~ Rumi

On the day my 21-year-old daughter Emily died, my heart split right open. There is an open-heartedness in grief. Everything seems trivial compared to such an enormous loss. If grief does nothing else, it gives you a sense of how fleeting life is—all this busyness that consumes us really amounts to nothing.

Eventually, even after the worst heartbreak, the world comes calling. Time to get back to work; clean the house; pay the bills—insignificant tasks when you know, I mean *really* know for certain that life ends. Depression follows those of us grieving like our own personal dark cloud, hovering over our heads and threatening a lightning strike of sorrow at a moment's notice.

Then, without ever truly believing you could even be capable of it again, you smile. Somewhere down the line, you laugh. But the sadness remains. How can this be? How can someone be so full of sorrow, yet joy still finds a way to creep in?

Over the last three years, I have found that while tears are only a thought away, so is laughter and that you can truly hold both totally incompatible emotions in your heart at the same time. There is the joy in reliving memories of Emily's life; her sweet voice, her unquenchable curiosity, and her undeterred enthusiasm to experience each moment to the fullest. When I look at one of her paintings, my heart not only fills with the emptiness of missing her but also the joy that I still have these beautiful, unique pieces of her that she left behind.

At times it can seem impossible to get unstuck from the muck of grief. Darkness can descend upon me out of nowhere and its grip feels like a life sentence. Then a ray of light penetrates the blackness and my heart feels a bit lighter. It can come from something as simple as the sound of a bird chirping or my puppy's soft nudges with her wet nose, asking me to play. It rarely comes from the things we typically think will make us happy, such as acquiring a new possession.

While everyone is jumping on the mindfulness bandwagon, to me all it really means is that we are aware of our emotions and we let ourselves experience them—even the painful ones—without judgment. Then we remember to breathe and take in the world around us at that moment. If I can stop my mind from living in the past when my daughter was alive and from jumping into a future without her and what could have been, I am okay. I am okay in the moment. There is no other moment than right now anyway.

With 223 overdose deaths every single day in this country, there are many other parents walking alongside me on this grief journey. I don't have any earth-shattering advice on how to survive the death of a child. I just know you can only do it one moment at a time. In some of those moments, you will feel as if you want to die too. But if you can just breathe, you will make it to the next moment and it may contain a small nugget of joy. Hold onto that promise. There is no betrayal of the one we lost by allowing ourselves to smile or laugh again. No one whom we loved so deeply would ever want us to go through the rest of our days in anguish. It doesn't mean we forget our loss and move on. It just means we make a little room in a heart burdened by grief for beauty and lightness.

