



Facing the New Year when You are Bereaved

Accepting the New Year

When we are grieving, it is hard enough to live each day as it comes. It can be daunting to face a whole new year stretching out in front of us. We may be afraid of what the new year might bring. We may worry whether or not we can handle any more challenges. Our current experience of emptiness and loneliness may make us reluctant to face a new year.

We might say to ourselves, "I used to be so busy. I used to feel so needed, so useful. Now it seems there's nothing but empty space and empty time." It's bad enough to wake in the morning not sure what we'll do with the day; what will we do with a whole year?

Longing to recover the past can sometimes make us resistance to accepting the new year. The past was where we were comfortable, where we felt safe, felt good. Grief burdens us today and we fear the new year won't hold anything different for us. We pine for the person we miss and the precious past we shared. We think about how it was, and wish we were back there.

Approach of a new year may mean different things for different mourners. Whether we welcome, dread or ignore a new year probably depends on where we are in our grief process. The question is not whether, but how grief will show up, and how we'll work with it.

A Learning Process

If your loss was recent, sudden or unexpected, you might experience it as a shock, as if you're living a bad dream or someone else's life, trying desperately to get back to your "old" life. The last thing on your mind might be the challenge of a new year. Writing or talking repeatedly about the death of your loved one might make you feel numb or detached. Eventually, you might realize that your life is not what you thought it would be, that your world has changed.

Therese Rando, a noted grief therapist and author, describes grieving as a learning process. Each minute with a loved one created patterns of how to operate and what to expect. Each new challenge, like doing the taxes, fixing things, and going into a new year, becomes a fresh occasion to accept the absence of your loved one and find new ways to cope, even if new challenges bring fresh pain.

As you courageously work through your grief over time, you eventually will find the strength to look to the new year with interest and wonder about what it might hold. Maybe you'll feel eager to welcome change, now that your grief has started to ease.

You might find comfort and joy in knowing that you did all that you could and loved well. Enriched by the love you once enjoyed, you can now show deeper compassion for all who suffer. You eventually will recognize life as a gift to enjoy with whomever crosses your path. In time, you might want to do on your own what you both once hoped to accomplish together.

Even if you're scared and lonely, and even if you long for the past, you can still open the door a crack to this new year.

Tips to face the new year:

- Begin by getting needed rest. If you're still exhausted from caregiving or from acute grieving, focus on physical recovery. Considering talking with your doctor about how to rebuild yourself physically.
- Give yourself a mental rest. Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations about yourself, and soothe yourself with music, prayer, uplifting literature, tears and laughter.
- Pay attention to hope and desire. Find small practical ways to give yourself new pleasure.
- Attend a support group or talk with friends and family members who can list and share memories.
- Seek spiritual support from a local minister, rabbi, priest, imam.
- Find courage to live into the future by living in the present, one day at a time. Do the best you can to care for yourself and others today.

It's Just What a Mother Does

Author Unknown

My son Grant would be 28 years old today. For a short time, I will allow myself the, "what if's" or "might have been's" ... and I will contemplate what he would be doing and where he might be. I will allow myself these thoughts and feelings because ... When her child transitions before her ... It's just what a mother does.

In August of 2014 my life changed irrevocably in a single moment. My son's physical death shredded the life I was living. I shattered into a thousand pieces because ... It's just what a mother does.

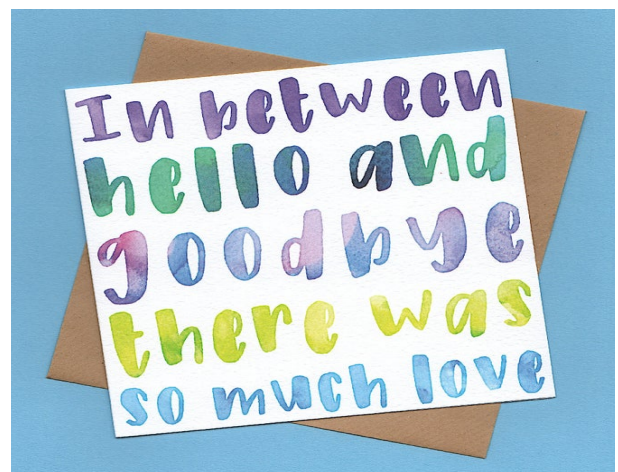
I have learned that my journey can be treacherous, tormenting and hopeless. I bear witness to this because I have lived each of those wretched emotions and more. I have been completely consumed by the agonizing reality of my son's death. Utter despair has suffocated my cries and no earthly sound could be made from the excruciating sorrow that enveloped my entire being. My sorrow could not be assuaged. I have truly mourned my child because ... It's just what a mother does.

As I have said in previous posts, "In my shattering was and continues to be my awakening". Grief no longer runs rampant through my heart. Thankfully I have tamed the wild anguish that adhered itself to every facet of my life. It has a place within me now and most days it's manageable. I have made the conscious choice to honor the life my son lived and not dwell on the reality of his death. I have waded through the mire and the muck of grief because ... It's just what a mother does.

In my early grief - I walked in that proverbial "valley of the shadow of death" ... sometimes completely alone and other times supported and surrounded by other souls. I have begun to heal & as I have moved forward I am finding those shattered pieces of myself ... strength, hope, peace and comfort ... forgiveness, empathy, promise and clarity ... gratitude, patience, sweetness and love. And another important part of understanding & navigating this journey ... what cannot be healed - can only be held - I know the grief will never fully leave me ... and yet despite this knowing ... my heartbreak has been gently settled deep within me, in a place all its own and I work daily to insulate it with the memories and rememberings of my son because ... It's just what a mother does.

There is joy when he crosses through my heart & surrounds my soul. I no longer see myself as a bereaved mother - rather choosing to embrace the idea that I am a 'shining light parent' because ... It's just what a mother does.

How I miss him in every possible way and in every single moment of every single day. More importantly I carry him with me, in the deepest and most secret recesses of my heart. He is part of everything I do and he will live on through me, until my last breath. We commune from time to time from across the veil and I treasure those Heavenly moments of connection. I will forever be thankful for this beautiful boy and I will honor his life as long as I am here. Why you might ask 🥹... It's just what a mother does ...



What I Wish Other People Understood About Losing A Child

By Paula Stephens, Founder of Crazy Good Grief

Four and a half years after the death of my oldest son, I finally went to a grief support group for parents who have lost children. I went to support a friend who recently lost her son. I'm not sure I would've gone except that when I was in her shoes, four years ago, I wish I'd had a friend to go with me. Losing a child is the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take, and the only people who can come close to appreciating it are those who share the experience.

The support group was part of a larger organization solely dedicated to providing support for those who have lost children, grandchildren, or siblings. The facilitator opened the meeting by saying that dues to belong to the club are more than anyone would ever want to pay. Well, he couldn't be more correct: No one *wants* to belong to this group. When hearing the stories from other parents, I had a visceral reaction to being part of this "club" but was also humbled by the greatness of these mothers and fathers.

The following five tips can be your compass to help you navigate how to give support to grieving parents on a sacred journey they never wanted to take:

1. Remember our children with us. The loss of children is a pain all bereaved parents share, and it is a degree of suffering that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it firsthand. Often, when we know someone else is experiencing grief, our discomfort keeps us from approaching it head-on. But we want the world to remember our child or children, no matter how young or old our child was. If you see something that reminds you of my child, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son, please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories, relive them with me; don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about him.

2. Accept that you can't "fix" us. An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable. We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same. Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way.

Please: Don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that's it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it's hard to watch, but our sense of brokenness isn't going to go away. It is something to observe, recognize, accept.

3. Know that there are at least two days a year we need a timeout. We still count birthdays and fantasize about what our child would be like if he or she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead. Some parents create rituals or have parties while others prefer solitude. Either way, we are likely going to need time to process the marking of another year without our child.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. This is a remarkable process similar to a parent of a newborn, first counting the days, then months, then the one-year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of that crevasse in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, the anniversary date of when our child died brings back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings (particularly if there is trauma associated with the child's death). The days leading up to that day can feel like impending doom or like it's hard to breathe. We may or may not share with you what's happening.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him or her, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when these tough days are approaching.

4. Realize that we struggle every day with happiness. It's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth. I remember going on a family cruise 18 months after Brandon died. On the first day, I stood at the back of the ship and bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I had to steady myself and recognize that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and enjoy the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other. You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation, or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away—witness it with us and be part of our process.

5. Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable. Our loss is unnatural, out of order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. And, in fact, our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. We would rather lose it because you spoke his/her name and remembered our child than try and shield ourselves from the pain and live in denial.

Grief is the pendulum swing of love. The stronger and deeper the love, the more grief will be created on the other side. Consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with someone who has endured one of life's most frightening events. Rise up with us.

There is a meeting for everyone! Join us at one of these meetings!

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

NOTE DATE CHANGE

**3rd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.
ZOOM Meetings until
further notice**

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bpusanova@gmail.com

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

3rd Wednesday @ 6 p.m.
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA

A support group meeting for parents whose children
have been murdered.

For more info contact:
Beverly Ruane
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

Support Group for Parents with No Surviving Children

2nd Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m.
North County Government Bldg.
Reston Police Station
12000 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston, VA

For more info contact: Nancy Vollmer 703-860-8587

Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

No Meetings until further notice

A support group meeting for parents whose
children have died from Drug Overdose or
Substance Abuse.

For more information please contact:
Jodi Norman at bpusanova@gmail.com
or call 703-656-6999
or
Kathie Kelly at tcffred@gmail.com
or 540-220-4325



Parents of Suicide Loss Support Group “Shining A Light for Those in Darkness”

**1st Sunday of Each Month
1:00~2:30 p.m.
Meetings held at ACTS
9317 Grant Ave, Manassas, VA**

For more information contact: Kimberly Fleming
Office: 571-377-8134 or Cell: 703-349-9184
email: kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org
website: www.djcfoundation.org

Sibling Support Group

Our National BPUSA Sibling Coordinator,
Katie Alger, will be facilitating a
Zoom Support Meeting for
any bereaved sibling over the age of 18.

The first Zoom meeting will be on
Thursday, January 28th
8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

If you or your surviving children are interested
in participating in the Sibling Support Group,
please send Jodi an email address to
bpusanova@gmail.com so the Zoom link can be
sent to you prior to the meeting.

Our sincere sympathy to the following families:



The Terrill Family on the death of Shawn's dad, David Terrill on December 8th.

Lindsay and Noli Conty, on the stillborn birth of their second baby, Ryan Dennis Conty on October 15th.

Please Check E-mails & Facebook

Almost all of our Chapter Communication is done via email. Please check your emails at least once a week. Everything from the newsletter to Chapter Announcements are sent through email. It would also be helpful to respond to all emails sent regarding the Chapter. That lets me know that you did see the email and that I have a correct email address – a simple “got it” would be better than no response at all!

It would also be helpful if you would join our private Facebook page. Please check this page on a regular basis. A Facebook page has been set up for our chapter. Members can join our group at Bereaved Parents of the USA/Northern VA Chapter. This is a closed group for privacy purposes, so nothing posted here will go into your regular News Feed for your regular FB friends to see. Request to join the group and approval will be sent to you.

Check Out Our Website
<http://www.bpusanova.com>

I need everyone's help in updating our website. If you have not already done so, please write a bio of your child and include a photo or a collage of pictures to include in “Our Children Remembered” Section.

I am looking for submissions for a booklet to give to newly bereaved parents. If you would be willing to write about how BPUSA has helped you on your grief journey, it would be greatly appreciated. Please email submissions to Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com.

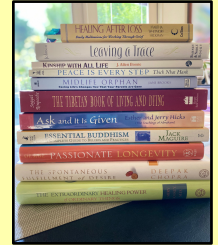


Book Club

There has been a suggestion of starting a book club for the Chapter. We would pick helpful books on the subject of Grieving.

We would start out in a Zoom Format (like our support meetings) and then when it is safe to do so we would meet in homes.

So, I need to know if there is any interest in this type of group. Please, let Jodi know, if you have an interest by emailing bpusanova@gmail.com.



Annual Picnic & Lotus Flower Lantern Release



Sunday, May 16, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Locust Shade Park – Marigold Pavilion



There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in any little way, we would love your help. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.

I could really use volunteers to plan our special events (Picnic, Butterfly Release and Service of Remembrance). Other areas of need are in Fundraising, Publicity, Outreach, and helping at the Memorial Garden.

If you would like to volunteer to help our chapter, please contact Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com or 703-656-6999.

On-Line Resources and Facebook Pages for Bereaved Parents

Bereaved Parents USA - www.bpusanova.com

Open to Hope - <https://www.opentohope.com>

Capital Caring - <http://www.capitalcaring.org/>

Llost - www.llost.org/index.html

Grief Net - www.griefnet.org

Good Grief - www.goodgriefresources.com

The Bereavement Journey -
www.thebereavementjourney.com

National Share Office - www.nationalshareoffice.com

Survivors of Suicide - www.survivorsofsuicide.com

Healing Heart - www.healingheart.net

MISS Foundation - www.missfoundation.org

Holding onto Love - www.holdingontolove.com

Comfort Zone Camp -
<https://www.comfortzonecamp.org/>

Camp Rainbow -
<http://www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/services/hospice/351-grief-support/3347-camp-rainbow-grief-camp>

Mary Washington Hospice -
<http://www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/services/hospice/351-grief-support/2840-child-family-bereavement-hospice-support-care>

Teens Helping Teens - Ann Bernardi at
ann.bernardi@mwhc.com or (540) 287-7231

Kids Helping Kids - Ann Bernardi at
ann.bernardi@mwhc.com or (540) 287-7231

Grief 101 – Ann Bernardi at ann.bernardi@mwhc.com or
(540) 287-7231

Grief Share - <http://www.griefshare.org/>

What's Your Grief? - <https://whatsyourgrief.com>

Facebook Pages for Bereaved Parents:

Bereaved Parents of the USA/Northern VA Chapter

Bereaved Parents of the USA

A Bed for My Heart

A Grieving Father's Experience and Awareness Group

Alive Alone

Angels Across The USA

Death of a Loved one; Quotes, Poems, and Resources

From Grieving to Healing & Positivity

Grieving and Surviving the Loss of Our Adult Children

Grieving Dads: To the Brink and Back

Grieving Fathers

Grieving Moms / Umbrella Ministries

Grieving Mothers

Grieving Moms

Grieving Moms Forever

GPS Hope: Grieving Parents Sharing Hope

Heartache and Hope: Life After Losing a Child

Hope for Bereaved Parents

Life after death: Coping with the Loss of a Child

My Grieving Heart

Navigating death of a child...

Only child has gone to heaven/or all children

Open to Hope Foundation

Parents Who Have Lost A Child/Children at Any Age

Parents Who Have Lost Children

Poems for The Grieving

Signs from Our Loved Ones

Silent Grief - Child Loss Support

Suicide Prevention and Awareness - David's Story

The death of a child is the saddest thing in the world.

The Pain of Losing A Child

Visiting Hours in Heaven

What's Your Grief?

While We're Waiting--Support for Bereaved Parents



We Remember Our Children Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in January and February



Kirsten Lynn Adler	2/21/94 ~ 10/24/10	Henry Lewis III	2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02
Ethan Arterburn	2/16/07 ~ 2/28/07	Tiffany Michelle Lewis	1/26/80 ~ 10/11/96
Demitrios Bedoya	10/27/76 ~ 2/10/03	April Charlotte Lillicotch	7/27/04 ~ 2/24/20
Bryan Christopher Bingel	1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08	Ian Patrick McDonald	5/05/89 ~ 1/12/15
Christopher Wesley Blok	3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09	Kevin McGuinn	2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08
Lesly Glyn Bolton	1/19/80 ~ 10/27/16	Emily "Tabor" McMullen	1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12
Baron "Deuce" Braswell II	9/29/89 ~ 1/20/06	Christine McNabb	1/13/88 ~ 2/23/08
Kenny Brooks Jr	8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06	Roseann M. Meale	10/04/69 ~ 1/19/87
Joseph Brendan Birkebile	6/26/89 ~ 1/11/11	John Earl Medley	2/21/59 ~ 9/09/08
Pamela Sue Chaiken	1/17/64 ~ 9/29/95	Michael Joseph Moore	7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09
Christopher Chapman	8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07	Johnny Ray Mullins	7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02
Eduardo P "Eddy" Chavez	2/07/06 ~ 9/20/10	Shelby Nicholson	4/22/92 ~ 1/07/09
Barbara Dawn (Dotson) Cleary	12/3/66 ~ 1/21/18	Christian Paul Norman	2/04/85 ~ 6/03/01
Alaina Michelle Combo	2/01/17 ~ 2/01/17	Angela Oliver	11/07/67 ~ 1/06/11
Ryan Michael Conde	12/02/04 ~ 2/02/17	Joseph Christopher Page	1/26/88 ~ 2/07/08
Stephen Brian Donnelly	1/08/72 ~ 2/15/18	Christina Lianne Panzo-Bowers	1/08/94 ~ 11/01/14
David Joseph Erickson	1/07/91 ~ 1/07/91	Michael Joseph Pennefather	12/09/95 ~ 2/04/08
Robert Alan Finch	7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01	Timothy Michael John Peyton	6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17
Antonio (Tony) Ford-Flores	2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10	Alice Amelia Porges	2/10/15 ~ 2/10/15
Victoria Anne Forster	1/04/89 ~ 1/04/09	Brandon Roat	2/02/92 ~ 2/13/17
Bruce Lee Foxworthy	8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12	Chelsea Rae Rosengarth	2/02/86 ~ 1/27/02
Payton Rose Freeze	10/13/98 ~ 2/10/16	Joshua Daniel Shirt	1/17/91 ~ 10/13/19
Jacob Thomas Fulton	4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15	Kevin Simpson	2/10/87 ~ 1/24/09
Ezekiel Josiah Gales	1/30/98 ~ 6/08/20	Ben Smith	12/22/70 ~ 1/26/03
Jacob Charles Glusheski	5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11	Adam Charles Sorge	5/12/84 ~ 1/04/14
Adon Gerald Grey	11/05/81 ~ 1/20/18	Robert Andrew Starling	8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18
Kristin Marie Harkness	3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08	Shawn Terrill	2/23/82 ~ 12/03/06
Ashley Hoefling	8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17	Dana Thrall	8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01
Philip Reid Hottle	2/16/85 ~ 12/03/08	Derek M. Tierney	1/20/76 ~ 10/09/04
Ryan Gardiner James	2/17/99 ~ 7/06/19	Caleb Milton Torres	2/11/12 ~ 2/11/12
John William Kennedy	1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18	Brian Floyd Weakley	1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
Nicole Michelle Lee	6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08	Brenden Michael Wilson	1/10/98 ~ 11/10/14

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Children" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your child's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of January and February, please provide us with your child's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

Bereaved Parents of the USA Welcome

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives.

We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

Chapter Contact Information

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Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Someone Cares About You

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.



Attention: If you do not wish to continue to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, please let us know by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing bpusanova@gmail.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

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