

caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

New Year's Resolutions for the Bereaved

By Tanya Lord

This year I resolve to:

- ♥ Not put a time limit on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my life time whether they are physically present or not.
- ♥ Tell their stories, the happy and the sad, they will live on through me.
- ♥ Encourage others to share memories.
- ♥ Teach others that they cannot "make" me cry, tears are only an external expression of how I am feeling all the time.
- ♥ Understand that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy and normal. "Doing well" means expressing my feelings.
- ♥ Understand that others will not understand my pain and it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen.
- ♥ Recognize that asking for help from those that love us is a really a gift that we give to them.
- ♥ Help others, reaching out to others in pain will help me to heal.
- ♥ Do something nice for myself every day.
- ♥ Know that if today I can not do everything that needs to be done, tomorrow is another chance to get it done.
- ♥ Cry when I need to, laugh when I can and to not feel guilty about either one.
- ♥ Let go, bit by bit, of the guilt, regret and anger because I know holding on to these emotions can be so damaging.
- ♥ Take a risk and let others into my life and heart.
- ♥ Take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual health.
- ♥ Reinvest in life a little bit each day...



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

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

4th Sunday @ 3 p.m.
First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

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

Support Meeting in Annandale VA

1st Thursday of Every Month
7 p.m.

Annandale United Methodist Church
6935 Columbia Pike
Annandale, VA 22003

For more information about this meeting please contact

Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999
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

Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

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

Next Meeting: Sunday, February 2 @ 2 p.m.
Location to be announced

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

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



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

Pot Luck Dinners & Restaurant Outings

We will meet the third Thursday of every month. There will be four potlucks throughout the year, and the other months we will meet at a restaurant (TBD).

The potlucks will be held at Valerie & Rich Larson's home, 6900 Cole Timothy Court, Manassas, VA at 7pm: Jan.16, April 16, July 16 and Oct.15. Contact Valerie at rlarson900@verizon.net to RSVP or for more information.

If you have never attended one of our group's potluck dinners, please consider joining us. It's an evening of support, friendship, and comfort with those who understand our pain best. This group has fostered many meaningful friendships, and we always welcome new ones.

***Our sincere sympathy to the
following families:***

***Patty Ray on the death of her husband
and Robbie's stepdad, Dr. Bob Ray on
November 3, 2019 at the age of 76.***



***Denise de la Montaigne on the death of her son and
Zane's brother, Catzby Pitzvada on December 17,
2019 at the age of 31.***

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.**



2020 Programs

Below is a schedule for 2020 (subject to change):

January 26 – Journaling with Bev Ruane

February 23– Sue Cerrone “True Colors”

March 22 – Kathy Phelps from Taking Notice Now

**April 26 – Chuck Collins author of “Holding onto
Love: Searching for Hope When a Child Dies”**

August 7-9– National Gathering in St. Louis, MO

August 16 – Butterfly Release at Memorial Garden

September 13– Chapter Picnic

December 13 – Service of Remembrance

Upcoming Restaurant Fundraisers

To make fundraising as easy as possible for the chapter, we have scheduled a couple Restaurant Fundraisers. Please come out, join the fun, socialize and leave the cooking to someone else. Both Paisano's and MOD Pizza will donate 20% of your order back to BPUSA NOVA Chapter.

Paisano's, 12439 Dillingham Square, Lake Ridge, VA
Wednesday, March 11, 10:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.

MOD Pizza, 13800 Smoketown Rd, Woodbridge, VA
Sunday, May 31, 11 a.m. – 10 p.m.



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.

We Don't Recover from Grief, and that's Okay

What's Your Grief Blog

After some discussion with our insightful readers, we're adding a brief preface to this article. We feel it's important to clarify upfront that when we say we don't recover from grief or experience "grief recovery", we do NOT mean that we don't recover from the intense pain of loss. It is important for all grieving people – despite their loss and experiences – to believe in the hope for healing. No one should expect to live with the anguish associated with acute grief forever.

Our belief is that grief encompasses more than just pain. We believe that over time grief changes shape and comes to hold space for many different experiences and emotions – some of these experiences may be painful – like a milestone or the anniversary of a loved one's death – but some of them may be comforting – like warm memories and the enduring role that your loved one plays in your life. With that, the original article is presented below.

I need to tell you that, in the face of significant loss, we don't "recover" from grief. Yes, I'm using the royal "we" because you and I are all a part of this club.

I also need to tell you that that *not* recovering from grief doesn't doom you to a life of despair. Let me reassure you, there are millions of people out there, right now, living normal and purposeful lives while also experiencing ongoing grief.

All the things you've heard about getting over grief, going back to normal, and moving on – they are misrepresentations of what it means to love someone who has died. I'm sorry, I know us human-people appreciate things like closure and resolution, but this isn't how grief goes.

This isn't to say that "recovery" doesn't have a place in grief – it's simply 'what' we're recovering from that needs to be redefined. To "recover" means to return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength, and as many would attest, when someone very significant dies, we never return to a pre-loss "normal". The loss, the person who died, our grief – they all get integrated into our lives and they profoundly change how we live and experience the world.

What will, hopefully, return to a general baseline is the level of intense emotion, stress, and distress that a person experiences in the weeks and months following their loss. So perhaps we recover from the intense distress of grief, but we don't recover from the grief itself.

Now you could say that I'm getting caught up in semantics, but sometimes semantics matter. Especially, when trying to describe an experience that, for so many, is unfamiliar and frightening. Grief is one of those experiences you can never fully understand until you actually experience it and, until that time, all a person has to go on is what they've observed and what they've been told.

The words we use to label and describe grief matter and, in many ways, these words have been getting us into trouble for decades. In the context of grief, words like denial, detachment, unresolved, recovery, and acceptance (to name a few) could be interpreted many different ways and some of these interpretations offer false impressions and false promises.

Interestingly, when many of these words were first used by grief theorists starting in the early 20th century, their intent was to help *describe* grief. I have no doubt that in the contexts in which they were working, these words and their operational definitions were useful and effective. It's when these descriptions reach our broader society without explanation or nuance, or when they are misapplied by those who position themselves as experts – that they go terribly awry.

So, going back to the beginning, we don't recover from grief after the loss of someone significant. Grief is born when someone significant dies – and as long as that person remains significant – grief will remain.

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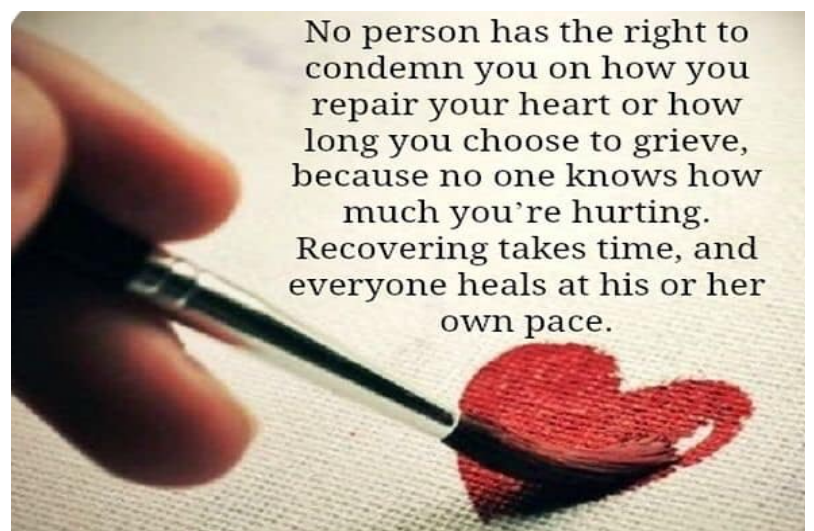
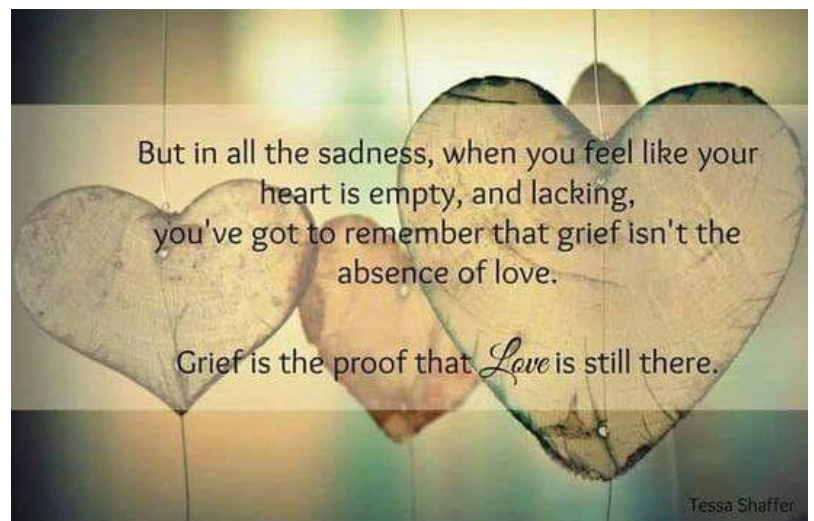
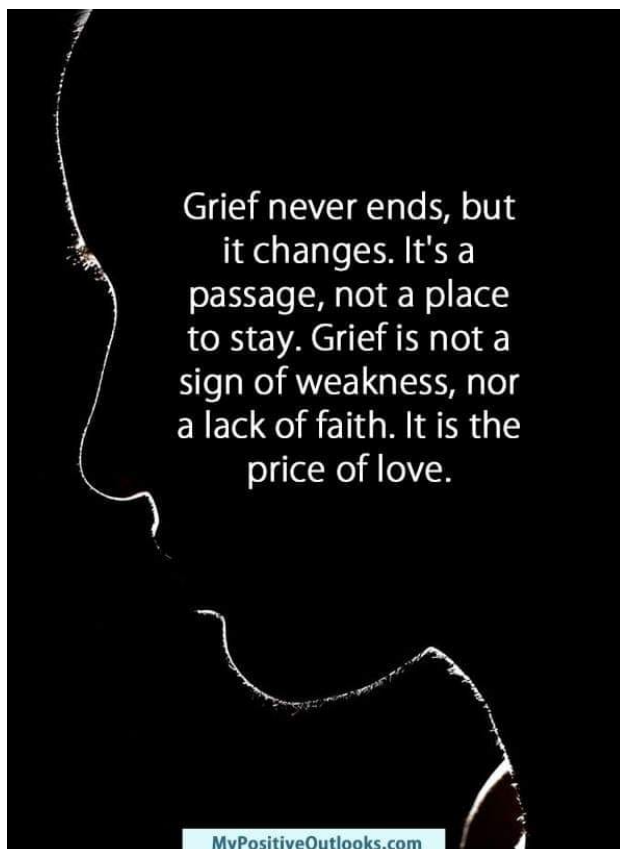
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Ongoing grief is normal, not dysfunctional. It's also not dysfunctional to experience unpleasant grief-related thoughts and emotions from time-to-time sometimes even years later. Humans are meant to experience both sides of the emotional spectrum – not just the warm and fuzzy half. As grieving people, this is especially true. Where there are things like love, appreciation, and fond memory, there will also be sadness, yearning, and pain. And though these experiences seem in opposition to one another, we can experience them all at the same time.

Sure, people may push you to stop feeling the pain, but this is misguided. If the pain exists, it makes sense, because there will never come a day when you won't wish for one more moment, one more conversation, one last hello, or one last goodbye. You learn to live with these wishes and you learn to accept that they won't come true – not here on Earth – but you don't stop wishing for them.

And let me reassure you, experiencing pain doesn't negate the potential for healing. With constructive coping and maybe a little support, the intensity of your distress will lessen and your healing will evolve over time. Though there will be many ups and downs, you should eventually reach a place where you're having just as many good days as bad...and then perhaps more good days than bad...until one day you may find that your bad grief days are few and far between.

But the grief, it's always there, like an old injury that aches when it rains. And though this prospect may be scary in the early days of grief, I think in time you'll find that you wouldn't have it any other way. Grief is an expression of love– these things grow from the same seed. Grief becomes a part of how we love a person despite their physical absence; it helps connect us to memories of the past; it bonds us with others through our shared humanity, and it helps provide perspective on our immense capacity for finding strength and wisdom in the most difficult of times.



Valentine's Day

Glen Lord

When someone we love dies, days on the calendar take on a new meaning. Days that once were full of joyful anticipation can now be a cause for dread and fear. Knowing that we can no longer celebrate special days without our loved ones has changed every holiday and other special days. Some of these days like Christmas, Thanksgiving or birthdays are clearly going to be triggers, and the anticipation of them allows us and others to prepare a bit for them. Other holidays may take us by surprise. Maybe they were not significant when our loved ones were alive so we don't initially associate the holiday to the pain of missing them that we are now feeling.

Valentine's Day can be one of these days. The pain of the holiday is clear to those who have lost a spouse. Most often thoughts of as a romantic holiday for spouses and couples, this holiday can be very painful for people missing others as well. We begin celebrating Valentine's Day as children when we struggle to put our names to our classmate's valentines. The day is filled with heart shaped candy, class parties and homemade valentines for our parents. It is a day to celebrate love, and as a society we have embraced the day to celebrate the love we feel for our parents, children, spouses, grandparents, siblings, and other family and friends. The day can bring up the pangs of grief because someone we love is now missing from this celebration.

With the death of our loved one, some control has been stripped from our lives. What we thought would be forever is suddenly taken from us. Just the same as we do not have control over the days that come along every year, we wish there was a way for them to just disappear-- to have "special" days that cause pain, to just forever be taken from the calendar.

Unfortunately, time moves forward without our permission and these days will come every year. We are left to decide how to make them bearable. This will be different for each day, but Valentine's Day invites us to remember the love. We can decide to focus on the memories. We can decide to focus on the love. The goal is not to take away the pain or to make everything okay, rather to allow us to share the love that always and will forever be there.

Some things that you can do on Valentine's Day to share that love:



- Light a candle in honor of your loved one.
- Bring Valentine's Day cards to people who may not get any.
 - Write a love letter to them and read it aloud and share it with the universe.
 - Make a donation in their name to a homeless shelter or donate a book in their name to a library.
 - Plant a tree or a plant in their memory and place a memorial plaque beside it.
 - Post their picture on Facebook and ask others to share their memories or photos with you.
 - Go shopping for a Valentine's card, and look for the perfect one---the one that they would have purchased for you and buy it as a gift for you from them.
 - Go to a favorite place and spend time with your memories.
 - Make their favorite meal and invite others to come share in love and memories.

These are just a few ideas. Open your mind and your heart. Do what feels right to you. Try one thing, if it does not work for you then try something else.

Valentine's Day is different, but it is still Valentine's Day. Our loved ones are forever a part of us. They have changed us forever and their love lives on in us. This Valentine's Day, allow space for the joy of their memories and the power of their love to share space with the pain of them not being with you.

Happy Valentine's Day, LOVE NEVER DIES!



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	Ian Patrick McDonald	5/05/89 ~ 1/12/15
Bryan Christopher Bingel	1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08	Kevin McGuinn	2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08
Christopher Wesley Blok	3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09	Emily “Tabor” McMullen	1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12
Lesly Glyn Bolton	1/19/80 ~ 10/27/16	Christine McNabb	1/13/88 ~ 2/23/08
Baron “Deuce” Braswell II	9/29/89 ~ 1/20/06	Roseann M. Meale	10/04/69 ~ 1/19/87
Kenny Brooks Jr	8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06	John Earl Medley	2/21/59 ~ 9/09/08
Joseph Brendan Birkebile	6/26/89 ~ 1/11/11	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
Ryan Michael Conde	12/02/04 ~ 2/02/17	Angela Oliver	11/07/67 ~ 1/06/11
Stephen Brian Donnelly	1/08/72 ~ 2/15/18	Joseph Christopher Page	1/26/88 ~ 2/07/08
David Joseph Erickson	1/07/91 ~ 1/07/91	Timothy Michael John Peyton	6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17
Robert Alan Finch	7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01	Christina Lianne Panzo-Bowers	1/08/94 ~ 11/01/14
Antonio (Tony) Ford-Flores	2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10	Michael Joseph Pennefather	12/09/95 ~ 2/04/08
Victoria Anne Forster	1/04/89 ~ 1/04/09	Alice Amelia Porges	2/10/15 ~ 2/10/15
Bruce Lee Foxworthy	8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12	Brandon Roat	2/02/92 ~ 2/13/17
Payton Rose Freeze	10/13/98 ~ 2/10/16	Chelsea Rae Rosengarth	2/02/86 ~ 1/27/02
Jacob Thomas Fulton	4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15	Kevin Simpson	2/10/87 ~ 1/24/09
Jacob Charles Glusheski	5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11	Ben Smith	12/22/70 ~ 1/26/03
Adon Gerald Grey	11/05/81 ~ 1/20/18	Adam Charles Sorge	5/12/84 ~ 1/04/14
Kristin Marie Harkness	3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08	Robert Andrew Starling	8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18
Ashley Hoefling	8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17	Shawn Terrill	2/23/82 ~ 12/03/06
Philip Reid Hottle	2/16/85 ~ 12/03/08	Dana Thrall	8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01
Ryan Gardiner James	2/17/99 ~ 7/06/19	Derek M. Tierney	1/20/76 ~ 10/09/04
John William Kennedy	1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18	Caleb Milton Torres	2/11/12 ~ 2/11/12
Nicole Michelle Lee	6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08	Brian Floyd Weakley	1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
		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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bpusanova@gmail.com



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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