

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING FOR SOMEONE LOST TO SUICIDE

My Hero

When our son died, I thought
You would hold me and comfort me
And make everything right
Like you always did.

You never let me down before.
When you couldn't fix things,
I was furious with you.
You wouldn't even talk or cry
Or throw things
Like I did.

When you didn't grieve my way,
The right way, I thought
You loved him less
And said so.

Now I know you didn't let me down,
You cried, you cared, you did the best
That any man in pain could do.
And I forgive you
For not being Superman

Or me.

Reprinted from SIDS and The Compassionate Friends' Idaho Falls Chapter newsletter.



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Table of Contents

Mother's Day Revisited	2
MOTHER	2
A Father Speaks	3
Hurting on Father's Day	3
Love is a Gift to Unwrap for a Lifetime	4
Secondary Loss After a Suicide	5
Remembrances	6
Grief Support & Survivors' Meetings	7
Need Help Right Now?	7
TSPN Regional Meetings	8

"Love Never Dies" Memorial Quilts

The "Love Never Dies" quilt project personalizes the phenomenon of suicide, demonstrating that suicide is not some abstract social phenomenon, but a legitimate public health crisis that affects many people within a given community. These quilts are routinely displayed at TSPN educational and awareness events all over Tennessee.

Anyone is welcome to contribute a quilt square, at no charge, no matter how long ago you lost someone.

More information is available at <http://tspn.org/quilt>. Any additional questions may be directed to Karyl Chastain Beal, chair of our Quilt Committee, at arlynsmom@bellsouth.net or (931) 388-9289.



Mother's Day Revisited

Barbara Atwood contributed the following essay to a 2014 issue of the newsletter of The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles.

Many of us in TCF (The Compassionate Friends) do not look forward to Mother's Day. On this holiday, when the whole nation is celebrating the joys of parenthood, grieving parents often feel a special anguish.

Mother's Day this year looms as a particularly difficult milestone for me. Sunday, May 10, 1998, is not only Mother's Day, but also the second anniversary of the death of my 10-year-old son, Jacob. Because this day of private sadness also happens to be a day of public celebration, I decided that I should start thinking early about the occasion. I engaged in a little research about the holiday, and learned a story that I think is worth sharing.

Mother's Day was the creation of a woman named Anna Jarvis in the early 1900s. Anna, who never married and never had children of her own, devoted herself to establishing a national Mother's Day as a way of honoring her beloved mother, who died on May 9, 1905. In Anna's view, her mother deserved a memorial because she had lived selflessly and endured considerable suffering—7 of her 11 children had died in early childhood. According to historians, Anna's mother mourned the deaths of her children throughout her life.

Anna insisted that the holiday always fall on a Sunday, so that it would retain its spiritual moorings. Because of her efforts, President Woodrow Wilson finally proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Although Anna couldn't prevent the new holiday from quickly becoming a marketing phenomenon, she did try. Speaking out against "the mire of commercialization" that threatened to engulf Mother's Day, Anna attempted to preserve her creation as a true "holy day"; a time for solemn reflection and prayer.

Mother's Day, then, was born of a daughter's grief and love. More importantly, it was intended as a tribute to a bereaved mother—a brave woman who lost multiple children, but who managed to live with an abiding kindness and generosity toward others. I like knowing this background, and my attitude toward Mother's Day has been colored by the knowledge.

The holiday now makes me think of the common sorrow that links all bereaved parents. I feel a bond with Anna's mother that stretches over time and space. In a broader sense, the woman for whom the holiday was founded reminds me of people I've met at TCF who have continued to live productive, meaningful lives in the face of unthinkable loss.



MOTHER

I was, still am- the best part of you.

You are, will always be- the best part of me.

LOVE

Carried In the womb, Now cradled in the heart.

LOVE

Never ends...

Moments Of Time—Held, Eternal, Remembered

by Pamela Hagen

Finally, Mother's Day in its origins symbolizes both the joy and the vulnerability inherent in parenthood. Anna's mother knew all too well that from the moment a child is born, hope and the possibility of tragedy go hand in hand. She understood the fragility of life.

Enriched by its own history, Mother's Day is easier for me to tolerate. The coincidence of dates this year—Mother's Day and the anniversary of my son's death—is not as jarring as it once seemed. Although the commercial images of the modern Mother's Day still make me wince, I can turn off the television and envision the kind of day that Anna Jarvis had in mind: a time for quiet reflection and the sharing of cherished memories.

A Father Speaks

Jim Hobbs is a member of Bereaved Parents USA of North Texas, headquartered in Denton.

Driving to work with the radio on, I sit next to a co-worker and friend in the passenger seat. It's early in the morning and the conversation is light. A song reminds me of Jesse, my deceased son, so I tell a story about Jesse. A cloud of silence and dread fills the car. My friend shifts his position and I can feel how uncomfortable he is. I swallow the memories of Jesse, and switch the conversation to last night's ball game.

Sounds familiar? It's painful to your friends to hear about your deceased child, and it's also painful for you to silence your memories.

Certain studies claim that women are social beings, and are more able to communicate their emotions than men. These same studies state that men are mostly competitive and tend to hide their negative emotions, such as sadness or grief, especially from other men.

Does that mean that men have less need to deal with their emotions? I don't think so. From personal experience, as well as experiences of other men I have known, grief is one emotion that demands relief. Without grief recovery, grief can become a destructive force that at some point, can consume your physical as well as your mental and spiritual health.

Bereavement support groups remind us that we need not walk alone. From a man's viewpoint, I think our group's monthly gatherings offer an important venue for men to work through the grief recovery process. Other doors are often shut to men who need to discuss their anger, guilt, sadness, and even happy memories concerning their deceased children. Let's talk with and listen to each other.

Hurting on Father's Day

Anonymously submitted to the June 1999 edition of "Mayday", the newsletter of the Survivors of Suicide group in Tampa, Florida.

As the day approaches
I wonder how I will react.
Am I still a father?
I will sit quietly never allowing
friends and family to see how I feel.
I miss my son, but I can't
allow myself to "break"
I must remain strong
And always be the "rock"
I wish I could let someone know
how much I miss my little angel,
how much I cry and how much
I miss hearing, "Dad, I love you."
I am a father, but I wonder will I just
pretend as usual, that
"it doesn't bother me"?
Remember me,
For I hurt too, on this special day.

"In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all; and, to the young, it comes with bitterest agony, because it takes them unawares. The older have learned to ever expect it. I am anxious to afford some alleviation of your present distress. Perfect relief is not possible, except with time. You can not now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say; and you need only to believe it, to feel better at once."

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), in a letter to the daughter of longtime friend Lt. Col. William McCullough after his death in the Battle of Coffeeville in 1862

Please, See Me Through My Tears

You asked, "How are you doing?"

As I told you tears came to my eyes . . . and you looked away and quickly began to talk again. All the attention you had given me drained away.

"How am I doing?"... I do better when people listen, though I
may shed a tear or two

This pain is indescribable. If you've never known it, you cannot fully understand.

Yet, I need you.

When you look away, when I'm ignored.

I am again alone with it .

Your attention means more than you can ever know.

Really, tears are not a bad sign, you know!

They're nature's way of helping me to heal ...

They relieve some of the stress of sadness.

I know you fear that asking how I'm doing brings me sadness ... but you're wrong.

The memory of my loved one's death will always be with me.

Only a thought away.

My tears make my pain more visible to you,

But you did not give me the pain ... it was already there.

When I cry, could it be that you feel helpless, not knowing what to do?

You are not helpless, and you don't need to do a thing but be there.

When I feel your permission to allow my tears to flow, you've helped me.

You need not speak. Your silence as I cry is all I need. Be patient ... do not fear.

Listening with your heart to "how I am doing" relieves the pain,

for when the tears can freely come and go, I feel lighter.

Talking to you releases what I've been wanting to say aloud,

clearing space for a touch of joy in my life.

I'll cry for a minute or two . . . and then I'll wipe my eyes,

and sometimes you'll even find I'm laughing later.

When I hold back the tears, my throat grows tight,

my chest aches, my stomach knots ...

because I'm trying to protect you from my tears.

Then we both hurt... me, because my pain is held inside,

a shield against our closeness... and you, because suddenly we are distant.

So, please, take my hand and see me through my tears...

Then we can be close again.

© Kelly Osmont

If you would like to remember your loved one in "Out of the Shadows", please send your loved one's name, birth date, death date, your name, and your email address to tspn@tspn.org with the subject line "Remembrance."

"Out of the Shadows" wants your articles, poetry, prose, and artwork for the next issue and the ones to come. We'll also need suggestions and recommendations on how we can make it better.

If there's a piece you want to submit to the newsletter, send it to tspn@tspn.org with the subject line "OOS Submission".

Feedback and suggestions can also be sent to this address with the subject line "OOS Feedback".

Secondary Loss After a Suicide

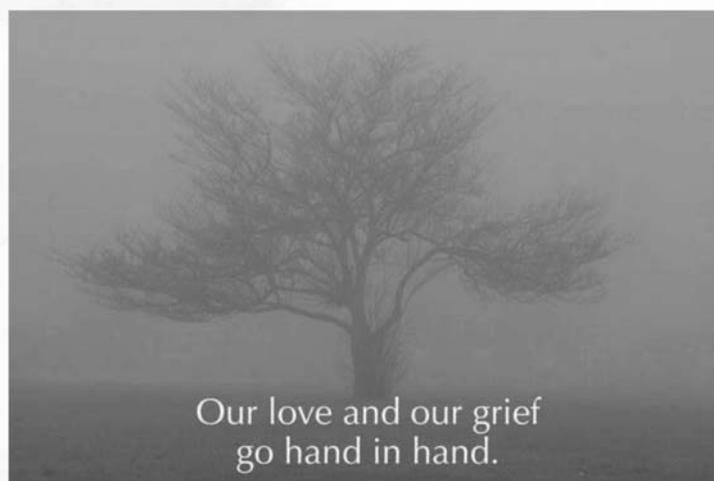
Our Side of Suicide (www.oursideofsuicide.com) is a blog offering hope, comfort and support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide, co-authored by two survivors. This essay, written by co-contributor Jessica, delves into an aspect of suicide rarely acknowledged by all too common among the people left behind.

We are all familiar with the pain that accompanies a loss by suicide. What we often do not talk about are the other relationships that are challenged or even broken after a suicide occurs. Secondary loss, as they are often referred to, are the losses that occur in addition to the person lost on that tragic day. We expect the people we trust the most to be our strength in the aftermath of such tragedy. When they do not give us what we need, when they fail to support us in the manner that we need, we experience the pain of a secondary loss. In my experience this can be equally painful, as it maximizes the anguish that we have been left with.

I don't think I realized how much I changed after the death of my dad. When we change, our relationships need to adapt. Unfortunately there are relationships that are not able to adapt to this change. The loss of close relationships often leads to further isolation and shame as we question who we can turn to in our time of need. We become angry at the people who we feel have betrayed us. This anger often blocks our ability to actually grieve the loss of our loved one. We feel isolated and alone. And if I know one thing, it's that people do not grieve well alone. So, what do we do? I have compiled a few tips to help you cope with secondary loss, and potentially decrease any anger that you feel.

1. Accept that people change only when THEY want to change. We cannot force people to change, which means we also can't force a relationship to change.
2. Don't put more energy into a relationship than the other person. It only leads to exhaustion and frustration.
3. Change your expectations for the person and the relationship. Maybe this person isn't your "go-to" in times of need, but they might be great at providing a distraction when you need.
4. Acknowledge and accept that every family member grieves differently. Don't expect someone else's grief to look like your own. Just because they aren't crying everyday doesn't mean they aren't in pain. Just because they are crying everyday doesn't mean they aren't moving forward.
5. Establish new supports. I was lucky enough to find a support group in the Chicago area after my dad's suicide. I met Becky (Jessica's co-blogger) in this group, and she became the person who offered me the most support when it came to this loss. To this day, she is still the only friend I have that truly gets it. Finding a new support helped me maintain other great relationships. Ones that might not have been the best at understanding what I was feeling, but ones that still held a tremendous value in my life.

It took me awhile to learn how to navigate in this new world in which I was living. The best thing I ever did was change my expectations. If someone continues to let us down we need to ask ourselves: 1. Is this person worth keeping in my life? 2. Do I need to change my expectations? When I asked myself these questions, I learned that some relationships were never as good as I thought they were. Others were able to remain good, but only when I made my own expectations more realistic.



Our love and our grief
go hand in hand.

Courtesy of the "Deep Grief Great Love Group Page" on Facebook
(www.facebook.com/dgglgroupage).

Remembrances

Shannon Elizabeth Godsey
2/5/1977-5/1/2002

Jeffery Alan Burnett
3/1/1983-5/1/2007

Michael-John Minatra
5/4/1988-6/13/2010

Autumn "Coco" Corinne Chadwick
12/6/1989-5/4/2011

Charles William Dugger
5/5/1932-12/30/2013

Tara Ann Swain
7/22/1988-5/6/2007

Richard Allen Thomas
5/7/1974-12/14/2012

Roman Scott Moore
5/7/1985-2/23/2010

Timothy Gill
3/6/1961-5/7/2000

Austin David Somers
5/8/1985-1/14/2007

Heather Krusell
2/6/1980-5/9/2008

Adam David Maxon
5/11/1981-7/24/2007

Cory Dale Wilson
9/14/1993-5/11/2013

Thomas Waldon Snow
7/19/1974-5/12/2005

Rickey Joe Ridley
1/23/1957-5/12/2006

Herman Hill
7/11/1936-5/12/2015

Matthew Norton
5/14/1980-5/30/2009

Billy Kendall Moore
5/15/1962-6/11/2009

Joshua Mitchell Duve
5/26/1989-5/16/2009

Eric James Powell
4/4/1972-5/17/1999

Joe Wayne Cook
6/19/1937-5/18/2003

Lowell Ratcliff
4/26/1924-5/18/2008

Charles W. Johns
5/20/1975-6/2/2011

Dr. Frank Fesmire
7/21/1933-5/21/1977

Jay Russell Odom, Ph.D.
9/7/1969-5/21/1998

Chad "Chubbs" Lambert
5/22/1974-5/22/2010

Joshua Mitchell Duve
5/26/1989-5/16/2009

Shep Case
5/27/1993-3/17/2009

Terence Lake
5/28/1984-1/31/2002

Flora Elizabeth Burridge
5/30/1963-4/29/2003

Matthew Norton
5/14/1980-5/30/2009

Jefferson O'Neal Grice
6/1/1970-12/14/2000

Brenda Chouinard Gagnon
6/2/1974-4/19/2013

Sonny Lee Higdon
7/29/1977-6/3/2008

Michael Raymond Powell
6/11/1968-6/7/2014

Shirley "She-She" Allen
6/10/1943-6/8/1997

Jarid Michael Henry
4/4/1988-6/8/2003

Matthew Tyler Medley
7/25/1992-6/8/2011

Kimberly Kerfien
4/24/1968-6/9/2007

Lonnie Russell Small
6/11/1929-1/24/1959

Michael Raymond Powell
6/11/1968-6/7/2014

Ryan Allen Daugherty
1/15/1977-6/12/2008

Brad Kurd
12/21/1977-6/12/2014

Stacey Nicole Price
9/13/1984-6/14/2010

Cody Scallorn
6/15/1993-1/2/2012

Tyler Ross Bradley
12/30/1991-6/15/2011

Donald Warren Barker
6/16/1974-7/6/2007

Dylan James Pitman
3/18/1992-6/17/2013

Jordan Jair Rashan Turner
6/18/1992-12/2/2012

Wayne Broughton
3/6/1972-6/18/2009

Sarah Elaine Tinder
6/19/1984-11/22/2012

Brent D. Hogshead
6/22/1943-11/24/1996

Michael Lee Culbreath
3/15/1965-6/22/2004

Alyssa Renee Buford
6/27/1998-2/18/2014

Marc Anthony Burridge
3/27/1967-6/30/2003

*Note: Flora and Marc Burridge are
husband and wife.*

Grief Support & Survivors' Meetings

West Tennessee

Jackson

Survivors of Suicide Loss
Paula Terry
pcterry64@yahoo.com
(731) 541-8256

Memphis

Healing Hearts Suicide Grief Support Group
Kerry Mitchell
momofamaje@yahoo.com
(901) 743-4701

Middle Tennessee

Clarksville

Survivors of Suicide Loss
Veronica R. Conley
veronica.conley@centerstone.org
Debbie Mashburn
debbie.h.mashburn@gmail.com
(478) 320-7973
3rd Mondays at 7 PM

Columbia

GRief After SuicideS (GRASS)
Karyl Chastain Beal
karyl@columbia@cs.com
(931) 388-9289
grief-after-suicide.com

Cookeville

"Journey" grief support groups
(931) 525-2600
info@heartofthecumberland.org

Franklin

Survivors of Suicide Loss
(615) 244-7444 (24/7)

Murfreesboro

Survivors of Suicide Loss
(615) 244-7444 (24/7)

Nashville

Survivors of Suicide Loss
(615) 244-7444 (24/7)

Spring Hill

Left Behind By Suicide
Douglas Johnson
tennesseedj@bellsouth.net
(615) 435-9621

East Tennessee

Chattanooga

SITE (Suicide Isn't the End)
Tonia Shadwick
wkdstepmom@comcast.net
(423) 834-1709

Survivors of Suicide Loss

Hilda Bevans
zueslittlebear@aol.com
(423) 697-9432
www.suicideperspective.com

Jefferson City

ComPaSS
Cynthia Lynn
clynn3118@gmail.com
(865) 680-3256

Johnson City/Gray

Tri-Cities Survivors of Suicide Loss
Linda Harold lindaphipps1973@gmail.com
(423) 245-5608

Knoxville

Suicide Grievers Support Group
Paula J. Alexander, LCSW, CGC
pj4031@tds.net

Tazewell

Surviving Our Loss After Suicide (SOLAS)
Tammy Wilson
corysmom51113@gmail.com
(865) 585-2917

For more information on survivors' groups and for information on other survivors' groups outside Tennessee proper which have members from Tennessee (in other words, far eastern Tennessee and the Memphis area), please visit

<http://tspn.org/for-survivors-of-suicide>.

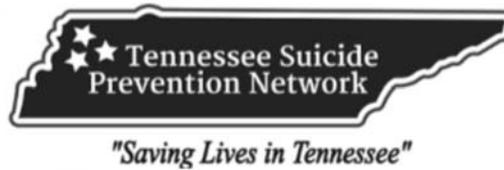
Need Help Right Now?

Losing a loved one to suicide is emotionally overwhelming. Survivors of suicide are at risk for attempting suicide because of the emotional upheaval they are experiencing.

Feelings of hopelessness, feeling trapped, feeling like a burden to others, increased alcohol or drug consumption, sleeping too little or too much, and withdrawing or feeling isolated from others are signs that you or a loved one may need help now.

If you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please seek help immediately. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.





TSPN works across the state to eliminate the stigma of suicide and educate communities about the warning signs of suicide, with the ultimate goal of reducing suicide rates in the state of Tennessee. TSPN's continued success is due in large part to volunteers willing to donate their time and energy. If you would like to volunteer with TSPN, please call (615) 297-1077 or e-mail tspn@tspn.org.

TSPN Regional Meetings

East Tennessee Region (monthly, 3rd Thursday, 12:15 PM)

Third Floor Conference Room, Cherokee Health Systems, 2018 Western Avenue, Knoxville, 37921

Memphis/Shelby County Region (monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:30 AM)

Memphis Crisis Centers Training Facility, 70 North Pauline, Memphis, 38105

Mid-Cumberland Region (monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM)

TSPN central office, 446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224, Nashville, 37211 (unless otherwise announced)

Northeast Region (monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM)

Frontier Health, 1167 Spratlin Park Drive, Gray, 37615

Rural West (monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 10:30 AM)

Fourth Floor, West Tennessee Healthcare Building, 1804 Highway 45 Bypass, Jackson, 38305

South Central (monthly, 1st Wednesday, 11:00 AM)

Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia, 38401

Southeast Region (monthly, 1st Thursday, 11:30 AM)

(May) Mental Health Cooperative of Chattanooga, 801 North Holtzclaw Avenue, Suite 101, Chattanooga, 37404

(June) Omni Community Health, 1635 Chestnut Street, Chattanooga, 37408

Upper Cumberland Region (monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM)

Volunteer Behavioral Health, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502

Blount County Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Alliance (monthly, 1st Friday, 12:00 PM)

Boys and Girls Club Meeting Room, Fort Craig Elementary School, 520 South Washington Street, Maryville, 37804

Bradley-McMinn-Meigs-Polk Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force (monthly, 2nd Wednesday, 11:30 AM)

Pine Ridge Treatment Center, Tennova Healthcare, 2800 Westside Drive Northwest, Cleveland, 37312

Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force (quarterly, 3rd Monday, 1:30 PM)

Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478

Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention for Hickman-Perry Counties (monthly, 4th Friday, 1:30 PM)

Conference Room, St. Thomas Hickman Hospital, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033

Montgomery-Houston-Humphreys-Stewart Suicide Prevention Task Force (monthly, 3rd Friday, 9 AM)

Youth Villages, 651 Stowe Court, Clarksville, 37040

Rutherford County Suicide Prevention Coalition (monthly, 1st Tuesday, 5:15 PM)

TrustPoint Hospital, 1009 North Thompson Lane, Murfreesboro, 37129