

## Contents of this ELetter

- You Will Make It Through
- Editor's Journal
- Rest In Peace Mr. President - Calvin Coolidge
- Grief Tip - How to Rephrase "I'm Sorry for Your Loss"
- Poems, Verses and Quotes
- On the Lighter Side
- Cooking - Cook It-For One
- Inspirational Story: Have Lunch With God
- Grief Group/Seminars
- Reader Feedback - If I Only Knew
- Nan's Articles: Love Is Stronger Than Death

### Please read our ELetter and pass it on!

If you are not a subscriber and would like to subscribe to the Wings ELetter, contact Nan Zastrow at [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com) or subscribe (or unsubscribe) at [wingsgrief.org](http://wingsgrief.org). Articles and stories may be reproduced providing you include the Author, Source, and Permissions.

## Hope for the Grieving: You Will Make It Through

By: Jill Hodge

*"No darkness lasts forever. And even there, there are stars." ~ Ursula K. Le Guin (The Farthest Shore)*

Everyone with a close relationship with their mother has felt it at some time or other or expects to feel it in the future. That dreaded moment when you will have to say goodbye to them. For some of us, it happens early in life, through illness, a parting of the ways, or other transitions; for me, it began in my mid-fifties, and even though I had plenty of time to ponder it, I wasn't prepared.

I was always very close to my mother, so we'd had many conversations about her aging, discussing everything from living wills to her end-of-life wishes, but I still wasn't prepared to handle the series of strokes and resulting dementia that started some two years ago.

Within the first year of her first stroke, we visited emergency rooms some ten times to manage the small hemorrhagic strokes she had and the residual falls, seizures, and infections that resulted. One day, we were "normal," talking on the phone almost every day and taking walks around our neighborhood on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and the next, our lives were totally different.

We Prepared for Aging, But Not for Grieving. I realize in hindsight that no amount of reasoned discussion about healthcare proxies and funeral preparations prepares you to take on the reality of a parent's (or other loved one's) health crisis. In fact, when I think about the rational way we discussed all these details, I'm struck by the fact that we never (not once) talked about how we would feel. How would I deal with her illness or death emotionally? We didn't talk about how my life would change. We left out so much of "life" in these practical discussions.

Of course, I know why we didn't; we didn't want to face it, and talking about my emotional turmoil during her end-of-life journey would have felt too real and been too difficult. So I went through those emotions without her. Her dementia changed her memory, her perspective, and her understanding, so she now has limited capacity to know or sense how each stroke might be affecting me.

Before she transitioned into middle-stage dementia, there would be periods of focus and brightness where my mom would be aware of her condition and its effect on me. As was her kind, loving nature, she pushed through and comforted me in much the same way she had always done.



It amazed me when these periods of connection came through. Even while dealing with such a pervasive rush of cognitive deterioration, she still “mothered” me. She showed the depth of her love and understanding. It was remarkable to experience.

### **The Zig-Zag Pattern of Grief**

But then this on-again, off-again awareness had its effect on my emotions too. There were so many emotions all at once, and the zig-zag nature of these feelings was exhausting. Good days, bad days, numb days, brighter days. Who knew what was coming next as I managed the day-to-day logistics of dealing with her health decline: hospitalizations, rehab stays, home care, equipment requests, financial issues and, finally, new living arrangements?

For the first time, I journeyed through a pervasive struggle without my best friend to lean on and with the heavy emotional burden of facing life without her. I’d come home from the hospital in those early days and just cry my eyes out. My husband and daughter were ready to console me, but they didn’t know how to deal with my intense emotional state, and they were grieving

too. I cried until I was numb, then cried some more until I was all cried out.

### **But I Made It Through**

There were so many emotions all at once: sadness, fear, frustration, anger, denial. No neat Kubler Ross sequence for me; I felt all the emotions simultaneously and throughout the day. The disorienting zig-zag pattern of grief meant that some days, I felt like I was on top of things and handling my emotions, and other days I was an emotional wreck. Through it all, I learned how to act “Adult” with a capital “A.” I call it “super adulting.” And it all came on so suddenly. It was like a raging firestorm swept me up, burnt through me, and then left me by the side of the road as a charcoal shell of my former self. Still breathing but burning with rage and sadness.

### **But I made it through.**

I was also exhausted from the caregiving. Already a caregiver to my partner (who has a disability) and my college-age daughter, who was just entering college when my mom’s health crisis began, the lack of sleep, trips to the hospital, and then taking care of my mom at home (after a full day’s work in the office) was unbearable at times.

### **But I made it through.**

Through almost two years of this super adulting, I found an assisted living facility that could handle my mom’s medical needs (and provide some socialization), but it came at a hefty price. Seeing the monthly bills causes its own stress. But it was the best place for her, a place that takes loving care of her during the day when I can’t and coordinates her healthcare. It helps with the logistics, but I still have anxiety about her advancing dementia.

### **But I’m making it through.**

Now that I have the time and space to regroup and journey through my own transition, I see that making it through every hurdle, while excruciating at times, was a journey I had to take. It was a journey that only I could take, and alone because it was a journey to a new stage of adulthood. I learned without a doubt that I could step into leadership, and I offer these insights to those of you who are going through a similar grieving journey with a loved one. May it comfort you to know that some or all of these benefits might await you on the other side of your grief journey.

### **You Will Lead**

Situations will push you to grow and own your voice because you must do it for your loved one. You will have to move through

## YOU WILL MAKE IT...CONTINUED

indecision to take action to move toward progress. You will become a leader. Once you have made these decisions, you will feel a sense of empowerment because you took action and moved through the world with agency. You can lead.

### You Will Feel Grateful

You will encounter incredibly loving, helpful people along your grief journey. They will hold your hand (literally or figuratively), they will make things a bit easier, and they will feel sad, angry, or fearful alongside you. Even when you feel alone, you will not be alone. You will feel gratitude as new people come into your life and offer loving kindness to you along the way.

### You Will Know Yourself Better

You will learn that even though you can't control what is happening, you determine how you will respond to it. You will figure out how you feel and what you want (and don't want). You will make choices and be faced with consequences and learn from those scenarios. You will know yourself better, and you better believe that your loved one would be proud of your new insight.

### You Will Learn to Connect on Your Own Terms

Sometimes you will seek out community and connection, and other times you will want solace and singular mindfulness to facilitate healing. Sometimes you will alternate between the two, taking from community what you need and being silent when needed. You will learn to set boundaries to protect your time and emotional resources. You will connect on your own terms.

There are still days when I feel very alone, when I miss hearing my mom's voice, and the fear rises up as I think about losing her completely. On those days, I try to sit with those feelings, build a tolerance for them, and not judge myself as I stumble around the day living in my emotionally fragile state.

Then there are days when I feel my mom as a living part of me, like an energized golden thread woven into my life's fabric. And when I breathe in and out, we breathe together. Some days my mom feels intertwined with my very essence and forever present in the warm, inviting heart she helped to create. Those are my best days. May you also know them as you zig and zag through your grief journey.

If you are grieving over a loved one's struggle or passing, I hope you feel a kinship to the ideas and sense of hope I have laid out here today. My wish for you: Allow yourself the freedom to feel however you feel but try to hold space for the idea that you will make it through. Make space for the possibility of a positive transition. I hope that over time you will come to some peace about these changes.

Perhaps you will feel as I do, that your loved one now resides inside you. That they have a new home. And when you breathe in and out, they breathe with you, forever present in your warm and inviting heart.

*About Jill Hodge*

*Jill Hodge is the writer and host of the inspirational personal growth podcast Let the Verse Flow. She created the podcast in response to the grief she felt during her mother's transition through dementia. Through storytelling, spoken word poetry, affirmation meditations, and music, Jill hopes to inspire creativity and self-care, especially for caregivers. Explore the podcast, blog articles, and her companion newsletter, the Me-Time Mixtape, to get tips and resources for your creative self-care. grieve.*

*"Permission granted" by tinybudda.com*

## AS I SIT IN HEAVEN

*author unknown*

AS I SIT IN HEAVEN  
AND WATCH YOU EVERYDAY  
I TRY TO LET YOU KNOW WITH SIGNS  
I NEVER WENT AWAY.

I HEAR YOU WHEN YOUR LAUGHING  
AND WATCH YOU AS YOU SLEEP,  
I EVEN PLACE MY ARMS AROUND YOU  
TO CALM YOU WHEN YOU WEEP.

I SEE YOU WISH THE DAYS AWAY  
BEGGING TO HAVE ME HOME.  
SO I TRY TO SEND YOU SIGNS  
SO YOU KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE  
DON'T FEEL GUILTY THAT YOU HAVE  
LIFE THAT WAS DENIED TO ME.  
HEAVEN IS TRULY BEAUTIFUL!  
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE!

SO LIVE YOUR LIFE AND LAUGH AGAIN,  
ENJOY YOURSELF BE FREE.  
THEN I KNOW WITH EVERY BREATH  
YOU TAKE,  
YOU'LL BE TAKING ONE FOR ME.



## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

---

*In my journey through grief, Gary always told me I could find a story in everyday experiences. He was right!*

# WHEN THE BLUEBIRD STARTS SINGING AGAIN! SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF HOPE

By Nan Zastrow

*“The bluebird is my message of hope. He wraps my soul in hope and peace. Knowing we will reunite in God’s world beyond. Without a doubt. It’s a place filled with happiness and love where we reunite with family and friends. Where families are made whole again. Where memories become legends. Where sorrow is gone, illness is eradicated and grief unwelcome. A place where rainbows are promises fulfilled. Where bluebirds start singing and bring messages of hope all over again.”  
(Nan Zastrow 1995)*

Signs are not a coincidence. They are one of God’s most engaging treasures for the bereaved. They turn our thoughts to “possibilities” that our loved one is trying to tell us something. They are often silent messages of hope. Most people ask for cardinals, dragonflies, butterflies, eagles, roses and other common flowers and fauna to be the predictor that their loved one can still communicate from the beyond. I asked for a bluebird.

When our son died decades ago, I wasn’t as open-minded to these symbols of love until the bluebird nested outside our country home. Multiple incidents with bluebirds enlightened both my husband and me. We believed that it couldn’t be anything greater than a message of hope from Chad. I wrote an article following their occurrences in the Wings magazine at the time. I wrote about watching them preparing their nest. About bringing the young fledglings to the railing on our deck engaging them to fly. I even wrote about their challenges when a bluebird



fell into our fireplace twice within weeks, and we gently set her free. What are the odds of that?

I felt a sense of hope in their presence. I wrote “If you ever had a similar experience, you may have sensed a merging of your souls like the merging with your child’s soul at birth. When you look into their face that first time, you become mesmerized by the incredible feeling of God’s wonders. A gift given to you. You feel ultimate peace and contentment.” I thought of the bluebird many times since those early days...seeing them but never in the same context—with such spiritual and deliberate meaning.

These memories never left my mind. I also remember strongly requesting that if my husband, Gary, should go

## SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF HOPE...CONTINUED

---

first, he needed to send me a bluebird as a sign that he was okay. I knew that such a specific request would be difficult; I didn't make it easy on him. Spring came just a few months after his death, and I didn't get a bluebird. The houses he put up in both the front and back yards kept their vacancy sign intact.

I don't think it wasn't because Gary didn't try. Instead, I got an Indigo Bunting at my feeder morning and night for several weeks the first summer. I chose to believe the Bunting was the "sign" I asked for—perhaps just because he was blue. After all God makes all kinds of beautiful blue birds. Couldn't He have sent a substitute? I cherished Mr. Bunting for who he was and that splash of vibrant blue color at my feeder, but it wasn't the sign I was looking for.

Then one morning this year, I saw a swish of blue color fly by my kitchen window. Could it be possible? Then for several days, I watched the activity of nest building as a pair of bluebirds gathered up the dried grass and pine needles stuffing them in the house made just for them. I thanked God for sending me the bluebird...my meaningful message of Hope!

I've learned a lot more about bluebirds since my daily experience with them this year. The Internet provided me with some needed hope and inspiration after many recent challenges. Bluebirds are messengers sent to encourage us and bring messages and wisdom to us. They are considered a good sign, especially right after a time of tremendous difficulty. In Christianity, bluebirds have a sacred symbolism. When God sends a bluebird, they are angels in disguise that are sent by guardian angels to deliver messages. This suggests that you should open your mind and heart and trust your intuition. The bluebird is meant to remind you that you are not alone. It's a message to stay focused and not lose hope, you will achieve the happiness you deserve. Another spiritual interpretation contends that the bluebird represents a connection between the living and those who have passed away. I'm okay with all those interpretations. My favorite word is HOPE. And everything I read verified its existence in the presence of my bluebirds.

Recently, I was weeding the garden around the bluebird house. I tried to be there when I expected they wouldn't be there, but as I stood up, less than 3 feet away from the house, there he was. I stood completely still not looking him in the eye (Gary always told me don't look a bird in the eyes. It would frighten them, and they would move the nest—a lesson from a past experience). My heart actually beat with pure joy! I have a small sun catcher in my kitchen window. On some days when the light is just right, when I glance towards the bluebird house there is a prism of mini blue lights dancing around their haven. Seriously now, could anything be more appropriate? I will cherish them forever long they choose to stay in my backyard.

In your own search for a sign or message, don't be restrictive, like I was. Look for the out-of-ordinary, the random, the unexpected and often repetitive. Be open to however that sign or message reveals itself to you. Then be open to its sacred message of peace in your life.



Though this article may appear to be a lesson about the bluebird (and oh! I could write a lot more!), it's also about holding onto hope and being open to the unexpected. For me, this time, it was the bluebird as a symbol of hope, love, positivity, and renewal which is the essence of life and beauty. The color blue is also symbolic of peace, tranquility and contentment. While the bluebird isn't specifically mentioned in the Bible, birds are symbols of messages and the color blue represents divinity,

depth of faith and tranquility. This is the stage of grief I hope to transition into in these coming months.

To me the bluebird is my declaration that heavenly signs and symbols are all around us after the loss of someone significant in our live. Some might be fleeting and others more constant. In each case, we must be open to them and take the sign or message for whatever measure of peace and joy it can give us. I believe strongly in messages from beyond and have been fortunate to receive them after many significant deaths—and especially for my son and my husband. In their intuitiveness, they knew exactly what I needed. They chose to let the bluebirds start singing again.

I couldn't let this bluebird experience pass without mentioning it in my journal this year. It came at a time when I

really needed some reassurance. I know that Gary worked hard to coordinate the coming of the bluebird to nest outside my window. It's even more symbolic and welcoming than ever since it's been over 5 years that the bluebird house has been vacant. God couldn't have choreographed a greater message of Hope.

I loved one author's humor in suggesting that Noah might have been standing on the deck of the Ark meticulously checking off the species of birds and wondering "Where are the bluebirds?" He might even have wished that he had a pair of these beautiful, symbolic creatures that would join him on his journey.

<https://www.bluebirdbehavioralhealth.com/>

<https://www.plowhearth.com>, <https://bibleangels.com/>



## Rest In Peace, Mr. President

By Todd Van Beck

**Rest in Peace, Mr. President.** That was the hope...that our presidents would rest in peace, but that has not always happened. For example, between 1865 and 1901 Lincoln's remains were moved 18 times.

Funerals are a reflection of how people live their lives, and this remains true for the funerals of our U.S. presidents. This series offers a glimpse into the deaths and funerals of our presidents, while offering overdue recognition to the scores of funeral professionals who labored ceaselessly to carry out the wishes of the presidents, their families, and in some cases, the wishes of the United States government. Each account tells an interesting story. —TVB

### CALVIN COOLIDGE

*the thirtieth President of the United States of America*

When President Harding died in San Francisco, California, his vice-president Calvin Coolidge was sound asleep across the country in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. A young man on a bicycle rode twelve miles in the middle of the night to awaken Coolidge and let him know that he would soon be the thirtieth president of the United States.

The oath of office was given to Coolidge by his father John Coolidge, who was a notary public. The Coolidges concluded that this was constitutional. Later, Coolidge was given the presidential oath in Washington, just to make sure.

Coolidge was a quiet man. However, he started out his presidency with full force. Tragically, in 1924, his youngest son Calvin, Jr. contracted sepsis from an infected blister and died. The loss of his son devastated Coolidge. By the end of his presidency, he was in a deep depression and sleeping sixteen hours a day.

After his presidency, Coolidge returned to Northampton, Massachusetts to retire. Being in a chronic depressed state over the death of his son began to wear on his health, which had never been robust.

In 1932, while visiting his father's home in Plymouth Notch, Coolidge experienced a severe attack of hay fever and ongoing asthma attacks. By the fall of 1932, he was using a variety of sprays to help him breathe. Hardly a night went by that he did not suffer great distress.

In reality, Coolidge was suffering from chronic heart disease. He experienced chronic indigestion, weight loss, and exhaustion, even after a night of sleep. He would not admit to heart trouble, but those around him noticed that he took his pulse often.

On January 5, 1933, Coolidge arose at 7:00 AM. He did not shave immediately but went for breakfast, and then he was driven to his downtown office. By 10:00 AM, he was taken back home.

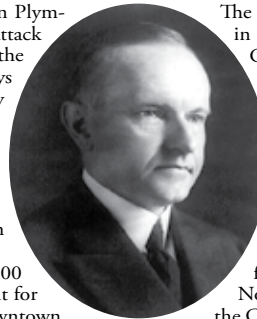
At 12:45 PM, Mrs. Coolidge returned from shopping and went upstairs. There on the dressing room floor she found her husband dead, lying on his back in his shirt sleeves. It looked like he was preparing to shave.

Northampton undertaker, **Oscar F. Ely**, along with his son **Charles** were called to the residence where Charles embalmed the President and prepared for the funeral. Coolidge had lived 60 years and 185 days.

Mrs. Coolidge made clear to Undertaker Ely that she wanted the funeral to be a simple affair in keeping with the President's simple way of life.

When the death call was received at the **Ely Undertaking Company**, by chance a salesperson from the **Boston Burial Case Company** was visiting. When this alert salesperson realized that the death call was for a former president, he immediately told the Elys that if the Coolidge family approved, his company would furnish their best casket at no charge. The Coolidge family accepted the offer.

On Friday the 6th, Ely brought a solid bronze, glass sealing casket to the residence and casketed the President. Coolidge was laid out in formal attire.



The funeral for President Coolidge was held in the historic Edwards Congregational Church, where the Coolidges were members. The funeral was held on January 7, 1933, and at 9:45 AM, the bronze casket was closed and permanently sealed.

Mrs. Coolidge had requested that the funeral be simple and no eulogy be read. The entire 20-minute funeral was composed of holy scripture and prayer.

After the funeral, the family prepared for the 100-mile trip up to Plymouth Notch, where more than six generations of the Coolidge family were buried. After a short rest at her home, Mrs. Coolidge was ready to make the trip to bury her husband.

At **Plymouth Notch Cemetery**, a canvas canopy was erected. **Willard Cabot**, an undertaker from Woodstock who was a close friend of the family, oversaw the committal service. Cabot had already buried the late President's father and son.

As taps sounded, the last remnants of daylight hovered over the western rise of the Green Mountains. The procession left the cemetery, and Willard Cabot lowered the casket into the earth. Finally, the gravedigger **Azro Johnson** began filling in the grave.

Todd W. Van Beck is associated with John A. Gupton College in Nashville, and has been an author, teacher, practitioner, and speaker for over 40 years. On May 30, 2018 Van Beck celebrated 50 years in funeral service. You can reach Todd at 615-327-3927.



FUNERAL HOME & CEMETERY NEWS

REPRINTED FROM JUNE 2022

©2022 Nomis Publications, Inc.

# Reader Feedback



*Before we are personally affected by significant loss, we conceptualize what that must feel like to lose a loved one. By imagining ourselves in such a situation, we think we may be more prepared for coping when we lose someone special. But we find out, we may never be fully prepared. When it happens, we are still trying to deal with questions and uncertainty whether it's the first loss or another loss years later.*

---

## ***If I Only Knew—How Difficult the Grief Experience Might Be***

---

My Personal Response: Death is no stranger to me. I've experienced seven sudden, unexpected deaths of family and each one affected me differently. The first death was the loss of my Mom just one week before my daughter was born. There isn't a lot that can prepare you, in advance, for grief. However, I wish I had known more than about her life: asked more questions, collected more keepsakes and journalled more stories. I was in my twenties then, and never expected to lose a parent so soon. I'm happy to say my losses that followed included intentional memory rituals for my loved ones that honors the life lived. "Memories are our keepsakes. And no one can take them away from us." – Nan Zastrow

---

To put it simply, I think just how terribly lonely you feel.

Carol,  
Merrill, WI

---

I keep reliving my husband's last moments in the emergency room . I cannot not think about it.

Should have known what to do in the emergency room and how to deal with their questions about what to do with him. Barely was able to drive home.

Jane

---

I don't think that most people imagine what loss will be like in advance. That's why it so often comes as a shock. Jewish tradition has a deep understanding of human psychology which is why it has a built in framework for dealing

with grief: Shiva – After the funeral, there are 7 days where the mourners (direct family) sit together in the home of the deceased. The doors are open and guests come all day – neighbors, friends, and family.

They tell stories, cry, laugh, eat, rest. This distracts the mourner, makes them tired enough to sleep at night although distressed and enables purging of initial grief that, if let alone, can cause a downward spiral into depression.

During this time, mourners wear the same shirt they wore (and symbolically tore) during the funeral. The mirrors in the house are covered to signify that now is not the time to pay attention to personal appearances. It's not a worry mourners need to take on (religious Jews have more guidelines than this but you can get the point). The mourners

sit on lower chairs than their visitors and are not allowed to serve food. Visitors bring the food and take care of everything. At the end of the Shiva the mourners go back to the gravesite . This is part of the rituals, what you are "supposed" to do but it also helps the mourners understand that the death actually happened.

30 days later the gravestone is placed at the grave . Another stage in the understanding. The death is real and written in stone In Judaism the mourning period is ONE YEAR - Because it takes one year to fully understand that the deceased is not going to walk in the door. It takes going through the holidays and birthdays without that person to fully understand and accept what happened. Every year after there is a memorial for the deceased. For a few hours the

## READER FEEDBACK...CONTINUED

---

family gets together, goes to the grave, eats together and focuses on the loss. This helps with family cohesion, teaches respect for the loss itself, and passes on the memory of the person, helping the younger generation know who they were and making their part in the family meaningful.

This framework is very helpful in addressing the psychological impact grief has on everyone. Different people handle things differently and the framework doesn't solve all the challenges, but it does help the family stay together, not sink into depression, and gives meaning to the community because grief belongs to everyone (to a certain extent), and taking care of individuals is the responsibility of everyone.

Forest Rain,  
Israel

---

To collect information, and hugs, and love while our loved ones are here. And then when we're confronted with the reality; that it's ok to grieve, take our time, no schedule, no list to go by. When I read the list of things you'll go through in the book written about grief (Death and Dying) by Kuebler-Ross; I've felt that may be more about going through grief for ourselves - loss of job, health, etc., not the loss of a loved one.

Teri,  
Wausau, WI

---

I wish I had known more about my own feelings beforehand. I think I was unaware of the depth of feelings that I had

for those I've lost and sort of expected them to live forever. This isn't happening to me type of idea. My first loss was my daughter when I found that she was born with congenital heart disease, and I was told she wouldn't live to see her first birthday. I began to grieve then, on some level, but didn't believe that she really was that ill. She lived for 32 years, in spite of all predictions, but she was both basically healthy on and off and then horribly ill over and over. I guess I grieved for her for much of her life. I wish I had spent more time simply enjoying life, with her, more but I learned about grief very early. There were more losses, some greater than others. My precious grandson died of a drug overdose. I grieved for him before he died as, on some level, I always knew this was going to be the outcome. I think by the time my darling husband died, I was "used" to grief, but I realized by then that I would just have to walk one step at a time through the process armed with the knowledge that we must grieve to go on living. I'm not sure that I wish I knew more, beforehand, as each loss was different and knowing wouldn't have made it any easier. However, looking back I am hugely grateful for the love I did have with each of them and the wonderful memories that I treasure every day.

Bunny,  
Boynton Beach, FL

---

I wish I would've known about the brain fog, memory loss, autopilot feeling that I had following my husband's

death. I wish I would've known more about the laws, paying off debt, all the tasks to take care of. I wish I would've accepted all the dreams, visions, day dreaming, conversations etc. as ADC's. I didn't think they existed until reading Hello from Heaven and looking back at it. I wish I would've known how to help my sons through their grief better.

Stephanie,  
Stevens Point, WI

---

I wish I had known how incredibly hard grief hits and had better understood what those close to me were going through when experiencing their own loss. Yes, I tried to console, and I sent cards with messages - all the things people normally do. But I didn't really understand what they were facing; how long and hard grief can last. I, like so many others, likely thought 4-6 months down the road that they were on a better track. It was only after I experienced the loss of my mom last year that I fully understand how profound and life-changing grief can be. I'm not certain that knowing this ahead of time would have prepared me better for the grief I'm experiencing now, but I think it would have made me a better friend to those who were going through difficult losses of their own.

Rhonda,  
Wausau, WI

---

We had two years to gear up for Shirley's end. I think we had all our ducks in order, so to speak. The unexpected



## READER FEEDBACK...CONTINUED

---

death was not in my situation.

I don't know what would trigger anyone to try to understand the grieving process when things are going well in life.

Maybe trying to understand a friend or neighbor loss could perk up an interest in learning grief. There's so many variables to grasp. Loss of a parent, spouse, sibling, or child have stronger differences.

Roger,  
Wausau, WI

---

I agree. No amount of education prepared me for the losses, each was different, though each experience gave me the feeling that I could handle things. And, I wished I had asked my mother more questions, which I later did with my dad.

Susan,  
Wausau WI

---

In discussions with others who have lost loved ones, some of our responses centered around being more prepared for the intense emotions surrounding our grief, knowing more about the physical aspects that grief brings about, specifically how our brain responds, and just being cognizant of how long the process takes to arrive at some semblance of order in our lives again. While we believe one can educate themselves on the issue, we don't believe one can

be completely prepared. Each death holds its own set of circumstances. It is only through experience that one really "learns" the process.

That being said, it is still important to talk about death and dying in order to educate those around us. Some preparation is still better than none.

Janet and Other grieving parents  
Fremont NE

---

I wish I knew how hard it would be after the death. How hard as a survivor wondering how to go on. Maybe we could not understand but if we heard it once maybe we would believe it.

Sue,  
Wausau, WI

---

I think the hardest part was thinking I could handle the loss of my wife. Not having her in my day-to-day life was/is so much harder than I could imagine. I have not been able to just "move on" and have been "stuck" in my grief. Now realizing that grief lasts forever, but not in the same overwhelming fashion as it has been, has been helpful. I still have regrets that my wife didn't want to talk about her cancer and that I did not push it. I should have done more talking about all the good memories and experiences we had.

Scott,  
Wausau, WI

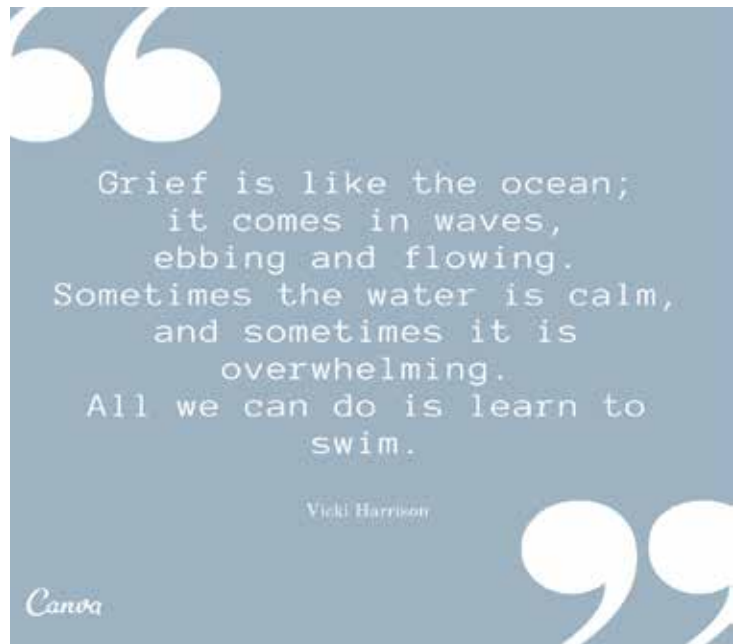
While overwhelmed with grief and unpredictable emotions; there's also all those "things" that need to be handled when a loved one dies. When our baby daughter, Sara Rose, died; my husband and I had no understanding of what needed to be done for her burial. The days just got all blurred together as we walked through the steps of her funeral planning. To this day, which is 46 years later, I'm forever "Thankful" for the loving help and support of family, friends and Funeral Home Directors. I also wasn't prepared for the days that followed and the reality of her absence from our lives. I held her blankets and little sleepers to my face, wanting to smell her precious baby smell in hopes of keeping her close and my memories intact. I don't know what it is about smell; but it was an unexpected comfort for me. Knowing what I experienced with our baby Sara Rose, after my husband died in 1999, I kept his favorite cologne to smell and I still have it.

Diane,  
Weston, WI

# Broken Hearts and Broken Wings

By Nan Zastrow

In blue skies, I once soared with eagles  
When sweet ballads my soul could sing,  
Life' painful and humbling experiences  
Broke my heart. And then broke my wings.  
My heart shattered in hundreds of pieces  
With the burden I was asked to bear.  
Each scar forms a constant reminder  
That life's tests pay our journey's fare.  
My spirit was crushed, oh so swiftly,  
'neath the burden of crippling grief,  
I longed for the freedom of flying,  
Visions of wings, lay still, at my feet.  
Oh where's the comfort of God's promise  
For the mourner who seeks him in prayer?  
Oh how will I overcome the sorrow  
When my heart and wings need repair?  
I searched for the magic to mend them,  
My broken heart and my broken wings,  
When my Lord whispered ever so softly,  
"You must first heal your spirit within."  
Listen to the beat of your heart vibes,  
Hear the message of experiences past,  
See the worth of your honored values,  
Gather strength from these lessons that last.  
Healing hearts share the loving memories  
And help others their burdens to bear.  
Life once again offers new purpose,  
Anger and sorrow will soon disappear.  
Healing wings energize the spirit  
Give flight to our grief and our fear.  
And slowly I'll rise from my grieving,  
As God's message becomes crystal clear.  
I'll rely on God's sacrifice and promise,  
In eternal life, my loved one I'll meet  
The clouds will part for the sunshine,  
The 'sting of death' I will surely defeat.  
***Found my spirit and wings are one, Lord,  
The battle over grief I will win,  
Because the wings I desire for soaring  
Are empowered by my spirit within.***



## On the Lighter Side...



### EULOGY

The old man had died. A wonderful funeral was in progress and the country preacher talked at length of the good traits of the deceased, what an honest man he was, and what a loving husband and kind father he was.

Finally, the widow leaned over and whispered to one of her children, "Go up there and take a look in the coffin and see if that's your pa."

### Stand By Your Man

Sadies' husband, Jake, had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months. Yet his faithful wife stayed at his bedside day and night. One night, Jake comes to and motions for her to come closer.

He says, "Sadie, you have been with me through all the bad times. When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there to support me. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you gave me support. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. You know what, Sadie?"

"What dear," she said gently...her eyes walling with tears.

"I think you are bad luck."

# *An Inspirational Story...*

## **Have Lunch with God**

Author Unknown

A little boy wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with a bag of potato chips and a six-pack of root beer and started his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old man. He was sitting in the park, just staring at some pigeons. The boy sat down next to him and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old man looked hungry, so he offered him some chips. He gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. His smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered him a root beer. Again, he smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word.



As twilight approached, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave; but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old man, and gave him a hug. He gave him his biggest smile ever.

When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? He's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old man, also radiant with joy, returned to his home. His son was stunned by the look of peace on his face, and he asked, "Dad, what did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I ate potato chips in the park with God." However, before his son responded, he added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime! Embrace them all equally!

Have lunch with God.....bring chips.

# ISRAEL CULTURE OF BEREAVEMENT

By Forest Rain, Israel

*Editor's Notes: I've had the privilege of friendship with Forest Rain for several years and follow her blogs. I wanted to share this one with my readers. Forest Rain is an American-born Israeli who lives in northern Israel. She's a marketing and branding expert and storyteller. Forest Rain gives voice to the stories of Israel illuminating its profound events, cherished values, and exemplary role models that transcend borders and make Israel an eternal wellspring of inspiration and strength for people around the world. She studied psychology and through her personal experiences has gained expertise in PTSD, trauma, and dealing with grief.*

*Read her writings at [www.inspirationfromzion.com](http://www.inspirationfromzion.com)*

The Israeli way to deal with bereavement is to find ways to do good for others, in the name of the deceased.

## **There are two ideas here:**

1. The belief that good deeds in the name of the departed elevates their soul in heaven. In other words, it is a way to continue helping the person you loved.
2. Doing good for the living in the name of the deceased means that the departed lives on in memory, staying connected and relevant to those living. Turning the personal tragedy into something positive that makes the community stronger is a way to make sure that we are not defeated by the negative (evil of murder by the enemy or tragedy of accident/disease)

The variety of projects undertaken in honor and memory of the deceased is astounding. This goes way beyond the name on the hospital ward built by a family, which you might have seen. Most people can't afford to build a hospital ward, but everyone can do something. In Israel, you will see "In loving memory of..."; on many hospital buildings and ambulances (what could be better than saving a life in honor of a life taken?) but there are also projects of all sizes, pretty much anything you can imagine:

- Everything from public gardens to benches on sidewalks dedicated to the deceased - so the living can enjoy beauty.
- Organizations to take care of everything you can think of: cancer awareness, organ donation, safety, education for children from broken homes, wheelchair donations, efforts to feed the needy, particularly on holidays.
- People have initiated good deeds days, asking others to do good in the name of their loved one.
- Sometimes projects are small but personal like giving home-baked cookies wrapped in a picture of their loved one and something wise they said... Who doesn't smile when they get a nice cookie?
- It is also common for people to donate a Torah scroll in honor of their loved ones. This has to do with religious belief but it is also a gift that enriches and adds cohesion to the community. This is very expensive, so it is common for people to crowdfund this and even strangers donate because the gift is understood and appreciated.



*This article is from the archives and updated in 2024.*

# THEIR STORIES LIVE ON LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

By Nan Zastrow

*I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge -*

*That myth is more potent than history.*

*I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts -*

*That hope always triumphs over experience -*

*That laughter is the only cure for grief.*

*And I believe that love is stronger than death.*

*– Robert Fulghum*

On a warm summer day, the neighborhood children asked if they could explore the wooded land behind our home. When they didn't return in about a half hour, my husband, Gary, got concerned and decided to look for them. He located them by the sound of excitement in their voices. They made a great discovery—candles, remains of a burned down hunting shack, a shoe, a soda can and more. As they accumulated the items in a pile, they talked about how “old” the things were. They decided the items “must have been there before there was electricity.” Gary let them weave their story and imagine the details of what might have been.

In reality, these items were all connected to our son, Chad. My husband could have interrupted the kid's fantasy and told them the real story of how the “boys” burned down the hunting shack when an unguarded candle fell on the floor while they partied around a campfire. The story behind these artifacts happened decades ago—but to the kids it could have been even longer! The discovery the kids made and the story they imagined brought back rich memories of a happier times when Chad enjoyed his own adventure. And such a memory was priceless!

I've often thought about the significance of all the stories I've told about Chad over the past years in the journal entries I wrote. And now I've added stories of my beloved husband, Gary who died. Gary was an adventurer and every day to him was an opportunity to make simple trips a two- or three-hour journey with vivid narration. We talked about the stories of our past and our plans for our future. Gary would say “We are sharing quality time,” and I wouldn't have changed that for the world!

I believe that stories are the greatest healing balm available for the bereaved soul. Stories give untold meaning to pain. Stories bear witness to frustration, fears, and triumph. Stories console the heart with memories of “better days”. Stories relive the experiences of “life” and gently reveal the lessons learned.

Telling the stories of life weaves the threads of memory that continues our bonds with our loved ones who died. When we tell our story after great life challenges, we begin to rewrite history. We turn our turbulent grief, our self-pity, our broken hearts, and our indecision into action. We take control over the events that consumed us and create a chapter of living beyond challenge.

Recalling the stories of Chad and Gary's lives are a continued testimony to me that "their lives mattered". Their stories are legacies of great joy. Their deaths challenged me and made me acutely aware that our paths are never certain. I am who I am today because of the role they played in my life. I am a reflection of my journey and a witness of their love. I encourage others to never stop telling the stories. There is a purpose for "telling your story" during and after your journey that creates healing. Many times, that means facing the pain, feeling the tragedy, and etching your scars with victory!

### **Telling the story makes it real**

Acceptance is a major hurdle that interrupts the momentum in healing grief. Sometimes a loved one's death seems unbelievable. We wish we could have just one more moment, one more year to say the things we wanted to say. Often the story of death challenges our belief system or overturns life assumptions such as "bad things don't happen to good people." Uncertainty kicks in and we wonder: "How will I survive? What purpose is there to living? Now what?"

### **Telling the story allows us to make sense out of the senseless.**

At times, I still have some trouble making sense out of what happened in both Chad's and Gary's deaths, but it has given me time to consider all the possibilities and accept how many things are out of my control. Accepting the reality of my own stories has made me more compassionate and understanding to others facing all kinds of life's tragedies. I don't have to entirely "walk in their shoes" to know their sorrow. I can follow in their shadow and absorb the incapacitation of their loss.

### **Telling the story and living with "why?"**

When we've been hurt by life it's normal and natural to want to know why. I once wrote, "I can live without the answer to "why" now. It doesn't matter anymore what occurred because I remind myself, I can't change a thing. My spirituality comforts me in the quiet moments by knowing my loved ones are okay. And my intuitive self whispers, "If I really knew "why" would it bring them back?"

### **Stories help us survive life's challenges**

My articles are stories of life and death. I want to believe that eventually the "good days" outweigh the "bad days." This is called "hope." We are aware that this may not have been the first nor will it be the last time we are challenged. And we learn that we can survive this too.

### **Telling your story is a witness to your growing spirituality.**

Moving through grief, our lives evolve. We are changed by our experiences. If we can see beyond the pain

and grasp the foundations of faith, our journey is cushioned with God's promises. I once wrote: "Chad has given me a valuable gift—the gift of Easter every day. Because I am a Christian, the Easter message has special significance to me. If you are a Christian, I respect that your faith in God offers you similar assurance. It is the assurance that there is "life after death." And such a hope guides my life's plan. I know that Chad and Gary dwell with our Heavenly Father who is fair and loving. I know that we will meet again someday. It is this Easter message that lives with me everyday and gives me purpose."

**Stories aren't meant to bring closure. Life goes on and so does your story.**

Once the story of your loved one's death is told, the story continues. Over the months and years that follow, we repeat our experiences to any interested listener. And the story never ends. Though our loved one's life has stopped in time, the stories are timeless. People look for a clue from us that we have found closure. What truly is "closure"? Is it a time when we no longer grieve? Is it a time when we quit telling the stories and stop saying our loved one's name? Others may assume that we have "accepted", found peace and have left our tragedies behind. The truth is: we never leave grief behind. We will never forget. Our loved one's influence remains. And our stories are nestled in our heart safe and secure in the knowledge that life and love are eternal.

**My story will go on.**

Mine is a story of love. Not just the love of a parent for a child or being in love with my soulmate and husband for over 55 years. It is also the pain of every loss of dream and I have many chapters yet to write. Mine is a story of survival when times are hard. I still savor comfort in words spoken, songs sung, and memories created. We all have a story. Every fiber of my being will remember and think about them. So, why not tell their stories?

If you are bereaved, gather your stories. Find opportunities to open your heart and let the memories pour out. Allow others into your lives to explore the memories and find joy in the traces of a beautiful life that once was. Chuckle over the good times. Say a silent prayer when painful memories surface. Rekindle joy by igniting the flame of faith, and hope. And believe that the stories of love are stronger than death.





# Be Good to Yourself SELF CARE TIP

## How to Rephrase "I'm sorry for your loss."

Say something less cliché such as?

- Acknowledge the ordeal they went through especially in sudden or traumatic death:  
I'm sorry this experience was so difficult for you.
- Share a memory: I remember when he/she (nothing like a personal story to make someone smile at a difficult time.
- A Memorable Trait: What I remember most about (him/her) was his smile

Here's another way to express "I'm sorry for your loss."

Instead of saying, "I know what it feels like.", let's say "I cannot imagine your heartbreak".

Instead of saying, "You're strong, you'll get through this.", let's say "You'll hurt, and I'll be here."


Instead of saying, "You look like you're doing well.", let's say, "How are you holding up today?"

Instead of saying, "Healing takes time.", let's say "Healing has no timeline."

Instead of saying, "Everything happens for a reason.", let's say "This must feel so terribly senseless right now."

And when there are no words to say at all, you don't need to try and find some. Love speaks in silences too.

Words by – Ullie Kaye Poetry



I will never say,  
"I know how you feel"  
Because I don't know.  
  
What I do know is that  
I will listen,  
if you'd like to tell me.



I've come to  
realize that  
nothing prepares  
us for losing  
someone we  
love...  
NOTHING.

# ASK ME...

## 30 Things I Want You to Know

Living Beyond Suicide – Helping Yourself or Helping a Friend  
By: Nan Zastrow



Suicide is often silent. It stalks its victim until it seems the only solution is to give in. Suicide involves two prominent factors, fear and the absence of hope. Nothing seems possible to change the course of the victim's path or future. Survivors are left wondering what went wrong and often the reason for the death is a mystery. Learning to live in our society as a survivor requires breaking the silence to live beyond its taboo. Every victim has a unique story that should be honored.

In 1993, Nan and Gary's son, Chad, suicided and ten weeks later his fiancé took her life, too. Nan admits she spent years hiding from their grief, absorbing every bit of damaging pain, swallowing hard-earned pride, admitting feelings of defeat, and finding excuses for what seemed "hard-to-believe." In time, Nan and Gary learned the silence had to stop, and they had the power to "teach" society how to respond to disabling loss.

All grievors want to be heard. The information in this book speaks not only to survivors of suicide, but to anyone who grieves, about the elements of grief and the depth of sadness. If you allow a griever to teach you about the uniqueness of his or her grief, you may learn so much more about the sanctity of life.

In this captivating book, Nan clearly describes the progression of survival and tells you 30 Things that every griever is likely to feel. With these revealing thoughts, you will be able to plan your response in positive ways to support them. As a griever, you will find comfort in knowing what to expect and be assured that peace and hope are the ultimate gifts of triumphing over burdensome grief.



Available at:

**Wings**  
A Grief Education Ministry

302 S. 56TH AVE,  
WAUSAU, WI 54401-3806

Web: [Wingsgrief.org](http://Wingsgrief.org)  
Email: [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com)  
[www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)

# Cook It... Freeze it... Or Eat it!



Meals for One...  
Or Two if you  
like leftovers.

*One of my biggest challenges since my husband died is making meals. I'm not a lover of leftovers, so that makes it even more difficult. In this new column to my ELetter, I'd like to share recipes and ideas from those in the same situation. Each month, we'll select one or two to share with the readers. (If this column goes over well, it will continue to be a regular feature that anyone can use whether you cook for one or a whole tribe.)*

For the next issue, please submit your recipe to [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com)

## SMALL BATCH MACARONI SALAD

### Ingredients:

- 4 ounces dry elbow macaroni (this is about 1 cup of dry macaroni)
  - ¼ cup mayonnaise
  - ¼ cup sour cream
  - 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
  - 1 tablespoon sweet relish
  - 1 teaspoon yellow mustard
  - 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
  - 1/8 teaspoon salt
  - 1/8 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
  - ¾ cup grated carrots (about 2 medium carrots)
- To easily grate carrots, use the large holes on a box grater or you can use a food processor.
- ¼ cup chopped red bell pepper (about ¼ of a medium red bell pepper)
  - ¼ cup chopped celery (approximately 1 small celery stalk)
  - 2 tablespoons chopped red onion

### Instructions

1. Cook the pasta in boiling water about 5-7 minutes. Drain and rinse under cool water. Then set aside.
2. Make the dressing. Combine mayonnaise, sour cream, vinegar, relish, mustard, parsley, salt and pepper in a bowl.
3. Combine pasta and dressings.
4. Prefer to chill for at least one hour before serving.



## TWICE BAKED POTATO CASSEROLE FOR ONE

### Prepare the Potato:

- Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C).
- Scrub the potato clean and rinse it under cool running water. Pat it dry.
- Prick the potato several times with a fork.
- Place the potato on a baking sheet and bake for 40 to 50 minutes, until it's completely soft when pierced with a fork.
- Let the potato cool on a wire rack.

### Prepare the Filling:

- Reduce the oven temperature to 375°F (190°C).
- Once the potato has cooled, cut it in half lengthwise and scoop out the inside into a medium-sized bowl. Using an electric mixer on low speed or a potato masher, mash the potato
- Mix in the melted butter, sour cream, milk, salt, pepper, and the egg until well combined.
- Fold in the bacon and a little more than half of the shredded cheese.

### Assemble the Casserole:

- Generously butter a 10-ounce ramekin and fill it with the seasoned potato mixture. Top with the remaining shredded cheese.
- Place the ramekin on a rimmed baking sheet to catch any spills.

### Bake the Casserole:

- Bake until the cheese has melted and the casserole is heated through, about 25 minutes.



Nurture yourself  
like you would  
anybody else going  
through something  
this hard.

# UNDERSTANDING GRIEF SEMINARS

In-Person | September 2024



**Ted Bowman** is a grief and family educator. He specializes in changes and transition. For over 40 years, he has been a frequent trainer, consultant, and speaker with many groups throughout Minnesota, the United States, and other countries. Ted was an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota (Family Education) 1981-2012; at the University of Saint Thomas (Social Work) 2006 until 2019; and 1989 to 1996 at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities.

Ted is the author of over 125 articles and chapters appearing in books, journals, newspapers, and magazines. His booklets, *Loss of Dreams: A Special Kind of Grief*, and *Finding Hope When Dreams Have Shattered* are widely used in grief care. He and Elizabeth Johnson co-edited *The Wind Blows, the Ice Breaks*, a volume of poems by MN poets addressing themes of loss and renewal. His newest book, *Ambiguous Parables: Poem and Prose of Loss and Renewal*, was published in November of 2021.

## SEMINAR ONE

### METAPHORIC WORDS FOR LIVING DYING, DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT

*A community seminar for clergy, hospice, funeral directors, caregivers, and families experiencing loss*

**Tuesday, September 17, 2024 | 10:00am–Noon**

Save a seat - register online. Pay at the door. \$40

Compassionate responses for difficult life endings require creative expression. Often metaphors are used: "My life was turned upside down; I will never be the same again; my days are like riding a roller coaster." While following metaphors appear to be a suitable approach, meeting people where they are, not where YOU think they should be, is much better. In this interactive session, following metaphors or clichés...even introducing metaphors...will be demonstrated, discussed, and practiced.

Three essential needs for grieving persons: 1) to find the words for loss; 2) to say the words aloud; and 3) to know the words were heard. The emphasis will be on aiding grieving persons find and express their thoughts and put them into words. Listening skills, following metaphors, and uses of bibliotherapy will be emphasized in this practical session that may change your approach to understanding and supporting the bereaved.

#### Objectives:

By the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to:

- \* Describe and practice following metaphors
- \* Prompt grieving stories through the use of stories, lyrics, poems, and aphorisms
- \* Redefine listening with grieving persons

## SEMINAR TWO

### GRIEF ENDINGS AND NEW BEGINNINGS: GIVING ATTENTION TO EACH AND BOTH

*A community seminar to understand grief*

**Tuesday, September 17, 2024 | 7:00–8:30pm**

*A community seminar to understand grief. Complimentary public seminar. Everyone welcome. No charge. Registration is not required.*

Through our lives we meet many changes carrying with them an ending that always leads to creating a new beginning. When the loss of a loved one is one of those intersections that disrupts our lives and necessitates change, we may struggle with the new labels we are given such as widow, grieving grandparent, or survivor. We are challenged by uncertainty. Plans, assumptions, long-held hopes and dreams may be shattered. In this session, we will explore the resiliency we acquire that can bring us through our evolving lives. The more we are aware of our losses and our gains, the more prepared we can be for the uncertainty of the future and our story of who we are becoming because of our loss.

#### Objectives:

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- \* Understand differences between either/or choices and both/and choices;
- \* Embrace the intersections of endings and beginnings;
- \* Distinguish differences between healing and curing.

**Both Seminars will be held at**  
Holiday Inn & Suites-Cedar Creek  
1000 Imperial Avenue, Rothschild WI

**For more information, contact:**  
Wings-a Grief Education Ministry  
Nan Zastrow 715.845..4159 or email [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com)

Presented by:



Partner Sponsor



Presented by Wings™ a Grief Education Ministry who partners with Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services to provide these seminars as a community service. Other major sponsors include Brainard Funeral Home, Helke Funeral Home, and Peterson/Kraemer Funeral Homes & Crematory. For a complete list of sponsors, visit [www.wingsgrief.org](http://www.wingsgrief.org)



# SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2024

*There is no charge for these groups. Registration is required for virtual groups to receive the link and for in-person groups to save a spot.*

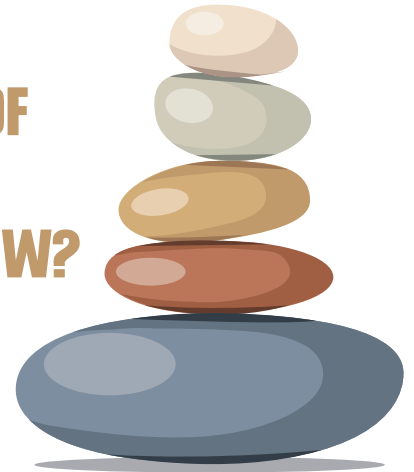
**Give Sorrow Words...  
Silence is Not Golden.**



**In-Person Group @ The Landing-YMCA**  
**Tuesdays: August 13, 20, 27 and Sept. 3, 10**  
**5:30—7:00 p.m.**  
**ZOOMGRIEF-VIRTUAL**  
**Thursdays Aug 15, 22, 29 and Sept 5, 12**  
**6:00—7:00 p.m. CST**

Grief is something you may consider private and personal, as though only you can own it. We live in a culture that avoids talking about loss and one that wants us to move quickly through mourning to become our former selves. But grief is a process that takes time and work. Silence is not golden. When you give sorrow words, you express how you are feeling and begin to release your personal anguish. You teach others about your grief. Grief that goes unnamed and unspoken, remains unresolved. Grief is an emotion that can rule your life if you don't give it the attention it demands. In this series, you will learn what's normal and what's necessary to heal your grief. This is a perfect group for those new to grief or for those who feel grief still is hanging on. Learn how grief challenges your common sense. Giving sorrow words after loss helps you find peace and meaning in your life going forward.

## FINDING THE OTHER SIDE OF SADNESS— WHO AM I NOW?



**OCTOBER—NOVEMBER**  
**(4-week program)**  
**Tuesdays: October 15, 22, 29,**  
**and November 5**  
**In-Person at The Landing**  
**from 5:30-7:00 pm**

Loss has significantly changed your life. This isn't something you chose. As painful as the process appears, you realize this unanticipated path requires you to redefine who you are so you "fit" into the next chapter of your life. There's another side of sadness and it's okay to walk forward at your own pace. It takes time and determination, but you get to make the choices. The first big step is deciding you aren't going to be bereaved forever. The greatest challenge in grief is discovering who you are now, after loss. The second greatest step is being happy with what you find. Take your memories with you. They belong to you forever. In this 4-week series you will learn what to expect as you heal. Through self-discovery, you may be surprised at the strength and compassion you still have to offer.

*Register online at [wingsgrief.org](http://wingsgrief.org) or email: [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com)*



Certified Grief Educator | Facilitator:  
Nan Zastrow  
[wingsgrief.org](http://wingsgrief.org)  
715.845.4159



**Thank you to our sponsors:**

Brainard Funeral Homes  
Helke Funeral Home  
Peterson Kraemer Funeral Homes