

Restoring Hope

S U I C I D E L O S S G R I E F S U P P O R T G R O U P
N E W S L E T T E R

SHARE YOUR HEALING JOURNEY

Please share your story with us for future editions. What are your favorite memories, tips, books, resources, or inspirational quotes?

Submit your contributions to ellen@iforhope.com.

Be aware that we will edit for space, clarity, and appropriateness.

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GRIEF AND THE HOLIDAYS

Holidays are especially challenging when we're grieving. Sometimes even a simple holiday greeting can feel like too much, as we wonder how anyone can feel "happy" or "merry" when we're so sad.

Whether you are up for trying to enjoy the holidays this year, or you're only just trying to endure them, it can help to manage your expectations.

Your holidays won't be the same if you're missing someone who was a major part of



your celebrations. That's just the way it is. You're going to feel sad at times you used to feel happy, and you're going to dread some things you used

to look forward to.

It can help to decide the minimal amount of celebrating you and your family require to feel like you've observed the holiday without overwhelming yourselves. Will a family meal be enough, or a religious observation, or a charitable donation? Start with the basics and add activities as you find the energy.

WHAT HAVE I GOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR?

Giving thanks is a difficult exercise when we're feeling overwhelmed by loss.

If you're not thankful for anything this year, that's okay.

Research shows us that gratitude has physical, mental, and emotional benefits. It might help you sleep better, feel better, or get along with someone better.

If you're up to it, look for something to be grateful for. Did anyone do the dishes, post something funny on social media, smile when you needed it? Say thanks!

TIPS FOR SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS



Keeping in mind that there is no right or wrong way to grieve, here are some of David Kessler's tips for getting through the holidays while honoring your grief.

- Do you think you'll want to participate in an activity this year, but you're not sure you can handle it? Have a Plan B. It's okay to go home early or excuse yourself.
- Create a ritual to remember your loved one as part of your holiday celebration.
- Allow yourself to express your feelings. Cry, talk, hug.
- Remember that your family or friends may have needs that are different than yours. You each have the right to decide what is right for you, and to change your mind.

WHAT IF AND IF ONLY

"Whatever you did or didn't do just before their death, you had done or hadn't done many times before."

Most of us who have lost a loved one to suicide spend at least some minutes or hours (or more) wondering if we could have done something differently to keep our loved one alive.

Adina Wroblewski reminds us, "Whatever you did or didn't do just before their death, you had done or hadn't done many times before. If

you were mad at them, you had been mad at them many times before when they hadn't killed themselves. If you were gone from home when they killed themselves, you had been gone from home endless times when they didn't kill themselves. If you failed to say "I love you" before they died, you need to remember

we don't go around expressing our love every minute of the day to those we love, and who we expect will be there."

"What-if" and "if-only" thinking may lead you to recognize that you probably did do all you reasonably could.

If you find something to forgive yourself for, please do.

HEALING JOURNEYS CONNECTIONS BY ELLEN PARÉ

When my father died, I began to notice songs playing on the radio or in restaurants, and often felt they were messages from my dad. While thinking about him I heard the songs “Dance with My Father,” “Firework” (I was born on the 4th of July), and “Father and Daughter.”

My husband was thinking about his deceased father when a loon landed in a pond across the way. It felt like a visit, and now he associates loons with his dad.

When my sister crochets she feels our grandma, who

taught her to crochet, sitting next to her. She feels our other grandma sitting across the room.

Is my family psychic? Do we have active imaginations? Or are we just searching for comfort in a world that can be awfully sad?

You know what? I don’t really care what the scientific truth is. Sometimes we feel connected to the person we lost, and that connection feels good.

Whether it comes from our heads or our hearts or directly from the person we’re grieving, it doesn’t really matter. Comfort is

comfort, and we all deserve some.

Now I feel moved to tell you that your loved one says “We’re still connected, and I love you.”



*connected to
the person we
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connection
feels good.”*

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Kevin’s Song, a local suicide prevention nonprofit, is holding its annual conference January 23-25, 2020 at the Inn at St. John’s in Plymouth.

The final day of the conference, Saturday, is

a Survivor Program, specially tailored to those who have lost someone to suicide. The cost for the Saturday program is \$50 (scholarships may be available if needed — call or text Ellen at 248-872-7772).

For more information about the full conference or the Survivor Program, go to kevinssong.org.



*Who can say
if I've been changed for the better?*

*But, because I knew you,
I have been changed for good.*

Stephen Schwartz

**UPCOMING
MEETINGS**

2nd Wednesday and
4th Tuesday of every month
7-9 pm

Wednesday, November 13

Tuesday, November 26

Wednesday, December 11

No meeting on December 24

FK Engineering Associates

30425 Stephenson Hwy

Madison Heights

248-872-7772 (call or text)

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Since 1990 we have helped people struggling with trauma, grief, depression, anxiety and those at risk for suicide. Our staff understands the importance of creating connection with each person while scanning for and addressing suicidal pain. In eliciting the story we illuminate patterns and origins of behaviors in order to both avert a crisis and inspire growth. We know that ultimately the person we are working with has answers to their life situation. By tuning in to their inner wisdom and encouraging expression of the authentic self, those solutions may be revealed. Discovering a sense of purpose through the revelation will result in feeling more self-accepting and confident.