

February 2021

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

Honoring the Past and
Rebuilding the Future

www.wingsgrief.org

Published by Nan Zastrow

Contents of this ELetter

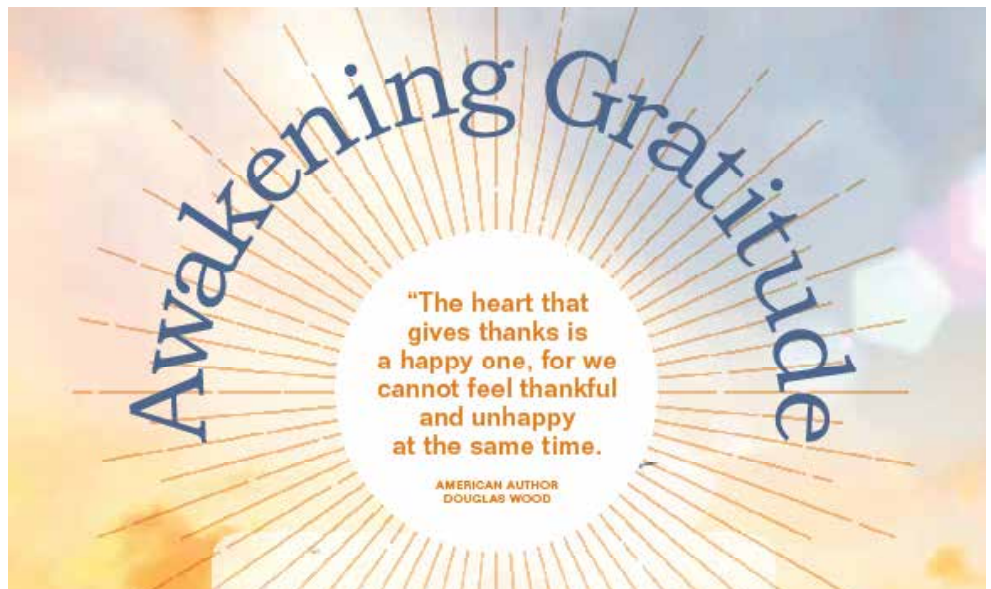
- Awakening Gratitude
- Guest Editor's Opinion
- Thoughts and Prayers
- This Too Shall Pass
- Zoom Grief Announcements
- Our Readers Send Their Thoughts
- Things to be Thankful for in a Pandemic
- What Do You Think - Reactions to the Pandemic
- Are You a Victim or a Survivor
- Self Care Tip
- Book Flyer

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 or subscribe (or unsubscribe) at wingsgrief.org. Articles and stories may be reproduced providing you include the Author, Source, and Permissions.

Awakening Gratitude

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.



Before COVID-19 changed our lives, my busy travel and teaching schedule had me hopping. Most mornings after I woke up, I went straight to work. I had a love-hate relationship with the adrenaline of stress and was a slave to emails, itineraries, deadlines and flight schedules. Now I'm in limbo. With most of my presentations postponed or canceled, I'm home. I have time to linger over my morning cup of coffee. I have time to breathe and to think. I have time to marvel at the sunrise.

More and more, what I've found myself thinking about is gratitude. I'm feeling so grateful for my life these days that I'm often awash in the warm fuzziness of apprecia-

tion. The feeling sneaks up on me when I'm having an inconsequential chat with my wife or puttering around in the kitchen. It blooms when I gaze out the window or think about my new grandson.

MY GRATITUDE INVENTORY

During this morning's sunrise, I sat down to give more thought to how this pandemic has created an opportunity to wake up to the power of gratitude. As I inventory my gratitude in this article, I invite you to do the same.

Continued on page 2

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Perhaps, like me, you've had more time to spend with your household members in recent months. I've been married to my wife for 35 years, but I've never spent as much time in close company with her as I have since March. Our forced captivity has given me a new appreciation for our relationship, and my unconditional love for her has only deepened. Because I can't spend as much time with nonhousehold family members and friends, on the other hand, when I do get to see them, I'm so thankful that my heart breaks wide open. My first grandchild was born just before COVID restrictions started, and I've only been able to visit him a handful of times. When I do get to hold him, boy, does it feel amazing.

BASIC ESSENTIALS

I have a warm, dry, safe place to live. I've never felt more fortunate to have a roof over my head and food in my refrigerator. The other day, I happened by a food bank drive-through. In a middle-class neighborhood, cars were lined up as far as the eye could see. All the extra "stuff" I have in my life doesn't matter in the least. I have the basics, and for that I am deeply grateful.

INTERDEPENDENCE

Here in America, we're infected by the "ideal" of rugged individualism. Coined by Herbert Hoover in 1928, this term encapsulated the misguided notion that individuals should be self-reliant and independent, not counting on others for support. These days, I look at the grocery store clerks, healthcare professionals, teachers and other essential workers with newfound appreciation. I'm not independent. I need them. My family needs them. I also need my neighbors and community members. Whenever I have the chance, I am kind and generous. And I am happy to wear a mask to help keep all of them safe.

VOCATION

I founded the Center for Loss and Life Transition decades ago to help people help others. I train grief caregivers. During the pandemic, I've been mourning not being able to conduct as many trainings or give live

Continued on page 6

GUEST EDITOR OPINION

Dear Readers,

During this past year of so many situations that caused us to think about our values, our country, our families, and ourselves, I believe we have all adjusted our priorities. I read this Publisher's Note in our local tabloid and couldn't resist reprinting it in Wings with the permission of the author.

Recently I was asked what has sustained me during this year of turmoil, upheaval—and for many—tragedy. My answer boils down to one word: Faith.

Through this long political season of conflict and controversy, I have had faith in our country. I believe in the vision of our Founders to "form a more perfect union" by creating a government flexible enough to adapt to the conditions of war, recession, depression and now lately a pandemic. Here we are intact today, 244 years after we declared our independence, having survived a pandemic and an extremely contentious political season. That's something special.

I have faith in my fellow human beings. Men and women all over the globe have been tested during this difficult year. Yes, there are horror stories of people acting badly, but there are many more stories of nobility, of men and women who faced the challenge and rose to meet it with their very best—the health care workers who showed up day after day to provide care for those stricken by the pandemic, and for all those whose "ordinary" illnesses suddenly carried a heightened risk; the police officers, fire fighters, and other emergency responders who continued to serve our communities day in and day out, again facing an increased risk every single day that the person they rescued or the criminal they arrested might be carrying a deadly virus; and the everyday heroism of retail and warehouse workers who kept all of us supplied.

Above all I have faith in God. I recognize the difficulty in reconciling an all-merciful Father with the daily suffering we see all around us; and yet I do believe that amidst the chaos there is a Divine Logic that one day we might understand and accept. There is an old saying that "God writes straight with crooked lines." We have seen a lot of crooked lines this year; someday I am certain we will see the true meaning that came of these seeming scribbles.

Like just about everyone, I'll be happy to say goodbye to 2020. But I have faith that 2021 will be better.

Patrick Wood
CEO Multi Media Channels
Publisher City Pages—Wausau Area
January 2021



EDITOR'S JOURNAL

NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

“THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS”...HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY?

An observation and opinion by Nan Zastrow

Published by Centering Corp in Grief Digest, Oct. 2020

I was recently asked what my feelings are about using the cliché “Our thoughts and prayers are with you.” We say it because it’s the right thing to say. Everyone accepts this condolence in good faith, right? I guess I never really thought about it before as I always considered it a respectable, comforting phrase that had a positive intention associated with it.

Yes, it is a cliché. And, yes, we’ve all heard it a hundred plus times. It’s a common closing comment used in media news after tragedy. Likewise, in our communities, public officials will repeat the well-known phrase after tragic events. And, of course, we’ve repeated it to family and friends facing loss or difficult times in their lives. Acknowledging that someone is suffering is an important human response that connects us and consoles us through adversity.

The word “Thoughts” typically indicates that you have paused to consider someone’s situation and recognize the uncertainty someone may be facing. It’s a word that shows concern and positive wishes for one’s well-being (death, illness, disaster etc.). The word “Prayers” represents a spiritual connection that suggests that you are praying on their behalf to God (or a higher power) to help the person in their time of need.

What I didn’t know was the negative backlash online that suggests that the phrase is hollow and insincere because it isn’t followed up with action. (usually politi-

cally motivated.) I was disappointed that somehow our society could turn something comforting into a subject for debate. Therefore, on the deeper side of my brain, I decided to consider how I really felt about the phrase.

It goes without saying that there are many clichés we repeat to the bereaved or those facing life crises that may cause someone to shutter. The phrase may be:

- Personally painful... (“He’s in a better place now.”);
- Lack good judgment... (You can have more children.);
- Test one’s progress in healing from their situation... (“How are you doing?”);
- And, challenge the strength of one’s faith... (“God wouldn’t give you more than you can handle.”)

Personally, I’m comforted by the words and trust that someone has empathy with my experience. Though they can’t change the situation; they wish for healing and peace in my future. In other words, I assume that many of those who repeat this phrase (to me) truly will follow through and say a prayer. At least, I know that is what I do when I say this or write this to someone.

Everyone will experience their own life-changing event at some time. However, expressing how you feel for someone else’s situation may be difficult to put into words. We can’t really relate to their situation as their story may be much deeper than we know on the surface.

Continued on page 4

February 2020 ELetter: Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

Honoring the Past and Rebuilding the Future

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Continued from page 3

Therefore, we rely on phrases that we believe convey a message of comfort and support. Though this cliché may be overused; in some cases, it means no disrespect. The phrase acknowledges, shows sympathy, and empathizes with someone during their difficult time. It remains an expression of sadness and hope that the person will recover from their situation—and is a verbal indication of moral support. Cliches have a role...and even when repeated a thousand times...we know exactly what is meant by them!

Prayer reminds us that “we wish things were different”. Thoughts and prayer are actions when we truly follow up, after saying such, that exemplifies our sincerity. I read online that “prayer is the idea of seeking help from outside of ourselves.” It’s a form of action by putting our trust in a higher power and through choice, gives us the opportunity to act and make a difference.

What kind of everyday action could you take? Action truly does show that you care and your words were sincere. There are simple ways to put action to work: a phone call as a follow-up to see how the person is doing or simply checking in with him or her at a later date. Write a note or send a card. Invite the individual to lunch where you can talk more intimately about their experience and perhaps find a way you can help them. Bring

them a meal. Mow their lawn. Shovel the snow. Give them a ride to an appointment. Simple actions speak volumes.

If you are using the phrase because you don’t know what else to say or because you feel it’s appropriate, “go for it.” Most bereaved would take no offense, nor do I think they would judge your sincerity with these words. I welcome those who say “thoughts and prayers” sincerely. I believe that as divine beings we do care about others and our intentions show a desire for support, healing and peace.



Wings[™]
A Grief Education Ministry

How to Connect with Wings:

- Email: nanwings1@gmail.com
- Postal: P.O. Box 1051, Wausau, WI 54402-1051
- Ph: 715.845.4159
- Follow the EVENTS calendar posted at the website wingsgrief.org
- Subscribe to the free online ELetter sent quarterly.
- Visit Wings on Facebook

February 2020 ELetter: Wings – A Grief Education Ministry
Honoring the Past and Rebuilding the Future

Are you a grief victim or A grief survivor?

*Being a victim is a state of mind dictated by others.
A survivor dictates their own state of mind.*

*A victim fears the moment of grief.
A survivor welcomes the moments.*

*A victim tries to hide the tears.
A survivor never leaves home without Kleenex.*

*A victim struggles to maintain a state of normalcy
A survivor knows normal no longer exists.*

*A victim gets caught in isolation.
A survivor reaches out when needed.*

*A victim is afraid, in time, others will forget.
A survivor knows that he never will.*

*A victim sometimes feels guilty laughing.
A survivor laughs through his tears.*

*A victim tries to block out memories.
A survivor embraces memories of all kinds.*

*A victim wants someone to cure their grief.
A survivor just wants someone to share their journey.*

*A victim struggles to get over grief.
A survivor fights to get through it.*

*A victim tries to get on with their life.
A survivor lives their life knowing
Nothing will ever be the same.*

*A victim says "Oh, I'm okay." Then secretly cries.
A survivor openly cries and says, "I'll be okay."*

(author unknown)

AWAKENING GRATITUDE

Continued from page 2

presentations to large groups. Webinars are just not the same. But still, being cut off from my life's work has made me even more humbled by the past opportunities I've had to reach and connect. It's something I won't take for granted again.

NATURE

I'm putting down my phone, turning off the TV and getting outside more. I live atop the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and while I've always been renewed by nature, I find myself engaging with it more deeply these days. My wife and I like to take our dogs and go for hikes. I've been going for more bike rides. What a gift it is to live on this marvelous planet.

THIS VERY MOMENT

I realize now that I used to be overly busy. I was better at doing than being. But now I'm appreciating every slow, unscheduled moment. Recently, my healthy 60-year-old brother-in-law spent 11 days in the ICU on a ventilator due to COVID-19. For a time, it was touch and go. Happily, he survived. Here in North America, we tend to go through life obliviously, with a high level of assumed invulnerability. Yet each of us is mortal, and living every day with

an intentional awareness that we might not wake up the next enriches every minute.

LEARNING TO SURRENDER

This pandemic has made me more aware than ever before that I have little control over the most important things in life. I can't keep my loved ones safe. I'm not in charge of the world. So, I'm learning to surrender to this lack of control and find gratitude wherever I can.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

When we consciously value something, we're grateful for it. We actively cherish it. I've awakened to gratitude for these most precious values in my life. How about you? Will you use the reset created by the pandemic to inventory your gratitude? Will you adjust your habits and daily routines so they're more in alignment with your deepest values? The sun is fully up now. It's shining on a brilliant new day. And I am so grateful to be here.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt is recognized as one of North America's leading death educators and grief counselors. His books on grief for both caregivers and grieving people have sold more than a million copies worldwide and are translated into many languages. He is founder and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition and a longtime consultant to funeral service. He can be reached at 970-217-7069, drwolfelt@centerforloss.com or centerforloss.com.

On the Lighter Side



February 2020 ELetter: Wings - A Grief Education Ministry
Honoring the Past and Rebuilding the Future

This too shall pass.

From the Internet. Author unknown.

One day Solomon decided to humble Benaiah ben Yehoyada, his most trusted minister. He said to him, "Benaiah, there is a certain ring that I want you to bring to me. I wish to wear it for the Sukkot festival, which gives you six months to find it."

"If it exists anywhere on earth, your majesty," replied Benaiah, "I will find it and bring it to you, but what makes the ring so special?"

"It has special powers," answered the king. "If a happy man looks at it, he becomes sad, and if a sad man looks at it, he becomes happy." Solomon knew that no such ring existed in the world, but he wished to give his minister some added humility.

Spring passed and then summer, and still Benaiah had no idea where he could find the ring. On the day before Sukkot, he decided to take a walk in one of the poorest quarters of Jerusalem. He passed by a merchant

who had begun to set out the day's wares on a shabby carpet. "Have you by any chance heard of a special ring that makes the happy wearer forget his joy and the broken-hearted wearer forget his sorrows?" asked Benaiah.

He watched the elderly man take a plain gold ring from his carpet and engrave something on it. When Benaiah read the words on the ring, his face broke out in a wide smile.

That night the entire city welcomed in the holiday of Sukkot with great festivity. "Well, my friend," said King Solomon, "have you found what I sent you after?" All the ministers laughed and Solomon himself smiled.

To everyone's surprise, Benaiah held up a small gold ring and declared, "Here it is, your majesty!" As soon as Solomon read the inscription, the smile vanished from his face. The jeweler had written three Hebrew letters on the gold band: Gimel, Zayin, Yud, which begin the words "Gam zeh ya'avur - This too shall pass."

At that moment Solomon realized that all his wisdom and fabulous wealth and tremendous power were but fleeting things, for one day he would be nothing but dust.



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. I hope you enjoy this new series. —TVB

ZACHARY TAYLOR

the twelfth President of the United States of America

In 1850, Independence Day marked the dedication day for the unfinished Washington Monument. Sixty-five-year-old Zachary Taylor, the current President of the United States, sat in the blistering hot sun, listening patiently to one speech after another. At long last, the endless political commentary finished and a very tired Zachary Taylor returned to the White House. He ate a bowl of cherries and drank a large pitcher of iced milk. During the night Taylor developed severe cramps, but no physician was called.

From July 5th to July 9th, President Taylor continued to decline. Physicians were engaged, but there was nothing that they could do except give him quinine and calomel, which was a purgative. On top of these problems, Taylor could not sleep.

On Tuesday, July 9th, Taylor's condition was so dangerous that he was coughing up green bile and his pulse was fading. As night arrived, Taylor knew that he was dying and uttered his last words: "I am prepared to meet my death. I have endeavored to do my duty. I am sorry to leave my friends."

Zachary Taylor, the hero of the Mexican War and the 12th President of the United States, died at 10:35 PM on Friday July 9th, 1850. He had lived 65 years and 227 days.

Late on Tuesday night, a White House messenger was sent to notify undertaker Samuel Kirby to come to the White House immediately. Kirby was a cabinet, sofa, and chair manufacturer, which included undertaking services.

Mrs. Taylor decided to forbid any embalming, and therefore, Taylor's remains were preserved in ice and were kept in this condition until they were placed in a Fisk Metallic Burial Case. On Friday, the casket was delivered to the White House. As a career military man, it was unusual that he was not dressed in his uniform, but instead was dressed in a white satin shroud which was distinguished by a white cravat and large bow tie.

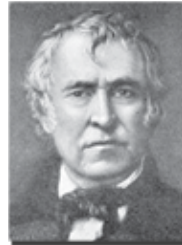
The casket was made of two cases. The outside case was solid mahogany and was covered in rich, black broadcloth. The inside casket was a Fisk Metallic Burial Case, which was very popular during this period. This Fisk was made entirely of lead and cost \$500.00. The body could be viewed through a thick glass-pane window.

At 9:00 AM on Sunday, the doors of the White House opened and thousands of people came to view the President's remains and attend his funeral. The funeral began with a private family prayer at 11:30 AM. The clergy then preached on the sterling character of General Taylor, and by 12:30 PM, the services were over.

Once again, the remains of a dead president would be temporarily deposited in the receiving vault at the Congressional Cemetery. President Taylor would be interred in the Taylor Family Cemetery, which was located in Louisville, Kentucky. A long, involved trip would be required to get the President home. Taylor's remains were kept in the receiving vault at the Congressional Cemetery until late October, 1850.

At 6:00 AM on October 22nd, the remains of Zachary Taylor left Washington by the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad. The funeral train passed through York, Pennsylvania and followed the east bank of the Susquehanna River to Harrisburg. On the 28th, the funeral train arrived in Pittsburgh, where undertaker William Alexander had created an impressive funeral coach for the mourning ceremonies.

At 1:30 PM, the remains of the President were placed on



The caption reads: **Grand Funeral Pageant at New York, July 23, 1850 in honor of the memory of Major General Zachary Taylor, 12th President of the United States.**

the steamer "Navigator," which would take the body down the Ohio River to Cincinnati on the way to Louisville. The steamer arrived in Cincinnati on the 31st, where no recognition of any kind was made that a deceased president was in the city's midst. A newspaper wrote of the insult: "No crowd is seen, not even a salute announces his approach. What is the reason for this indifference? We pause for a reply."

On November 1st, the steamer reached Louisville and the President's remains were placed in a family vault. Taylor would remain in this vault for 75 years. In 1926, the government provided funding for a new mausoleum, and both President and Mrs. Taylor were re-interred in this new monument.

In 1991, an author from Florida concocted the idea that Taylor had been poisoned, which would have made him the first assassinated President – not Lincoln. Unbelievably this author was successful in getting the president's remains taken out of the mausoleum. On June 17th, the Medical Examiner tested the remains for arsenic poisoning. Ten days later, the result came back that Zachary Taylor had not been poisoned.

Today President and Mrs. Taylor rest undisturbed in their beautiful mausoleum.

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 JANUARY 2021

©2021 Nomis Publications, Inc.

Holding Onto Hope When Loss Hurts

Finding a reason to shine!

“We must be willing to let go of the life we planned, so we can accept the life that is waiting for us.” (Joseph Campbell)

When the darkest moment in life changes everything you know to be true, it doesn't mean that your divine spirit can't be revitalized. After the suicide death of her son, Chad and his fiancé just 10 weeks later, Nan found that she was desperately searching for new meaning and purpose. Accepting that “this is real” and holding on to the belief that “I can do this!” begins the process of re-engaging in life again.

Nan vowed to live the best life possible under the circumstances and honor the precious memories of her son. She believes that everyone transforms through grief and moves onto to another stage, just as our loved ones who died move onto a new stage. They still live within us and influence our future choices and who we become after loss. Every dark cloud can have a silver lining of hope strengthened by not giving up or giving in. Nan offers her readers significant suggestions for healing after loss. This book is a testimony that the sun will shine again!

“Nan's writing is always fantastic. She shares her knowledge and experience in terms that everyone can relate to and understand. She has an amazing knack of putting feelings of pain and loss into hopeful thoughts. I highly recommend everything she writes.”

- Bunny, Florida



NAN ZASTROW

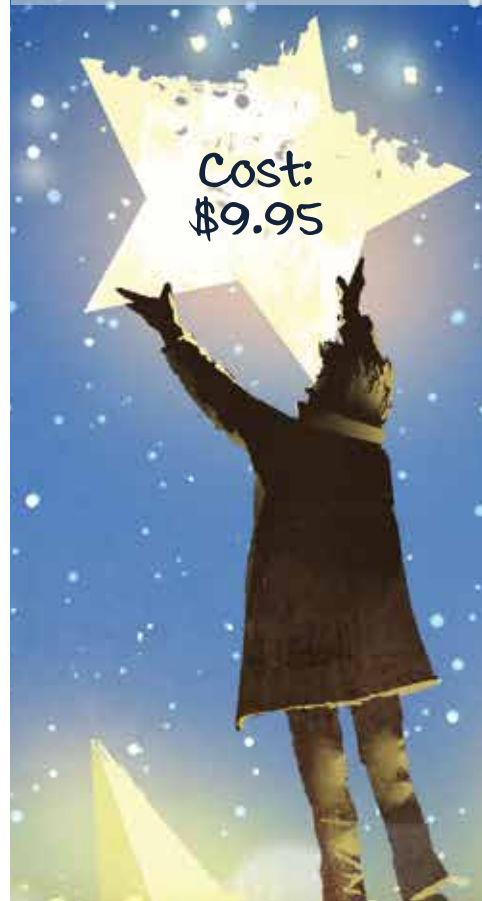
Available at:

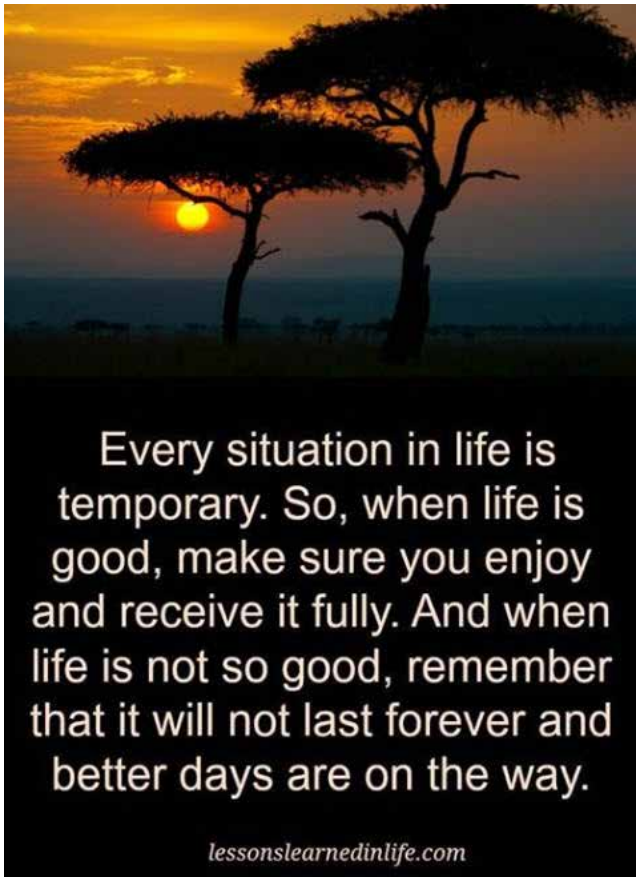
Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

P.O. Box 1051
Wausau, WI 54402-1051

Web: Wingsgrief.org
Email: nanwings1@gmail.com
www.centering.org

Cost:
\$9.95





Every situation in life is temporary. So, when life is good, make sure you enjoy and receive it fully. And when life is not so good, remember that it will not last forever and better days are on the way.

lessonslearnedinlife.com



Know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love.

Len Bouscaglia

Out of the Ashes/TB

Things to be Thankful for in a Pandemic

The pandemic isn't over yet. Every day is a new day and an opportunity to be thankful for the positive things you experience during this difficult time. Here is a short list of ideas to motivate you to look for hope in the future.

1. Being able to see a beautiful sunrise or sunset
2. My sustained health
3. Time to bond with my family while we are in quarantine
4. Family that checks in
5. Things that make me laugh
6. Friends who continue to connect
7. Challenge that makes me learn something new
8. My home
9. Food on my table or refrigerator
10. A job while others may have lost theirs
11. Appreciation for essential workers who are taking the risks for me
12. Fewer appointments or scheduled activities that keep me going outside my home
13. Pleasant weather that encourages me to get out and enjoy nature
14. Watching the birds from my windows
15. Time to tackle cleaning closets and drawers
16. Time for home improvement projects from my "To Do List"
17. Neighbors helping out when I need something
18. My pets as companions
19. Virtual church services when I can't attend in-person
20. Virtual concerts and other entertainment
21. Restoring connections with friends I haven't seen in years
22. The opportunity to slow down
23. Virtual or social distancing celebrations
24. Time to reflect on my career, goals, and life purpose
25. Hope in the new vaccine

What are you thankful for?

Be Good to Yourself

SELF CARE TIP

Entering a New Year without Your Loved One

For the bereaved the thought of a New Year and 12 challenging months ahead can be daunting. It often causes greater sadness and loneliness knowing we are leaving our loved one behind in the past. Give yourself a mental rest from all the activities and emotions you experienced over the holidays. Your senses may still be reeling from the fact that life has changed so drastically.

The New Year presents the opportunity for living in the present, one day at a time. It can also be the catalyst to acknowledge that you need to find something practical, new, or adventurous to occupy your time as you adjust to differences in your daily schedule. Seek support from groups and other learning experiences that teach you how to move forward after loss.

Open the door to the New Year with caution, but also with optimism that your path can help you discover renewed purpose, meaning and joy without forgetting the rich blessings and gifts your loved one gave you in his or her life.

Some people may not understand why those grieving are reluctant to move into a new year. For them they see a fresh year, a new season...but for the bereaved it's moving into a new calendar year, which their loved one will never live in.

– Zoe Clark-Coates

ZOOMGrief Continues to Deliver Hope

Grief changes lives. And, so did COVID-19. The Pandemic has changed the way people work, socialize, shop, dine at restaurants, and almost every other facet of life. Doesn't that resemble the way "Grief" affects someone after the loss of a significant loved one?

Pandemic-mania struck home with Wings-a Grief Education Ministry when we had to cancel education/support groups and live seminars. For over twenty years, Wings has provided these events in the community, and suddenly our schedules of events was literally erased from the public awareness. WE were dealing with our own new grief that seems surreal.

But we have bounced back and joined the Virtual Communication world until (and perhaps even after) the "all clear" is released by health experts. Our safer-at-home programs will continue with the high quality information, support, and education indicative of our "live" programs through the Zoom application.

ZOOMGRIEF will be our standard for offering programs to those who want to continue to heal and learn. Watch for announcements from ZOOMGRIEF. If you know that you are particularly interested in joining any, please sign up for the ZOOMGRIEF ALERT LIST by emailing your name to nanwings1@gmail.com. You will receive all current notices for programs. Information will also be available at the Wings Facebook page and our website. www.wingsgrief.org

Thank you to all of our community sponsors, friends, and followers over the past 25+ years who continue to support us through these changing times.



Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

Helping you heal grief through:
Inspiration • Articles • Shared posts

<https://www.facebook.com/zastrownan>

Become a WINGS™ friend on Facebook.

Reader Feedback



What do you think?

The Pandemic changed our lives. Our losses were counted in family and friends as well as the great loss of normalcy in our lives. Everything changed like going to a job; socializing with friends; taking vacations; working out at the gym, being an essential worker at risk every day...and many others. It's easy to think about the things we gave up whether willingly or not. It's also important to remember the positive outcomes of living through a pandemic.

What positive outcome of the pandemic do you want to remember 2020 for? What did you accomplish that you may not have if you weren't put in a quarantine situation? What are you grateful for? Who was it in your life that played an important role in keeping your positive?

I found there to be many positives from the pandemic.

- Families spent more time together
- Families ate homemade meals instead of so many meals on the run
- Extra-curriculars were removed taking away all the busy-ness in our lives
- Family game nights and/or movie nights were resurrected
- People were doing more outside activities, walking in the woods, fishing, playing outside, taking in the wonders of God
- Prayer!! People turned back to God and realized He is their center and they focused on things that were important

I was able to start to "declutter" my house and organize pictures into photo albums.

I was home more, cooking and baking more and just enjoying my time at home. I'm so grateful for my faith. Throughout this pandemic and the craziness in politics I never felt scared or nervous because I know that God is in control and if we put our trust in Him we can get through anything. I'm grateful for my family and the fact that even if we cannot be together we can connect via Google meet or Facetime.

I'm grateful for my St. Mary's School family and I am grateful that my husband and I both have jobs and that our children all have stable jobs and that our grandchildren were able to successfully attend school virtually. God and prayer are the most important positive factors that keep me positive. I also have a

very positive family and work environment.

Suzie - Marathon, WI

This is so encouraging as we all need to focus on the positives in our lives! A positive outcome for me is highlighted by examining what I am thankful for each and every day. It's the simple things like being able to shop for nutritional foods, exercising outdoors, like walks, biking, snowshoeing. Indoors I subscribed to Yes You Can Fitness online. I'm getting good sleep, and volunteering at St. Vincents in shoes. We call friends/family on the phone or zoom/google duo/FaceTime. These are only a fraction of the positives! Even if we cannot travel, we sure are saving money for a time when we CAN! I am grateful for the simple things in life we all take for granted! I think we all need

to dig deep within and use our faith in God to get us through each day!

Sue - Wausau, WI

While going through all these months of COVID, I think the most important thing I learned was to be very intentional about things I think, say and do. When we first were restricted I just stayed home most of the time. But once I had to reenter society and saw how much things had changed, while I was hibernating; I realized that I had to pay more attention and understand how important every interaction really was. Relationships with friends were put to the test. Not everyone I'd thought to be a friend, wanted to talk, or do things we always did. I reevaluated many things I'd taken for granted. I also learned

Continued on page 12

READER FEEDBACK – WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Continued from page 11

the importance of using the phone to call people, not something that comes naturally to me. But I soon learned that receiving a call is as important as sending a card or a visit. I found that there were many people that wanted and needed interaction with others.

I also found out that I wasn't as solitary as I'd always thought I was. I learned to listen a lot longer before expressing an opinion. I learned that almost everyone has a very definite opinion, and everyone needs the courtesy of being listened to. Along the way, most importantly I also learned to value each day a great deal more than I had before.

Anonymous

Nanci

COVID has given me the gift of time. I've slowed way down, I've connected with old friends out of sheer boredom! I've read lots of books, and I'm remembering my dreams, which means I was probably sleep deprived prior. Trying to focus on the good!

GINNY - Atlanta, GA

I'm grateful for my health every day, and that I didn't get sick with this virus. I hope I don't! I'm very grateful my sister pulled through. She contacted the virus, but made it through ok. I would say my boyfriend has been very positive through all this and even with my mom passing. It's been a very difficult year. One thing that I am working on right now, that I always wanted to do

since I had cancer, is expand on my skin care education. I am studying oncology aesthetics. When it's safe to go back to work, I would like to work with cancer patients. I never had the time to do it before so I'm taking advantage of it now. I've had a lot of challenges like many other people and I count my blessings that I am still alive. I've had to fight for my life twice, and didn't think I was going to make it because of life-threatening illness.

Patricia - Coatesville, PA

For me, personally; I want to remember how important it is to live in the present moment, in the now, and how that touches all aspects of our lives. To think on those "happy moments" that occurred, no matter how big or how small. From a broader perspective, I want to remember our selfless healthcare workers and the resiliency of humanity. And how technology helped us stay connected when there was no other way.

As for accomplishments: I took the time to make more connections with others as I reached out to some family and friends with phone calls or hand-written notes that I had not been doing before the pandemic. I started playing piano, although it's still a work-in-progress...

I'm grateful for many things! Grateful for my faith in an ever-present God, a personal God who never leaves us. The joy of a child's laughter, family and friends and many of those little things in life. Most recently, the beautiful frost that has covered our environment with

its white icy crystal beauty. Reminding me of God's handiwork around us and it made me smile.

Many family and friends played an important role for me, but my son has truly helped in keeping me positive. His Dad died when he was 17 years old; he is now 38. As I watched him grow to adulthood, he has many of the qualities and characteristics of his Dad. One of those enduring qualities is empathy and the ability to listen and share thoughtful, good advice that's rational, caring and helpful.

Diane - Weston, WI

The pandemic brought my family closer, made me slow down and notice the little things.

Ann - Wausau, WI

Throughout the past year we've all lost some normalcy. Yet, there were positive things that resulted during this pandemic we are living through. We learned not to let fear keep us from being happy and having a purpose each day. We learned what is truly important; that being "relationships". How grateful we are for our faith in a God who is much bigger than this pandemic.

Here is one situation we had while living through a pandemic. Something we accomplished that we may not have done in normal times, because it required an enormous amount of time and patience.

Continued on page 13

READER FEEDBACK – WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Continued from page 12

My husband and I had put off a project for quite some time. If it weren't for our "stay at home" time perhaps it would still be put off. We spent over two months (last April and May) converting VHS and 8mm tapes to DVDs. While doing this, we watched the actions and heard the voices of our loved ones, even from forty years ago. Some of whom have passed away. My... how we cherish those memories. Like reliving many parts of our lives. Tom completed 60 DVDs and such a meaningful task. After we made copies of the DVDs we mailed them to our family and friends. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHED. There is good that can come out of every situation.

Also, My husband enjoys playing the piano and usually I am the audience of "one" who listens to his songs. He typically serenades me about 7:00 in the evening. Well, during this pandemic I opened our front doors and sure enough all the people walking their dogs stopped to hear him play the piano. Now there is a regular audience of admirers who time their dog walking activity around Tom's concerts. He is not taking requests yet.

Karen - Venice, FL

The pandemic brought our attention to what really is important in our lives. We all missed the human connection. It also brought a lot more virtual opportunities to us. I finished writing my book.....just about. My family has remained healthy, even in spite of several members getting

COVID. I put my faith in God and decided not to live in fear.

Cindy - Bonita Springs, FL

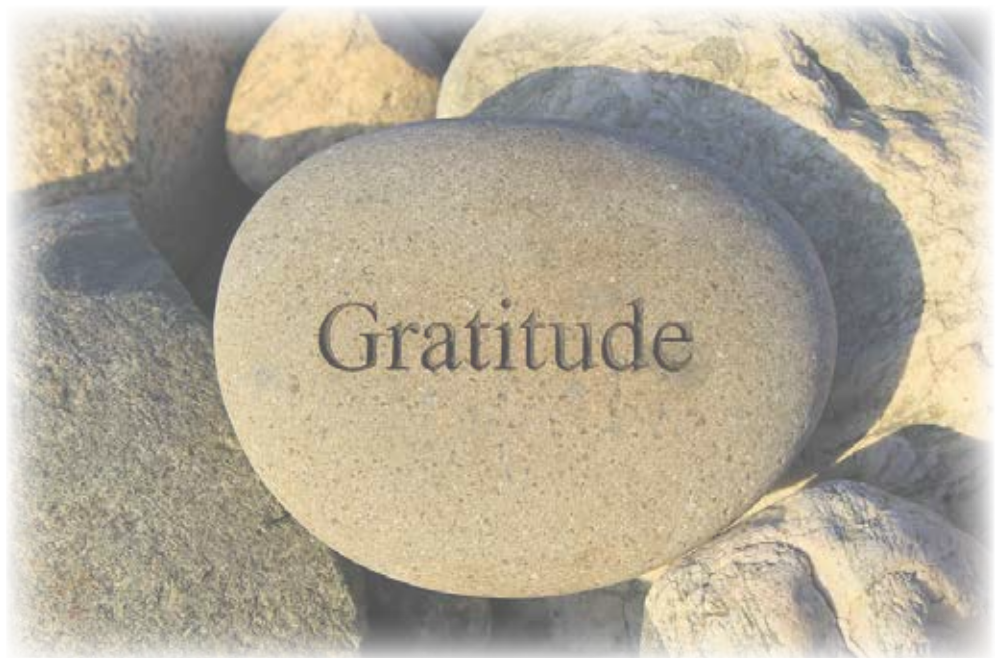
We are thankful to have each other through this challenging time, all the togetherness has been a plus (most of the time!) and its comforting. Like many, we have tried to reach out to friends old and new and reconnect, maybe send a special card, as Nan suggested in her Christmas Zoom meeting. A few craft projects and taking longer walks is energizing. Going to church is important to me/us but so many do not wear or they remove their masks, making that difficult.

Gale - Schofield, WI

Throughout this pandemic, I have had the opportunity to look inward and focus on my wellbeing on a daily basis. Social distancing has given me the time I otherwise wouldn't have had to slow down and work through difficult aspects of my grief. In 2020 I had more time and energy to do yoga every day, which has always been a positive outlet for me. I'm grateful for my resiliency and optimism even in the midst of the most uncertain of times. My family has been supportive and has helped me to realize that I'm not alone in my fears and uncertainty about the future.

Rebecca - Wausau, WI

“Gratitude turns what we have into enough.”





THE OTHER SIDE OF GRIEF—YOUR NEW REALITY

You now live in a new reality after loss. This is not something you chose. However, you realize that there comes a point when you must balance life in your new reality to let go of grief and move forward. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting. In this 4-week series, you will understand why the secret to moving forward is not about escaping the sorrow of grief; but, it's about finding how to build the courage to live your life differently.

In this ZOOMGRIEF virtual group, you will be challenged to imagine and initiate a new path; design your new identity; and rely on your core values to validate: "Who Am I Now?" To live a fulfilling life again, you must be willing to accept this new chapter and grow from your experience.

This interactive series is designed for participants who are ready to discover their authentic self, challenge their fears, make forward choices, and become a seasoned griever gracefully.

SUICIDE: HOW TO STOP THE SILENCE

Breaking the silence about suicide, Nan continues to expose her feelings and experiences with this unspeakable taboo. She will share the common reactions that families face and what it feels like to be a "survivor of suicide".

This presentation will help you know how you can "break the silence". Suicide is a beast—not to be feared, but rather to be explored. Learn about 18 ways to live and thrive in a society that still doesn't understand. Some time for questions and sharing will be included.

Based on personal experience, Nan shares and speaks frankly, not with bitterness or despair, but with a desire to share what she and her husband, Gary, have learned and offer hope to family and friends of those who died too soon.

April 13, 2021
6:00—7:00 p.m. CST

May 4, 11, 18 & 25, 2021
6:00—7:00 p.m. CST

Registration is required.

Register online at wingsgrief.org or email: nanwings1@gmail.com



Sponsored by Aspirus



Facilitator: Nan Zastrow



wingsgrief.org | 715.845.4159