

February 2022

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

Honoring the Past and
Rebuilding the Future

www.wingsgrief.org

Published by Nan Zastrow

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28 Ways to Remember a Loved One on Valentine's Day

By *Chris Raymond*

For those grieving the death of a loved one, the holidays generally prove difficult, but Valentine's Day can feel particularly cruel because of its emphasis on togetherness, love, romance, possibilities, the future, etc. Moreover, given its significant marketing these days, as well as merchandise prominently displayed in stores of all types, it is practically impossible to avoid reminders that the "couple's holiday" approaches. This article offers 28 ideas – one for each day in February – to help you honor and remember your deceased loved one on and around Valentine's Day and offer you a little peace.

- Write a love letter, note or poem to your beloved, attach it to a helium-filled balloon, release it outside and watch it drift away until lost from view. (This generally proves more cathartic than you might initially think.)
- Visit your loved one's gravesite, share your feelings with him or her and leave a Valentine's Day card, flower or other memento.
- Create a "memory chain" by writing your favorite Valentine's Day and/or romantic memories, your present feelings and/or adjectives that reflect the deceased's special

qualities onto long, narrow strips of red, pink and white paper (about 8" long by 1" high). Form interlinking loops with each piece to form a chain you can use to frame a doorway, hang across a wall or fireplace mantle, etc.

- On Valentine's Day, make it your mission to help someone else feel special by surprising him or her with a card, a flower or a small box of candy or chocolates, such as the person who delivers your mail or newspaper, a neighbor, the kid who cuts your lawn in the summer, your barber or stylist, etc.
- Purchase and light a special candle or small electric lamp to signify your loved one's continual presence in your heart and mind during the holiday.
- Participate in a local walk/run that raises funds to support a cause your loved one would champion, or to help find a cure for the illness/disease from which he or she died. Exercise offers numerous benefits for reducing the stress caused by grief.
- Invite family members, friends and others who knew and miss your beloved over for a Valentine's meal featuring his or her favorite dish(es) and beverage(s), such as

28 WAYS TO REMEMBER...CONTINUED

wine, tea, beer, coffee, etc. As you serve each item, share with your guests why he or she loved each offering, or your favorite memories involving this fare.

- Create a memory board and display it in your home.
- Make a point to get outdoors and exercise (particularly after indulging in Valentine's candy or chocolates!) by simply walking for 30 minutes in a place you associate with your beloved, such as a local park, a shopping mall, etc.
- Make a Valentine's Day memorial wreath for your front door or above the hearth by adding ornaments, decorations and/or photographs of your beloved to a real/artificial heart-shaped wreath.
- Bake or buy a special Valentine's Day treat, such as a cake or cupcakes, and share it with your office coworkers in memory of your loved one.
- Make a special Valentine's Day ornament or decoration using items from around your house, or purchased from a craft store, and then hang it in a place of honor in your home, from your car's rearview mirror, etc.



- Purchase a Valentine's card and/or gift that your loved one might have selected for you and give it to yourself in his or her memory on February 14. If that idea feels odd to you, then consider doing something "just for you" on or around the Valentine's Day holiday that might provide you with a little peace, happiness and even joy, such as going out for dinner, visiting a spa, seeing a movie or connecting with family or friends.

- Whether on your computer or using pen and paper, journal about your favorite Valentine's Day and/or romantic memories involving your beloved – and consider adding new entries each year thereafter.
- Ask your family members and friends to contribute a memento, favorite photograph, card or personal note to a Valentine's Day "memory table" you set up in your home in your loved one's honor. Afterward, you could also use these items to create a permanent memory box or scrapbook.
- Make a financial contribution to a cause your beloved would champion, whether in his or her name, or anonymously.
- If weather and the season permit, plant a tree, shrub or rose bush in honor and memory of your beloved to serve as a living reminder of the love you carry in your heart during Valentine's Day, and all yearlong, despite your loss.
- Watch your loved one's favorite movie or (if you feel up to it) the first movie you saw together, whether by yourself or with other family members and friends.

- Purchase a Valentine's Day gift with your beloved in mind, wrap it and give the present to someone less fortunate in memory of your loved one.

- Create a special Valentine's memorial gift for family members, friends and others who knew your beloved. Gift ideas include personalized silicone wristbands, memorial window decals, framed photos, memorial garden stones, handcrafted items, etc.

- If the weather and season permit, visit the cemetery or memorial park in which your beloved rests and spruce up his or her gravesite by removing old leaves, flowers, twigs/branches and other detritus.

You might also clean his or her tombstone, gravemarker or memorial using these basic DIY headstone cleaning tips.

- Create a tribute video using software that incorporates your favorite photographs and/or existing video of your beloved, set it to music and share it with your family members and friends.

28 WAYS TO REMEMBER...CONTINUED

- Volunteer your time to help a local service organization or your place of worship fulfill its mission of helping others – especially if your time benefits widows, widowers, “shut-ins,” children coping with the loss of one or both parents, or anyone who might otherwise feel alone during the Valentine’s holiday.
- Take a road trip and spend Valentine’s Day in your beloved’s favorite location, attending his or her favorite sporting or recreational event, or doing anything the two of you enjoyed doing together.
- Light a virtual Valentine’s Day memorial candle in memory of your loved one online. You do not need to create an account or provide any personal information, so you have the option to create this virtual memorial anonymously or share it with anyone you choose.



- During a meal with family members and friends on Valentine’s Day, make a special toast in your loved one’s memory and/or ask everyone at the table to share their favorite memory of the deceased.
- Create a “memory capsule” by placing significant reminders of your beloved – such as cards, letters, photographs, souvenirs and other mementoes – in a sturdy container and burying it in the ground. Hold a small ceremony, if you wish, to honor the occasion after deciding upon a future “do not open until” date.
- Finally, simply accept that whatever you’re feeling on or around Valentine’s Day is perfectly valid and you should not fight it or pretend your grief is not real. If you feel sad and want to cry, then do so. If you wish to be alone with your thoughts, or in the company of others purely to distract you from your thoughts, then do so.

Like our fingerprints, the manner in which each of us mourns the death of someone we love is unique and doesn’t follow a timetable, pattern or defined stages. Therefore, the best thing you can do right now is listen to your heart, mind and body as you travel your individual grief journey and do whatever you need to do to survive Valentine’s Day and the days, weeks and months ahead.

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How to Connect with Wings:

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- Visit Wings on Facebook

- Follow the EVENTS calendar posted at the website wingsgrief.org
- Subscribe to the free online ELetter sent quarterly.
- Visit centeringcorp.com for grief articles and resources. Follow Nan’s articles published by Grief Digest.



EDITOR'S JOURNAL

NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

BEGINNING A NEW YEAR WITH INTENTION

“An optimist stays up until midnight to see the NEW YEAR in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.” (Billy Vaughn)

There likely was a great majority of us who greeted 2022 with the pessimist attitude. After living through COVID for a couple of years, one of our greatest wishes is that in 2022 we see the end of this pandemic and can return to a sense of normal that engages us in social activity again.



A few weeks ago, I completed our ZOOMGRIEF class on How to Begin a New Year with Hope. The focus I presented was on INTENTIONS, not resolutions. When we have “intentions”, it means we want to do or plan to do things without committing to strict measurable outcomes, sometimes unrealistic. Intentions are not as intimidating or demanding as a resolution which often

fails. I’m comfortable with intentions that I can complete or carry forward year after year because they are ongoing opportunities to improve my life.

Adding the event of the death of a loved one makes beginning a New Year even more difficult. It’s not a celebration. For the bereaved, it is a reluctance to turn the calendar for a year their loved one will never live in. I remember our first New Year even though it’s been decades since our son, Chad died. There were many “fears” we carried with us—all riddled with uncertainty of living in a changed world and adjusting to a different kind of “normal.” I never once thought of a resolutions such as: “This year I’m going to get over my grief.” Instead I proposed an intention of: “This year I’m going to continue to heal my grief by...(and added a new thought or idea to make it happen.) Getting over grief is a resolution you likely couldn’t keep. We don’t get over grief, no matter how long it has been. Living with grief is the reality.

Since that point in time, I’ve continued to approach each New Year with the feeling of a Fresh Start and I continue to make a short list of Intentions. This helps me focus on something that might be challenging or some project that might be nagging me that truly qualifies as unfinished business. Carrying forward my intentions is my reminder that life will happen and I have little control over what happens. But that doesn’t mean I can’t plan for positive experiences.

This reduces the stress and anxiety I might feel if I committed to something unachievable. (I'm a stickler for following through on commitments.)

The New Year gives us a chance to re-visit disappointments, attitudes, and the behaviors of the past year. We accomplish that by creating a vision of a clean slate, a new beginning, and a brighter outlook. We mentally adopt the most powerful attitude of all: HOPE. HOPE is a powerful word when you put it to the test. It doesn't always "just happen". It requires a little work on your own behalf. Hope is the possibility, but self-motivation and perseverance are the mechanisms that make it happen.

Here are a two Positive Intentions Anyone Can Adopt to Begin a New Year with a Fresh Start. These are on my list.

1. Let go of last year's baggage. Definitely the COVID virus interrupted lives. It became an excuse for dismissing responsibilities, turning down social invitations, living in sweatpants or jammies, and spending more unproductive hours surfing the Net. For the bereaved it was a devastating time of brief good-byes with their loved ones, extreme sadness or depression, and inability to have in-person supportive connections while grieving.

But even COVID has a silver lining. Not only did it allow us to spend more time with those who are close to us, but it was an opportunity to improve relationships. We lived a little slower pace of life, perhaps finding new hobbies, relaxing, or enjoying deep discussions about life events. We developed creative ways to connect with family and friends. We learned more about ourselves and what's really important. And we survived!

Name your own baggage and state your intention. I know exactly where my intentions are this year.

2. Slow down. Stop to smell the roses. If there is one thing 2020 and 2021 taught me (and many others) was how to find pleasure and a sense of oneness in a world stalked by quarantine and isolation from family and friends. There actually was no excuse for not finding time to do

the things I put off before...like daily walks, rides, more home cooking, more writing, and time with my husband, Gary, to reconnect and talk about our life events. I found it inspiring to revisit how we dated and worked through our life events and looked hopeful for what is yet to be.

A New Year's Prayer

(author unknown)

May God make your year a happy one!

Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;

Not by making your path easy,

But by making you sturdy to travel any path;

Not by taking hardships from you,

But by taking fear from your heart;

Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,

But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;

Not by making your life always pleasant,

But by showing you when people and their causes
need you most, and by making you anxious to be
there to help.

God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the
year ahead.



Looking back, when someone loved dies, you are told: "Life goes on." For many people it goes on very much like before and the dull pain becomes a part of you. For me, life began a series of encounters with people who led me to my passion to begin Wings. Writing was my "release" of feelings and thoughts too hard to express.

BEGINNING A NEW YEAR...CONTINUED

Beginning in 2020, I put a lot of pressure on myself to “learn” things I never did before (i.e., Zoom, developing a website etc.). Looking forward in 2022, I’m anxious to begin doing many of the social things and the return of in-person Wings events that I’ve missed over the last couple of years. I will take time to smell the roses.

I could go on about Intentions, but you get the idea. It’s a ritual that isn’t difficult to do and adds value to my meaning and purpose in life. Fresh Starts are considered “self-love” and so are worthy intentions. This is your New Year. It’s a choice to make it the best that it can be. The confines of a pandemic will not last forever. You have time now to plan your course of action and even begin the tasks of rebuilding who you are after loss. It can be

an amazing journey filled with surprises of how resilient you really are. It offers new perspectives and exciting opportunities for exploring options you never thought about before. Maybe when it comes to welcoming in 2023, I can be the optimist who is eager to see the new year in. In the meantime, may 2022 be a year of adventure and happy beginnings for you!

Note: Join us in Jan. 2023 for a repeat of our ZOOMGRIEF program: How to Begin a New Year with Hope | 3 Attainable Fresh Starts for the Bereaved. Will be repeated by popular request.

 **There is no charge for these virtual groups, but... registration is required to receive the Zoom link.**

FEB. – MAR.

HOW GRIEF CHANGES YOUR LIFE:



5 MAJOR CHANGES YOU WEREN'T EXPECTING WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE DIED

Feb. 15, 22, Mar. 1, 8, and 15 2022
6:00–7:00pm CST

Grief is not an event that begins and ends. It becomes part of your life. It is an active, ongoing process of turning your sadness into a meaningful life again. Grief can affect your body, mind and spirit. We'll help you understand why you may feel that no one understands. Grief can also change your life depending upon various factors including your internal coping skills, your stress tolerance, and your outlook on life. In this 5-week series, we'll discuss the 5 major changes you likely weren't expecting when your loved one died and share ways to cope. Accepting the changes doesn't happen immediately. Life can be brighter and better than you imagined. Death has a way of changing you, but healing your grief has a way of finding the bright spot in living again after loss. Our experienced facilitators offers education about what to expect and the group offers companionship and understanding from others who have also experienced loss.

APRIL

SPEAKING OF GRIEF... LET'S TALK

SPRING
April 12, 2022
6:00–7:00pm CST



We invite you to our Open-Microphone ZOOMGRIEF session that allows you to express your thoughts, ask questions, share your challenges, and feel a connection with others going through grief just like you. In this session, the facilitator, Nan Zastrow will encourage you to share your grief, listen to the stories others want to tell, and share your own experiences.

Participants will be asked to honor confidentiality, be non-judgmental and respect each other's feelings so this can be a safe place to talk. This is not a counseling session—and we won't be giving advice. It's a time for you to speak openly about what hurts and what helps. Facilitation may include guided questions to create conversation and each session will conclude with an inspirational thought or healthy grieving tips.

Don't grieve alone and keep your anxieties and fears bottled up inside. Discover how others are finding their way through grief. The goal of this session is to change the dark moments into hope and happiness again. We can do this together.

MAY

Beyond the ABC'S of Grief

The Realities of Grief

Tuesdays May 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31
6:00–7:00pm CST

Grieving is different today. We are more aware of death and its consequences because of exposure to media. The new generation of bereaved are more willing to talk about grief's impact on their lives. The basics remain the same and you may think you have grief figured out. You understand that grief is a process, it takes time, and it hurts. What more do you need to know? What about the “gray” side of grief that isn't often talked about and those who grieve may hesitate to mention?

This series goes beyond the myths and the artificial phrases meant to comfort you. We'll learn about the new dynamics such as: how generations grieve differently, getting stuck, how friends and relationships change, your fears, living in uncertainty, and how you find the courage to go on when it hurts.

Perhaps you feel like you are healing, but there is still more to learn. Grief is a continuous process of learning so your life experiences can prepare you for the next inevitable loss. Come and learn what's beyond the basics and how to create happiness and positive meaning after loss.

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



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A Grief Education Ministry

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Reader Feedback



What services of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry have you benefited from or found as a valuable resource?

In 2022, Wings-a Grief Education Ministry will be entering its 29th year of providing education and support to the bereaved and caregivers, not only locally but across the nation. I've never asked this question before, but some of you have, on occasion, given me your thoughts. I'd appreciate your feedback on this question so I may share it with others.

I've found your e-newsletters and Seminars to be invaluable.

Thank you so much!

Sarah
Pickerel, WI

I appreciate your programs so much, and I appreciate you. I've found all of your programs helpful, each in their own way. Besides the information provided, I also find a sense of community. Even though there may not be communication between attendees, I personally find it comforting to know I am not alone. The programs give me different ways of looking at situations. They give me productive things to think about, and the programs help me to know that I'm not losing my mind. Your programs are delivered in a professional, yet friendly, manner.

Wings is especially important to me, because I do not have friends, I am not good at making friends, and I'm comfortable with my own company, so consequently I don't necessarily seek out friends. To feel part of something, even for a little while, is nice. I also don't have anyone to talk about Phil with, which is probably the hardest thing.

Our daughter and youngest son literally cannot even discuss their dad, even a year later, they are that heartbroken. Our middle child has come to terms with the situation, but we don't have an opportunity to talk very often.

Meredith,
Mosinee, WI

Totally love it (Wings) and recommend this significant grief resource to clients, friends and bereaved parents...

Vince,
Dartmouth NS Canada

I think Wings does a great job helping to heal the broken heart.

Charisma,
Naperville, IL

Though I've never had the privilege of attending Wings programs, in person (because I live in FL), I certainly read the ELetter immediately when received. It is invaluable and always has information that is relevant to working with bereaved persons. The Wings website is a treasure trove of articles, past and present. There is a link to the Bookstore

where one can find invaluable books written by the fantastic, knowledgeable Nan Zastrow.

I haven't attended any ZOOM-Grief programs but have had the privilege of reading through their content and these programs are nothing short of magnificent. They are "spot-on" and anyone being part of these programs has received a huge amount of wonderful information.

I worked with the bereaved for 30 years and have had the honor of sharing Nan and Gary's work with them for nearly all of those years. I have learned so much from them and cannot thank them enough for giving me a huge amount of insight. I have immeasurable respect and admiration for Wings in every possible way. Congratulations on a job hugely well done.

Bunny,
Boynton Beach, FL

I attended your ZOOMGRIEF workshop on "How to begin a New Year with Hope". I found the workshop very educational and enlightening. Thank you for all you do!

Tammy,
Gulf Breeze, FL

I give the Wings in-person support group the majority of the credit for my ability to recover from the suicide of my son 14 years ago. Not only did I meet Nan and Gary (living proof that it is in fact possible to be okay, laugh, and smile again after losing a child) and have a forum to freely share my experiences with other grievers, but I also learned a lot about grief and healing that I had never been exposed to before.

Stephanie,
Seattle WA (formerly of Wausau, WI)

I attended a ZOOMGRIEF virtual program and the ELetter has really helped me with grieving the loss of my Dad.

Sara,
Chippewa Falls, WI

I want you to know that your grief education classes were a significant factor in my coping and healing after the unexpected death of my husband over seven years ago. They gave me support and helped me understand what my family and I were experiencing. I also found comfort in your Coping with the Holidays seminar.

Although grief is no longer the focus of my life, I continue to read your ELetter when it arrives. I think it helps me acknowledge and appreciate the journey my life has taken. I often recommend your website to friends when they have experienced a loss.

God bless you and the work you do!
You make a difference!

Peggy,
Verona WI

Your in-person support groups and virtual ZoomGrief programs have been very helpful to me throughout the years. For me it has helped in many different ways, when I was grieving the loss of my mother, as a Hospice volunteer, and to help others who are grieving the loss of their loved one.

I especially enjoy the group meetings, either in person or virtual because it gives people a chance to see that they are not alone, to give them a platform to talk about their loved one and keep their memory alive, and to realize the emotions and feelings they have are normal and part of the grieving process.

The fact that you two share your own story of heartache and sadness and that there IS life after death shows us that if you do the grief work you can learn to love, live and smile again. Thank you for the services you provide to so many.

Suzie,
Marathon, WI

I am writing to thank you for all the beautiful readings and thought-provoking articles on wingsgrief.org. May 2021 the life of my precious 22 year-old grandson, Tyler , was taken from him by a bullet from a gun .He was shot in a beautiful park , He was mistaken for someone else . Such a senseless act!!!

My grief was beyond words, but God saw that I needed help and put Vince Mac Donald in my path. Vince has helped me through many layers of grief. In our conversation a few weeks ago Vince suggested that maybe I would benefit from your website. The first

heading that I read was A BEAUTIFUL GIFT to me. Honoring the Past, Rebuilding the Future. These were the words I needed to help me face my next step in my grieving process. I was able to reflect and write pages and pages of precious thoughts which freed my spirit, a need that I didn't know I had within. I continue to read, reflect and enjoy the articles and poetry on your website. Once again, many thanks.

Cathy,
Dartmouth Nova Scotia

Both the in-person support groups and Zoom virtual programs have been extremely beneficial for me throughout my grief. Knowing that I'm not alone in experiencing grief and hearing different perspectives and personal stories from others has been so important for me, especially throughout the pandemic. I have learned so much about the grief process, as well as helpful tips about how to cope in healthy ways to express my grief.

Rebecca,
Wausau, WI

Hey God, Hey John *(from the Internet)*

Me: Hey God.

God: Hey John.

Me: Can you end my grief?

God: I could - but why?

Me: So I can stop being overwhelmed by my sadness.

God: There is something worse than grief.

Me: What's that?

God: Feeling nothing. Let grief come. Let it stay as long as it needs to. Let it go. Let it come back. It's all a process. It's all a slow boil.

Me: So my grief will never end?

God: Not as long as you love the one who is gone. But that doesn't mean that your grief won't take 1000 different forms. Sometimes your grief will look like clouds in the sky or tears on your pillow or memories in your mind. Grief is formless. It will come and go like the tide. Don't fight it. Don't race through it. Don't let other people tell you how to grieve. Your grief is your own. Honor your grief.

Me: How do I honor my grief?

God: Grab a pen and write down what I'm about to tell you.

- When somebody else tries to tell you how you should grieve, smile and forgive them through your watering eyes and then imagine how lonely it must be to be the person who audits the tears of other people.
- The well-intended will tell you how long you should miss your beloved but you take your time.
- Grief is a hedge maze and being lost inside of it is more than okay. Don't race through your heartache because you might just miss a miracle or two in the teardrops rolling down your face.
- Don't grieve quickly just to make somebody else feel better. If you need to, let your grief become a coral reef. Let the algae of your hurt slowly form over the years into the softest violet hue of heaven. It can take two lifetimes to recover.
- When our beloved becomes an empty chair, it's okay. Take as much time as you need. Your healing is your healing and the scars of absence will itch longer than you can imagine but that is because you risked to love so deeply. That is far better than the alternative.
- I am proud of you and the courage it takes for you to grieve so fearlessly. Don't listen to those who want you to go back to normal. Normal will never exist again for those of us who have lost a part of our heart.
- If the moon broke in half, would it feel normal? To hell with normal. Normal was their scent on your collar. Normal was their voice resting in your ear. Normal was their touch on your skin.
- You have a new normal. It's looking at the shape of clouds for messages from the great beyond that your beloved is fine.
- You have a new normal. It's building a cabin in the woods of your memory where you and your beloved can meet for lunch. You have a new normal. It's crying and laughing at the same time, whenever their favorite song plays on the radio.
- Grief isn't the enemy of life. Numbness is. Don't become numb to your suffering. Welcome it in and let it wrap you up like a blanket whenever it shows up at your door.
- It's okay I swear. It's okay. Your beloved misses you just as much as you miss them and someday you two will get all tangled up together again.
- Someday you two will push each on a swing again under a shower of falling blooms. Someday you two will ride comets together on the edge of everything.
- Someday you two will giggle at all of the people who tried to tell you how to grieve.

– John Roedel (johnroedel.com)

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Living with grief in a pandemic, has extended the almost absent face-to-face support from family, friends and community. Grievers are struggling for the kind of contact that ultimately heals grief. This article is a great reflection of a time, not so long ago, when we already began questioning the disappearing art of "community" healing. Printed with permission from Ben Wolfe, a past speaker for Wings-a Grief Education Ministry.)

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "COMMUNITY" AND FACE-TO-FACE GRIEF?

by Ben Wolfe, former Founder, Director/Grief Therapist of St. Mary's Medical Center's Grief Support Center in Duluth, MN, currently a Trainer and Consultant

Families and community once upon a time buried their own. Neighbors and community were not only part of the living aspects of one's life, but also supporting the family after a death. After a death the "neighborhood" would stop their day and spend time acknowledging a person's life had come to an end. Neighbors often helped by digging the grave, making a casket and lowering it into the ground...shoveling the dirt. Families, neighbors and communities buried their own before funeral homes and cremation societies existed, before we "gave away" hands-on and face-to-face grief.

In "those days" community was defined as those individuals we could see and spend time with within a day's walk. Then the community expanded as man used horses. Then it expanded again with the invention of the car, then the airplane, and now we live in a "world community" with the internet and technology that brings events and people right into our "space" in real time.

Whatever happened to "community" and face-to-face grief? In California due to people being so busy they utilized "drive by visitations," where you could stay in your car and "order-up a deceased person to visit" as you drive through the back/side of the funeral home. Rather like a "McDonald's drive through without the fries!" We are busy after all and cannot waste any of our precious time parking the car, going in to share our condolences with the family of the deceased (even the euphemism "deceased" is used versus THEY HAVE DIED!), and then getting back into the car and caring on with our life.

Many persons are now starting to tell their family members, "I do not want a funeral or memorial service after I die." My comment to those family members... "I'm sorry about your loved one's death, but they are dead and as a result, they lose their rights. What do YOU need?" Death hurts and acknowledging it helps us not only confront its reality, but also publicly allows OUR community to share their stories and in turn, to grieve themselves. Through some type of ritual(s) we acknowledge life has changed, that life is different.



GRIEF FACE-TO-FACE...CONTINUED

I truly do acknowledge we ARE busy with work and other commitments, and as a result what we would like to do doesn't always work...and this is one area where "community" has changed. The tech revolution has changed the face of supporting the bereaved. We no longer stop by and visit prior to death, nor often even after, but rather use technology to "share our condolences." In many cases today due to the pandemic, with family members and friends dying from not only Covid, but as a result of any type of death, virtual services via zoom, for many, have become the "new normal." We sit in our comfortable homes or apartments, and we listen via technology about a person's living, about their "life stories"...no hugs and no in person "I am so sorry!" Some use Facebook as a way to share their memories and thoughts, pictures, and connect with other persons who are also grieving. For those who see the world through technology this works, this does help "share stories" and is appreciated by griever...but what happens after the stories are shared? Where has the "community" gone? We joke about the "Jellobrigade," those who stop by right after a crisis and bring casseroles, jello and everything else under the sun...and then two weeks later they are GONE. They (I am included at times) are gone onto the rest of their busy lives.

How do we stay connected long after the "Jellobrigade" leaves? How do we as a community continue to support bereaved persons who after three, six, nine, twelve months later finally come to terms that "the person is NOT coming back!" Yes, grief does get easier, but certainly not two weeks after one dies, or the first month after the death, or, "It has ALREADY BEEN a year." We need to remind ourselves missing a person who has



died, lasts a lifetime. As "community," where do we as fit into a griever's world while they "relearn their world?"

I-Phones, Facebook, blogs and blogging, e-mails, Internet, Twitter, Google, YouTube, CaringBridge, video-cams, zooming...for many a new world of social connecting. For others this is ALL they know. They are growing up with technology at their fingertips and use it to enhance their lives and their relationships. According to AARP, The Magazine (Nov./ Dec., 2010), "Kids used to sleep with teddy bears. Now 78 percent of 12 and 13-year-olds who own cell phones have gone nighty-night with them at their sides. That figure rises to 86 percent among teens 14 and older.

And young women take things even further: 21 percent of those 18 through 34 check Facebook in the middle of the night." On-line grief support for many has also become important as it provides support often NOT found face-to-face with those who "once upon a time were my support system." Technology and social networking are opening up people's lives like never before...but what about the bereaved and their network after a death... whatever happened to actual face-to-face visits?

With today's technology we can choose to never leave our homes. We can pay our bills, order our food, meet and have relationships with others, choose our clothes, in some cases work from home, and never have to spend "time" with the bereaved. I hope your social networking via technology will not stop the day-to-day phone calls, visits, dinners out, cups of coffee, and walks with the bereaved. I hope the keyboard will not take the place of supporting others face-to-face.

Be Good to Yourself

SELF CARE TIP

Healing a Broken Heart



Valentine's Day reminds us of matters of the heart. Physicians now accept and suggest that someone can really die of a broken heart. A bereaved person's risk factors increase and their tolerance for illness and disease spike. Don't just pretend that you are okay. It's important to socialize and talk about your loss. Grief can be a frightening and unfamiliar experience. You do not need to grieve alone. If you are suffering the loss of a loved one, you need to find a way to let go of the pain. Support groups provide a safe place with others who have had a mutual experience. Be good to yourself. Explore the experience of grief and grow from your discoveries.

Day by Day

By Jenny 10.16.21

*My heart is with you
Deep within
Toward the Light.
There was time well spent
Day-by-day
Bringing us nearer
To the understanding
Of what's at play.
The only answer is
Love itself
Filling in our heart
Seeming to be in
Some kind of drought.
Pay forward that love
Which fills your soul
Day-by-day,
Making it your
Only goal.*





Rest In Peace, Mr. President

By Todd Van Beck

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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

BENJAMIN HARRISON

the twenty-third President of the United States of America

Benjamin Harrison died on Wednesday, March 13, 1901 at 4:45 PM at his home in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was 67 years old and was the 23rd US President. Harrison's grandfather had been William Henry Harrison, who served as the ninth president.

Harrison was an excellent extemporaneous speaker in front of large crowds, but one-on-one he was aloof and conceited. His nickname was "The Human Iceberg."

In early March of 1901, Harrison caught influenza. After being confined to his bed for two days, Harrison developed a pain in the left side of his chest with an alarmingly increased pulse rate and labored breathing. Harrison was diagnosed with pneumonia, which in 1901 was tantamount to being given a death sentence.

Eventually, Harrison was unable to recognize his own family. Shortly before his death, Harrison opened his eyes and cried out, "Are the doctors here? Doctor, my lungs!" These were his last words.

The undertaking firm of C.E. Kregelo & Son took charge of the body. Mr. James Bailey, who was in the employ of Charles E. Kregelo, embalmed Harrison's body in the bed-

room where he had died. The embalming was completed by using the right common carotid point of injection, and the preservation chemicals came from **Professor Clarke's Embalming Chemical Company** in Cincinnati.

From Wednesday to Saturday, Harrison's remains were reposed in his bedroom. On Saturday, from noon to 10:00 PM, Harrison's body was reposed in the rotunda of the Indiana State Capitol. After the public viewing, the body was returned home. The funeral was scheduled to take place at 2:00 PM on Sunday in the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis.

President Harrison's casket was called "The State Casket." It was made of solid cedar with a solid copper inner liner, which made the burial receptacle airtight. The copper liner was upholstered with white silk, upon which Harrison's body would rest. The exterior of the casket was decorated on the corners with hand-carved ornaments and heavily carved molding around the entire circumference. The exterior of the casket was plain and covered with heavy black cloth. The casket's most impressive features were six massive silver handles. The casket weighed 300 pounds and was the finest casket that Kregelo offered.

President William McKinley sent his condolences to Mrs. Harrison. Little did McKinley know when he penned his condolence note, in little more than six months, he would be killed by an assassin's bullet.

On Thursday, it was announced that President McKinley would attend the funeral. This would be the first time that a standing president would attend the funeral of a former president. The funeral attendance would be by family invitation only.

On Friday evening, the Kregelo Undertakers brought Harrison's casketed body downstairs and placed it in the front parlor. The casket was opened and positioned near the mantel on the south side of the room.

The undertakers from Kregelo then made preparations to transfer Harrison's remains to the State Capitol building on



BENJAMIN HARRISON

Saturday morning, Kregelo had already prepared a canopied catafalque and mourning decorations at the Capitol, and now they began moving wagons loaded with flowers from the home to the rotunda. By 2:30 AM on Saturday, fourteen wagon loads of flowers had been moved and set up. It was estimated that over 600 floral arrangements were displayed at the Harrison funeral.

On Saturday morning, the Kregelos' hearse was in front of the Harrison home. The hearse was pulled by four black horses. The funeral car was heavily draped in black with the unique feature of displaying a large American flag on the roof of the hearse.

By all accounts, Harrison looked natural and well-preserved. His head rested on a white silk pillow, and his snow-white beard was trimmed perfectly. He wore a Prince Albert coat, striped gray suit pants, a black silk vest, and a winged collar shirt with a black silk bow tie.

President Harrison's funeral began at 2:00 PM and followed the funeral rituals of the Presbyterian Church. The funeral lasted thirty minutes. Harrison was buried next to his first wife, Caroline, at **Crown Hill Cemetery**. The entire grave was lined with evergreen and a group of workers from Crown Hill stood ready to lower the casket into the vault. Finally, a heavy granite slab weighing 1,200 pounds was positioned on top of the vault and was cemented into place. Crown Hill charged \$6.00 for opening and closing the grave and \$15.00 for the evergreen covering.



CHARLES E. KREGELO

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.

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On the Lighter Side

Cat Died and Went to Heaven

A cat died and went to Heaven. God met her at the gates and said, 'You have been a good cat all these years. Anything you want is yours for the asking.'

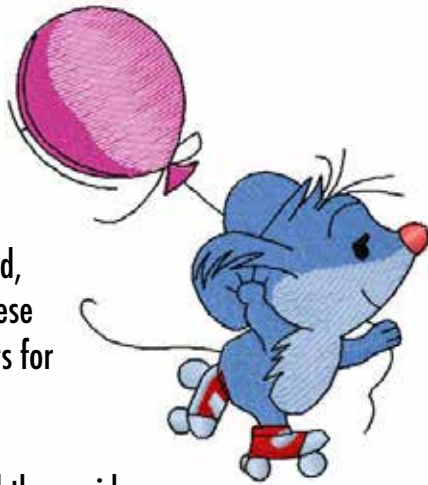
The cat thought for a minute and then said, "All my life I lived on a farm and slept on hard wooden floors. I would like a real fluffy pillow to sleep on."

God said, "Say no more." Instantly the cat had a huge fluffy pillow.

A few days later, six mice were killed in an accident and they all went to Heaven together. God met the mice at the gates with the same offer that He made to the cat. The mice said, "Well, we have had to run all of our lives: from cats, dogs, and even people with brooms! If we could just have some little roller skates, we would not have to run again." God answered, "It is done." All mice had beautiful little roller skates.

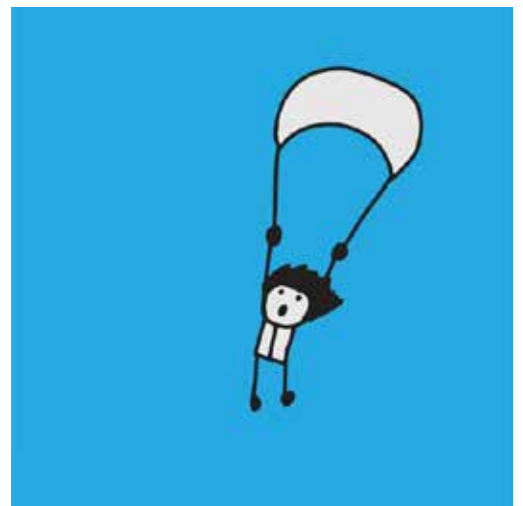
About a week later, God decided to check on the cat. He found her sound asleep on her fluffy pillow. God gently awakened the cat and asked, "Is everything okay? How have you been doing? Are you happy?"

The cat replied, "Oh, it is WONDERFUL. I have never been so happy in my life. The pillow is so fluffy, and those little Meals on Wheels you have been sending over are delicious!"



OOPS

At the skydiving training course, the instructor took time to answer some of the "first time skydiver questions. One guy asked: "If the chute doesn't open, and the reserve doesn't open, how long do we have till we hit the ground?" The instructor paused and said, "The rest of your life."



How to Honor Your Loved One Sacred Memories of a Life Lived

By: Nan Zastrow

Grief doesn't mean "forgetting". As time passes, a bereaved person may feel as though they are losing connection with all the things their loved one cared about, and all the sacred memories of a life lived. Here are ways to recreate a moment or feeling that connects with your loved one, body, mind, and spirit. "Your memories are your keepsakes. No one can take them away from you."

- 1. Spend time with a friend of your loved one. Listen to their stories about him/her.**
There will be laughter and tears, but this can be very therapeutic.
- 2. Spend time with your thoughts. Deliberately make time to be alone with your thoughts and your happy memories. This is a necessary part of grieving and letting go.**
- 3. Celebrate with a favorite food. What food was your loved one's favorite? Make it a tradition to have a dinner or gathering where you can highlight this dish.**
- 4. Take a road trip and visit a favorite place of your loved one. Everyone can do this even if COVID is rampant. Or take that trip you always planned to take together.**
- 5. Clean out a closet or drawer of your loved one's belongings. Decide what to do with them. Give them away. Donate. Or put them back in their place for another time.**
- 6. Give away personal items belonging to your loved one to someone else special in his or her life. It might be a piece of jewelry, furniture, a book, or item he/she created. Share the love.**
- 7. Journal memories and stories. It's easy to forget special, joyful times after a few years. Writing them down will allow you to relive them and feel the joy.**
- 8. Commit to "learning more" about your grief journey. Grief education is a continuous journey. As grief changes, so will your thoughts about life and death.**
- 9. Make a Memory Box. Assemble a collection of items that remind you of your loved one and put them in a unique box that you either decorated or purchased. Share these items with grandchildren, family, or friends as you relate who you loved one was.**
- 10. Write a letter of appreciation to someone who was a loyal friend during your intense grief. Share your gratitude. Let them know how they made a difference.**
- 11. Snuggle with something soothing. Do you have an item belonging to your loved one that gives you comfort? Snuggle with it. Cry, laugh, but above all LOVE.**
- 12. Watch TV. Watch one of your loved one's favorite television shows even if it isn't on your list of favorites. Determine what he/she liked about it. Take pride in your sacrifice.**
- 13. Give into the Beauty of Nature. What was it in nature that your loved one enjoyed? Try to find that special place or moment to reconnect.**
- 14. Be Grateful for what you have...Count your blessings. Be grateful for the happy moments, the family and friends who support you and get you through the tough times.**

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



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