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**Wings**  
A Grief Education Ministry

Honoring the Past and  
Rebuilding the Future

[www.wingsgrief.org](http://www.wingsgrief.org)

Published by Nan Zastrow

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## Grief in a time of COVID-19

*This post was written by Charity Smith, PhD, Post-doctoral Psychologist, Park Center, an affiliate of Parkview Behavioral Health Institute.*

As we face the daily challenges of COVID-19, we're filled with a myriad of emotions—some easily named, while others feel more elusive. Along with feelings of depression and anxiety, the angst, uncertainty, emptiness and confusion we feel is, most certainly, grief — and it is a full-body experience. It can manifest as fatigue, inattentiveness, low motivation, sadness, fearfulness, anger and disconnection, all of which are very much a part of trying to cope with an ever-changing world during this global pandemic.

Grief and mourning, though often used synonymously, differ in meaning. Grief is our initial reaction, while mourning is the active and engaged process of moving forward. When we talk about experiences of grief and mourning, we typically center the conversation around the deaths of loved ones or significant losses, such as divorce or children leaving the nest. Rarely do we talk about the weight of grief or the journey through mourning as a day-to-day experience, wherein we struggle to even put our finger on the nature of our loss. In a time of COVID-19, we are tasked with doing both. In the chaos of daily upheaval, we are grieving the loss of our typical routine, long-held goals and

autonomy. We grieve proms, graduations, weddings and funerals; normalcy, safety, security; and beloved friends and family members who are dying at a distance. All of this occurs within us as we work to adapt to the list of changes we face.

### **Role loss, mourning ourselves, and redefining normal**

Throughout our lifetime, we define a portion of our identity based upon the roles we fill and the responsibilities we hold, be that as a parent, friend, employee, student or other titles we carry. With stay-at-home mandates, and other pandemic-related safety protocols in place, many of us are struggling with dramatic changes to our roles, leaving us to push forward each day, as we mourn our understanding of ourselves, our world and our place within it. Those suddenly out of work are struggling with loss of income, alongside the confusion inherent to no longer holding the title of “worker” or “breadwinner”; parents are struggling to redefine themselves as teachers, while also working from home; and students, now learning online, are grappling to understand their identity in the absence of classrooms,

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contact with teachers and time spent with peers.

It will be some time before we return to our day-to-day routines, which makes it all the more important to find and forge some semblance of structure amid all of these changes. Creating a schedule, even if followed loosely, helps us find balance and meaning in our daily tasks, while also allowing us to build space for self-care and self-compassion. It's also imperative that we allow ourselves "COVID-free time," away from screens, social media feeds, and other news outlets. Unplugging from stories of despair helps us to tune back into our own needs, including tending to our grief.

### **Anticipatory grief, disenfranchised grief and the importance of compassion**

Anticipatory grief, in simpler times, is how we try to prepare ourselves for an impending death—a piecemeal approach to coping with the losses we face in the moment, ahead of the larger grief that looms. Our instinct is to steel ourselves against these changes to the best of our ability, and in death, when there's a reasonably foreseeable trajectory, we can. During this pandemic, we don't readily know how to grieve our losses piecemeal. Changes are occurring daily, making it difficult to anticipate what we may lose next. We're in a collective holding pattern, wondering: "How long until I get to see my grandkids again?" or "Will the store still be open tomorrow?" and even "Is tomorrow the day I lose my job?" It's important to give ourselves permission to ask our questions and voice our fears, while also working to accept that some answers are out of our control.

Disenfranchised grief occurs in response to any mode of death we cannot publicly mourn, either based on our relationship to the decedent, the mode of death or other cultural/societal factors that make our grief taboo or difficult for others to face or understand. Certainly, with COVID-19, we are all experiencing disenfranchised grief as we struggle to identify our current experiences as events we feel we are "allowed" to mourn. We often relegate ourselves to the role of disenfranchised griever, comparing away our suffering, with phrases such as: "Well, at least I'm not in Italy—those people are really struggling." It's true, people in Italy are suffering through a significant number of deaths and our hearts break for them, just as our hearts break for those in New York, Detroit, Louisiana and our own backyards.

Indeed, it feels strange to turn to a friend and say, "I'm grieving the loss of my routine," or "I'm mourning going to the gym," because these things can feel trite in the grand scheme of a global pandemic. In fact, they aren't trite at all—they are genuine parts of our individual and collective human experience and they are a genuine cause for grief. Pain is not comparable; we are allowed to grieve our own losses. Just as we recognize and allow others their pain with heartfelt compassion, it is important we give that same degree of care, empathy, and understanding to ourselves. There is no playbook, there is no "supposed to," and, while we can hold hope, we can also let go of expectation, for ourselves and others.

### **The nature of grief**

I'll close this with a poem I recently found that I wrote years ago, long before COVID-19 made its appearance on the global stage and "pandemic" became a household word. That it still feels fitting, even in this moment, speaks to the global nature of our grief:

#### **Good Grief**

We grieve that which we perceive and misperceive; that which we fear and that which we cling to; that which we love and that which brings us harm. —Every change a loss, no matter how great the gain—and still, we grieve.

We grieve babies—grown and ungrown; youth—ours and others; the aged, and our elders. We grieve for those we have never known and for those who knew us before we ever were.

We grieve the near-misses, the dodged-bullets, the what-ifs, the shouldn't-have-beens, the wouldn't-have-beens, the "I-know-betters," and the fateful outcomes. We grieve almosts. We grieve maybes. We grieve that which we deny, even to ourselves.

And from this, we grow. We grow in the spaces left behind—in the possibilities left unfulfilled, left open, offered up, handed over, and passed down. We rise from the soil where the dust settles.

We change. We move forward. And we grieve.

*(This website offered the article with a Share option. I chose to share this with my readers. <https://www.parkview.com/community/dashboard/grief-in-a-time-of-covid-19>)*



## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

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NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,  
Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

### EDITOR'S JOURNAL

*This article was originally published in Grief Digest in 2015. A recent Pop-Up Memory reminded me of the story, and I wanted to share it again. The scene I describe in this article is much more common these days than it was a few years ago, so now I can relate to my pop-up memory frequently--and it still brings a smile*

## POP-UP MEMORIES ARE NOT GRIEF BURSTS

Recently, we experienced a pop-up memory of Chad. We (my husband and I) were driving home and stopped at the signal lights. A shiny beige pickup truck came whizzing through the intersection of the busy street and easily caught our attention. In the bed of the pickup truck was a 3' x 5' American flag whirling in the breeze. Simultaneously, Gary and I had an instant pop-up memory to a long ago time, when our son Chad, did the very same thing! I haven't seen such a display since Chad's death, and this pop-up brought kudos, a smile, and a story for Gary and me.

If you are a web surfer, you are familiar with "pop-ups." In many situations, they are frustrating and distracting, but they do get your attention. Web pop-ups are those images that appear suddenly and unexpectedly in the middle of something else you were doing. Pop-ups in the Internet world can also lead you on a trail from site to site to discover a hidden piece of information. You are intrigued, and your senses become alert challenged by the clue.

As your grief begins to heal, you are likely to experience more pop-ups than grief bursts. I define grief pop-ups as a light-bulb kind of recognition that instantly recalls an event or moment in the life of your loved one that may have been a forgotten or a "buried" memory. It doesn't require a specific trigger; it often just surfaces. It usually occurs when the mind is peaceful and is not focusing on any outside stimuli. The memory suddenly pops-up in your thoughts (whether stimuli or non-stimuli induced) and creates a highly pleasant sensation that brings a smile and a story associated with the recollection.

The story behind our pop-up memory on this particular day, was a high school senior, our son Chad. At the time, he was a member of the Wisconsin National Guard, and passion-

ately patriotic. His patriotic spirit was displayed every time he donned his army fatigues with the bloused pants over his tanker-style, infantry boots (not typical army issue). He was the young man who, with permission, drove an Army jeep to his homecoming celebration. He slept beneath a patriotic quilt. Camouflage was his preferred choice for casual dress.

Chad joined the Army National Guards in his junior year of high school because he was motivated by Desert Storm. He lived and breathed his commitment. But the pop-up memory smile had to do with his 1976 Chevy truck. In the bed of his truck, he mounted a 3' x 5' American flag and proudly drove to school, work, the National Guards, and in his hometown with this symbol of pride. Seeing some other young man with the same spirit of adventure on this day invoked an awesome pop-up memory from the past.

### Differences between Pop-Ups and Grief Bursts:

The important element of pop-up memories are the stories. These differ from grief bursts. Most bereaved are familiar with the term grief burst and can attest to having one. Grief bursts typically bring on a feeling of being overwhelmed with resident emotions of grief. They create a sensory jolt that typically comes from something that triggered the recollection. Grief bursts signal a single characteristic of a loved one that coincides with a familiar place, a smell, a song, a fragrance, or a glance of someone who looks like your loved one, just to name a few triggers. They may bring happy or sad memories. They create an opportunity for you to express your sorrow and re-acknowledge the reality of your loved one's death. In contrast to pop-ups, they seldom tie to a life-story or event to go along with the memory.

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## POP UP MEMORIES...

*Continued from page 3*

Pop-up memories can happen when you least expect them. Working in my kitchen one day, I had a pop-up memory of Chad and Jenny making pizza. The pop-up memory recalled the story of the two of them camping on the shore of the Rib River and raiding the refrigerator and house for camping supplies. While writing this article, I had a pop-up memory of Chad returning from advance military training sporting his proud tattoo. I easily recalled the story that went along with the conversation over the phone with Chad about making an appropriate choice for a tattoo.

The reality about pop-up memories is that every story recalled through a pop-up memory revives our connection to our beloved son. (It becomes a continued bond) Pop-up memories always connect to a life story. You feel a need to retell the story or discuss it with someone else because the vision recalled is so captivating it begs repeating! You visualize your loved one in his/her time actively doing exactly what the pop-up memory awakened in your mind. It's every bereaved person's wish to be able to talk about the times in the life of their loved one that were special and pop-up memories provide that opportunity. These stories bring great comfort. What I like about pop-up memories is the warmth I feel years after the death. It allows me to re-live the happiness of who this person was and the special joys he brought to my life.

### **Embrace your pop-up memories**

There will always be a place in your heart and your life for memories of your loved one. It's a comforting and healing part of grief when the memory you experience can bring you moments of joy as you recall the story of what created the

memory. Pop-ups can create instant connections to positive feelings like an instant replay at a sporting event. Details, sights, sounds, colors, and joyful emotions are vivid. You feel like you are right there again. Pop-ups interrupt the moment and connect the past to the present moment in your life. Merging the two confirms that our loved one lives forever in our hearts, our stories, and our memories. Love lives on!

The pop-up memory of Chad driving his truck with the billowing flag stayed with me for days. It encouraged me to look through a couple picture albums again. Maybe it was a fluke that the summer's patriotic holidays were upon us. Or maybe it was just coincidental that we crossed paths at the intersection at the same time as these young men. What are the odds of that? Or maybe it was just one of those little miracles that Gary and I have recited almost every day in the past 25+ years since Chad's death that remind us that Chad will always live in our hearts and will always be the wind beneath our Wings™!

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*Note: Pop-up memories is not a clinical word or familiar word in the vocabulary of grief counseling. It was adopted by me as a result of this experience and its likeness to everyday Internet surfing! Please feel free to use it as a means to describe healing grief stories! It is my wish that you too can recall the joy and pass it on! Nan*



### *How to Connect with Wings:*

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- Postal: P.O. Box 1051, Wausau, WI 54401
- Ph: 715.845.4159
- Follow the EVENTS calendar posted at the website [wingsgrief.org](http://wingsgrief.org)
- Subscribe to the free online ELetter sent quarterly.
- Order a Free copy of Grief Digest at [www.centeringcorp.com](http://www.centeringcorp.com)
- Visit Wings on Facebook



# IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC: MAKING MEMORIES OR MISSING OPPORTUNITIES?

Bob Baugher, Ph.D.



Do you take pictures? Video? Selfies? Are you camera shy? If you are like many bereaved people, you have regretted not having taken the time for more pictures of your loved ones who've died. But, why take pictures now while the world is reeling from illness, death, paranoia and protests? Because, as you know, someday this will all be history. By capturing memories now, you can, years from now, share the memories with those who are not yet born, those too young to understand what is going on, and anyone else who wishes to look back on this time in our history. To place it in context, might you have found it interesting if you discovered writings from your ancestors who lived through the plague of 1918?

Each day you carry around a miracle. You have something that your ancestors could have only imagined. With the push of a button, you can capture the moment—forever. Looking back, you may wish you would have done it more often in the past. And, given the pain you are in as you cope with your grief, taking pictures and video at this time in your life may seem like a trivial task you don't care much about.

As you read this, the initial stages of the virus have moved on. However, there is still much to record as we continue to be in the middle of it. Are your family members interacting more than they ever have? In March, 2020 I asked my college students to state one positive thing that happened to them during the previous week. The most common

response went something like this: I've been interacting with my family members more than I ever have—and, it's nice. There may never be another time when so many of you will be around one another. Take advantage of these extraordinary times: pictures of the entire group and photos of people doing things together. I know that, with the opening of the economy, we are beginning to drift back to our old ways. But, do what you can while there is still time. Take video of people coming and going, of loved ones wearing masks, of events on TV, of people eating dinner, hugging, laughing, playing games, dancing, or just hanging out. Of course another way to capture the moment is to write about it. Keep a journal, write a poem, react to the news, and/or narrate a day in your life as these events swirl around you.

## Here are a few generic suggestions for capturing life's moments:

- 1. Capture events, even if they have already happened. For example, just after a funny event has taken place, I would still grab my video camera and say to the people involved (as they are laughing), "What just happened?" Later, when we view the video, we laugh almost as hard even though we had not caught the event as it was happening.**
- 2. Don't be intrusive. Shoving a phone or camera in a person's face will usually not get you praise. I have found that most camera-shy people will relax if you are not pushy.**
- 3. Engage your subjects. Don't set up your phone on the kitchen counter and walk away. Get as close to people as comfort will allow. This will capture good, full-face views, something those who know the person will later appreciate.**

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## MAKING MEMORIES...

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**4. Don't forget to include yourself. In addition to selfies, you can hand the phone to someone else. Someday when you're gone, you don't want people to say, "Why was she (or he) always behind the camera?" There is the argument that pulling out a camera takes away from the spontaneity of the moment and that the person holding the camera loses out on being part of the group interaction. I've found this not to be true. The only exception is when the camera-person is taking pictures most of the time and missing out on the real fun.**

**5. Don't videotape or take pictures of someone without their knowledge unless you absolutely know that later they would approve of what you have captured. You don't want to get the reputation of being a stealthy photographer, creating paranoid friends and relatives.**

**6. Don't forget to download your videos and photos. As you know, something could happen to your phone and, in an instant, all could be lost.**

**7. At the end of each day or of the week, as I said before, sit down and talk about the events into your phone or write about them.**

As you know all too well, life is short. You have already experienced the death of one or more precious people. Your job is to learn from the past and use the little miracle you carry in your hand to capture the memories of your life and the life of those around you especially in this time of uncertainty. Trust me, you won't regret it.

*Bob is a Psychology and Death Education instructor at Highline College in Des Moines, Washington. He's been taking video for nearly 40 years and has more than 1,600 hours in his home collection.*



**Wings-a Grief Education Ministry has a presence on Facebook.**

Here is a place to find Hope and Inspiration! Become a Friend.

What you will find posted on our Facebook page:

- Inspirational quotes
- News about Events such as Support Groups, Community Seminars, Holiday programs, Grief Tips, and other educational experiences
- Shared posts that make the heart feel good
- <https://www.facebook.com/zastrownan/>

# Bless my Friends

Author unknown

Every single evening  
As I'm lying here in bed,  
This tiny little Prayer  
Keeps running through my head:

God bless all my family  
Wherever they may be,  
Keep them warm  
And safe from harm  
For they're so close to me.

And God, there is one more thing  
I wish that you could do;  
Hope you don't mind me asking,  
Please bless my computer too.

Now I know that it's unusual  
To Bless a motherboard,  
But listen just a second  
While I explain it to you, Lord.

You see, that little metal box  
Holds more than odds and ends;  
Inside those small compartments  
Rest so many of my friends.

I know so much about them  
By the kindness that they give,  
And this little scrap of metal  
Takes me in to where they live.

By faith is how I know them  
Much the same as you.  
We share in what life brings us  
And from that our friendships grew.

Please take an extra minute  
From your duties up above,  
To bless those in my address book  
That's filled with so much love.

Wherever else this prayer may reach  
To each and every friend,  
Bless each e-mail inbox  
And each person who hits 'send'.

When you update your Heavenly list  
On your own Great CD-ROM,  
Bless everyone who says this prayer  
Sent up to GOD.Com

## Our Readers Send Their Thoughts...



Thursday was the eleventh anniversary of Larry's death. When the day quieted and I was sitting here at night I pulled out my binder of worksheets and info from your classes. I was so touched, once again, to see the emails you had sent me encouraging me and telling me I was doing my grief work i.e. having a graveside memorial service a year later when our son came home, writing a eulogy, etc. etc. I really wasn't sure what grief work was but you made me feel like I was on the right path.

Your words were just what I needed to hear at that time Nan. Sincere, honest, and kind at a most difficult time in my life. You will always be special to me. You and Gary met me where I was and gently, ever so carefully, helped me back to living again.

*Thank you and God Bless you both.  
Nancy Pekarske, Mosinee*

I received a call from a woman a few days ago, and forgive me, but I missed her name. She was cleaning out some closets during this COVID-19 isolation crisis and came upon a letter and magazine (Wings original magazines sent by US postal) from 1995. Her grandchild was killed in the Oklahoma City Bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. She was curious if Wings still existed and found the phone number in the magazine. We talked for quite awhile about the impact on her life. She was grateful that Wings reached out to her in her time of sorrow.

*Nan Zastrow*



# Freedom is Not Free - Cadet Major Kelly Strong 1981



I watched the flag pass by one day,  
It fluttered in the breeze.  
A young marine saluted it,  
And then he stood at ease.  
I looked at him in uniform  
So young, so tall, so proud,  
With hair cut square and eyes alert  
He'd stand out in any crowd.  
I thought how many men like him  
had fallen through the years.  
How many died on foreign soil?  
How many mother's tears?

How many pilot's planes shot down?  
How many died at sea?  
How many foxholes were soldier's graves?  
No freedom is not free.  
I heard the sound of Taps one night,  
when everything was still.  
I listened to the bugler play  
and felt a sudden chill.  
I wondered just how many times,  
That Taps had meant "amen".  
When a flag had covered a coffin, of a  
brother or a friend.  
I thought of all the children,  
Of the mothers and the wives,  
Of fathers, sons, and husbands,  
With interrupted lives.  
I thought about the graveyard  
at the bottom of the sea.  
Of unmarked graves in Arlington  
No freedom is not free.



# THE LAST CAB RIDE

An inspirational story from the Internet.



I arrived at the address and honked the horn. After waiting a few minutes I honked again. Since this was going to be my last ride of my shift. I thought about just driving away. But instead I put the car in park and walked up to the door and knocked.

“Just a minute”, answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 90’s stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940’s movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knick-knacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware. “Would you carry my bag out to the car?” she said.

I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness. “It’s nothing”, I told her. “I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother to be treated”.

“Oh, you’re such a good boy,” she said.

When we got in the cab, she gave me an address and then asked, “Could you drive through downtown?” “It’s not the shortest way,” I answered quickly. “Oh, I don’t mind,” she said “I’m in no hurry. I’m on my way to a hospice”.

I looked in the rear-view mirror. Her eyes were glistening. “I don’t have any family left,” she continued in a soft voice “The doctor says I don’t have very long.” I quietly reached over and shut off the meter. “What route would you like me to take?” I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds.

She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she’d ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, “I’m tired. Let’s go now”.

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her.

I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair. “How much do I owe you?” She asked, reaching into her purse. “Nothing,” I answered. “You have to make a living,” she said.

“There are other passengers,” I responded. Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

“You gave an old woman a little moment of joy” she said. “Thank you.” I squeezed her hand, and then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift?

What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away?

On a quick review, I don’t think that I have done anything more important in my life.

We’re conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware – beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

# Reader Feedback



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

GRIEF HAS SHATTERED YOUR LIFE AND ADD TO THAT THE CURRENT COVID-19 VIRUS WHICH MAY HAVE COMPLICATED OR INTERRUPTED YOUR GRIEVING PROCESS. EVEN THOUGH THE REST OF THE WORLD IS DEALING WITH ANOTHER KIND OF GRIEF, YOU MAY STILL FEEL LIKE A FORGOTTEN GRIEVER DUE TO THE LOSS OF YOUR LOVED ONE. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT GRIEF IN THESE TIMES?

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While currently I am not grieving, I am a bereavement caregiver. I am currently working with a family who is grieving the loss of a child.

This 11 year old boy was murdered while his mother laid atop him attempting to protect her son from a gunman shooting into their mobile home. The trauma of the grief is overwhelming and as you might imagine it is magnified by PTS.

The day after this tragedy, our state went into a stay at home order and the pandemic took over the news outlets. One small article was in the local paper without identification of this little man. After that - nothing. This family couldn't have a ceremony to honor their son. They also couldn't access the "victims support service" due to the pandemic.

As you might imagine, they are struggling to find answers and help where there is none. Disenfranchised is an understatement.

Roger, Bereavement Coordinator  
Treasure Valley Hospice  
Boise, Idaho

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This is not something I can truly answer as I am more wrapped up in the pandemic, itself, than in the grief process. However, some of my clients are, quite understandably, feeling far more vulnerable. Their assumptive world is gone in so many ways and, now, another way has arrived to more than tip the process into deeper waters. No doubt that social isolation can fuel stronger grief

feelings as having no one to lean on makes the grief stronger and makes one feel more alone. The emotions become fiercer and more entangled and often mix up into a melange of sadness, fear, feelings of craziness and confusion as to what to deal with first.

Bunny, Venice, FL

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The fear of the virus is worse than the virus itself. It's the unknown in our lives. Being alone has added to that fear twofold. Before the virus, life seemed somewhat normal. At least we were able to embrace our friends and families. Now this stay-at-home order and social distancing is not normal, for anyone. I have put all my faith in the Lord that we will get through this. This certainly was not what I, in my wildest dreams, thought my retirement would be like. Finding joy in just the smallest things is what helps me get through most days.

Mollie, Wausau, WI

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I found that I had more time to actually absorb my grief due to COVID – and not all in a bad way either. I found that I was able to slow down the fast paced work life I was previously dealing with and this allowed more time for me to process my thoughts and feelings versus ignoring them or pretending like it was not real when all along it was just lying at the surface waiting for me to acknowledge it. This time also allowed me to remember my mom and special moments we had together.

Paula, Wausau, WI

I think dealing with COVID at this critical part of my life change has complicated the healing process for me and presented me with more challenges in healing than I ever anticipated. In the beginning of the stay-at-home order, I felt like I lost all contact with the outside world and the "no social contact" crippled me. Socialization is most critical to my healing. Being isolated and alone was scary. I felt like I was regressing in dealing with my grief.

While I could still have contact via phone, Facebook, texting etc., it does not replace the physical social contact. Plus, not being interactive limited conversations as there really wasn't anything new to share or talk about. I had to stop lunch dates and dinners with friends, I also had to give up the gym which kept me motivated to get up each day, gave me a place to go and be as social as I choose to be on any given day. I was thankful for the turn in the weather and make sure I walk each day just to release anxiety and eliminate additional stress.

I did not feel any comfort in the catch phrase "we are all in this together." I felt alone.

Jan, Wausau, WI

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The pandemic and current events in our country recently have caused a lot of uncomfortable and challenging thoughts and emotions. At times I have unintentionally put my own personal grief on the back burner because I've felt overwhelmed. At the same time, I feel like the current events of our country and the world has taken me out of my own grief and allowed me to listen to the grief experiences of others. I feel as if the pandemic and other events have made me realize that it's important to tell our stories and to listen to the stories of others. The state of the world has made me realize that my grief is bigger than me and that people all over the world are grieving. I want to listen and speak up for the voices who need to be heard.

Rebecca, Wausau, WI

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Grief has been so hard to deal with during this time of COVID-19. Our family hasn't had the chance to say the goodbyes, I love you – and, mostly we haven't been able to show our support to the surviving family members. During the period between Feb 15 and May 15, I had two cousins (63) an uncle (91), a great aunt (97), an aunt (89) all pass away; three of them were from one family and none had COVID-19. My

breathe gets taken away every time I think of not being able to be there; that aunt, uncle and cousin helped raise me – make me who I am. Not being able to see or have those goodbyes eats at me. As each phone call came into say that people had passed, my heart got heavier and felt more sad. To me, there really is a part of your heart that needs that time and place to say your private final words. Until we can spend time with together (extended family) my grief, sadness and heart's peace won't come. It is hard, I try to support myself with memories and tears.

Kim, Naples, Idaho

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I met the one-year anniversary of my husband's death in April and grieved alone. However, I did create a memorial picture and sent it to my friends and family, in an effort to share my grief with those who care for me. I also lit candles and listened to his favorite music. Yes, I cried and grieved like it was all new but it was cleansing. COVID-19 isolation has been a double-edged sword. On the one hand the isolation and loss seemed greater than when I was able to socialize with others face to face. Additionally, I couldn't use outside distractions to prevent me from attending to the great loss I feel when I feel it. It de-

manded my attention and I honored that and gave my grief all the time it needed. I think I am healthier and stronger for it.

Jill, Arbor Vitae, WI

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COVID-19 stay-at-home orders commenced just two weeks into our 6-week grief education and support series. I felt the disappointment of the group and their need to stay connected. It took me sometime to develop an online ZOOMGRIEF version of the series, and was overjoyed when many of those in that face-to-face group joined the virtual version. I know virtual doesn't deliver the connection that being together does; but there wasn't a choice. The virtual group has validated how important it is to not just let life go on around us and disconnect from those who give us hope. Together, we struggled together to still share the stories and memories. It also validated that learning about grief is a necessity to live with the new reality in our lives. By the end of the virtual series, I can truly say "thank you" to the participants for joining ZOOMGRIEF. And, our mission at Wings will continue, even virtually, to help people cope with loss, until we can safely meet again.

Nan Zastrow



### How to Enjoy the Summer Holidays When You are Grieving

Summer holidays are a time for family reunions, graduations, weddings, vacations, travel, picnics, and a time to suspend. This summer many of those activities are postponed or canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The “loss” of these activities and the restrictions of social distancing exaggerate the painful reminders of how things have changed. Our energy and enthusiasm are furthered minimized by lack of social gathering.

You owe it to yourself to enjoy the peace and serenity of warm summer days. Holidays and special days happen all year long... not just October, November, and December. Every single year for the rest of your life you will be faced with these repeated events. So how can you honor your loss, respect the social distancing rules and still enjoy the warm summer days?

**Having a plan that keeps you active is important. Here are a few ideas of what you can do:**

POST A FLAG AT A CEMETERY TO HONOR VETERANS

EAT A RIPE, RED STRAWBERRY COVERED WITH CHOCOLATE

WALK YOUR DOG AT A COMMUNITY DOG PARK

WATCH A FIREWORKS DISPLAY ON TELEVISION STAYING SAFE AT HOME

EAT WATERMELON UNTIL YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COULD BUST

WEAR FLIP-FLOPS AND PAINT YOUR TOENAILS A BRILLIANT COLOR

GRILL A PERFECT HAMBURGER WITH OR WITHOUT KETCHUP AND MUSTARD

TAKE A DIP IN A BACKYARD POOL

WATCH A FUNNY MOVIE ON A RAINY DAY. GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO CHUCKLE

HAVE A WATER BALLOON FIGHT WITH VERY COLD WATER

CATCH A COLORFUL DRAGONFLY AND TAKE TIME TO LEARN HIS STORY

PLANT A PERENNIAL OR TREE AND WATCH IT GROW

BIKE A CHALLENGING TRAIL AND BE THANKFUL FOR YOUR ABILITY TO MASTER IT

PICK WILDFLOWERS IN A FIELD AND CHUCKLE OVER YOUR “WILD-SIDE”

BUILD A CAMPFIRE AND ROAST MARSHMALLOWS

MOW THE LAWN AND BREATHE IN THE FRESH AROMA OF CUT GRASS

WATCH A FARMER CUT HAY IN A GREEN FIELD. ADMIRE THE HARD WORK FARMERS DO.

DRIVE TO A NEARBY CITY AND SEEK OUT POINTS OF INTEREST THAT YOU NEVER LOOKED FOR BEFORE

PICK A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER AND MAKE A WISH ABOUT YOUR FUTURE PLANS

MEDITATE IN NATURE... WHERE YOU FEEL CLOSE TO GOD

GET PHYSICAL. TAKE A LONG WALK STOPPING TO SMELL THE ROSES ALONG THE WAY

WISH UPON A FALLING STAR. IT'S A SIGN OF HOPE.

CREATE A SIMPLE RITUAL IN YOUR LOVED ONE'S NAME

PICK UP FAST-FOOD AND PICNIC NEAR THE WATER

TEACH A CHILD TO FLY A KITE

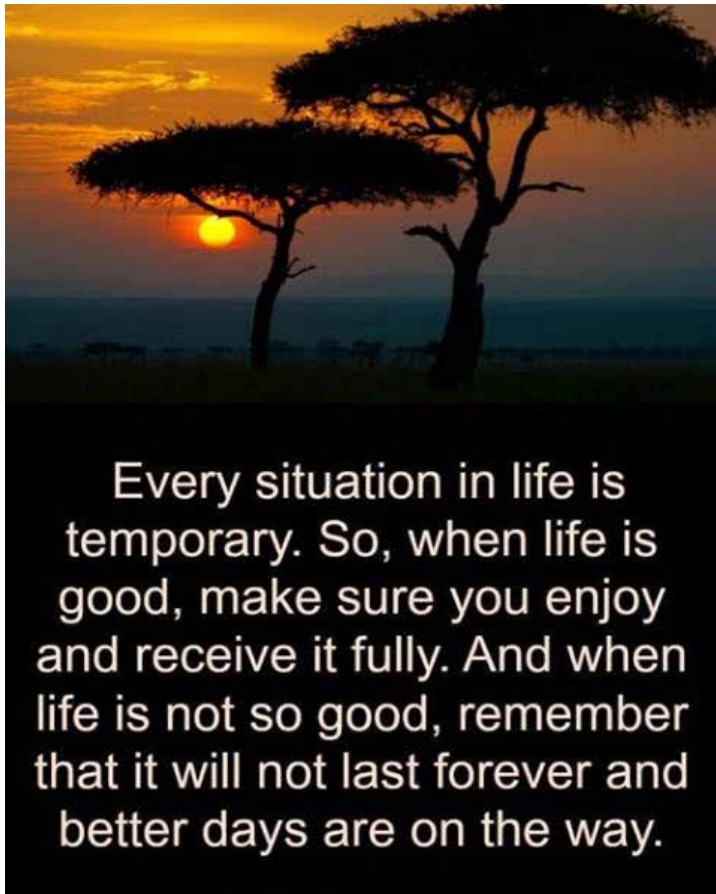
INDULGE WITH A PITCHER OF ICED TEA OR LEMON-ADE IN THE HOT SUMMER SUN

CHALLENGE SOMEONE TO A SUMMER YARD GAME

BECOME A HOMETOWN TOURIST IN YOUR OWN TOWN, AND DISCOVER HOW IT HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

PICK UP A PUTTER AND MAKE A MINIATURE GOLF COURSE IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

TAKE SELFIES AND PHOTOS IN YOUR FAVORITE PLACES AND CAPTURE LIFE IN THESE COVID TIMES.



## 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 seemed 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](mailto: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](http://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.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR UPCOMING ZOOMGrief SESSIONS



**Facilitators: Nan & Gary Zastrow,**

Certified Grief Educators, Founders of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry providing education and support since 1993. [www.wingsgrief.org](http://www.wingsgrief.org) 715.845.4159

## THE OTHER SIDE OF GRIEF—YOUR NEW REALITY

Tuesdays via ZOOMGRIEF link:

AUGUST 4, 11, 18, 25 • 6:00-7:00 p.m.

*Registration required. email [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com)*

In this NEW series, participants will learn how to accept that life after loss will gradually become their new reality. The secret is not about escaping the sorrow of grief; but, it's about finding how to build the courage to live 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 be happy again, you must be willing to accept this new chapter and grow from your experience. This interactive, Part-2, four-week series is designed for participants who are ready to discover their authentic self, challenge their fear factors, make forward choices, and become a seasoned griever gracefully.

## THINGS SOMEONE SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU ABOUT GRIEF

Tuesdays via ZOOMGRIEF link:

SEPT 22, 29 & OCT 6, 13, 20, 27 • 6:00-7:00 p.m.

*Registration required. email [nanwings1@gmail.com](mailto:nanwings1@gmail.com)*

Grief happens. No matter how prepared you think you are for death, you can never be prepared for the mixture of emotions, the pressure to move on, how the world goes on without you, and how to establish a life without your loved one. Trust your path to those who have been there! In this 6-week series, learn about and share all the things you wish someone had told you. Even though grief is normal, finding new meaning is natural and desirable. You can't go back to the way it was before, but you don't have to forget the person who died. The trick to inner peace and purpose for living again is to find out how to live without all the answers. Rebuilding your life after loss can be the greatest tribute you can give to your loved one who died.

– By Wings-A Grief Education Ministry

## HOW TO REINVENT YOUR HOLIDAYS AFTER LOSS AND COVID-19

Tuesday via ZOOMGRIEF link

DEC 8, 2020 • 7:00-8:00 p.m.

*Registration is not required. Public is welcome. Enter Zoom Meeting ID#865-0384-2535*

Holidays this year may seem less than happy and more like surviving. Plans and traditions may be altered by the death of a loved one or by social restrictions resulting from the pandemic. Nevertheless, the holidays will come and go with or without your approval. You can choose to initiate some change or skip the season all together. We'll explore the 4 major components of holidays that may cause worry: Family, Food, Traditions, and Faith. We'll share ways to "save the day" by initiating magical moments that are possible even when you are sad. Reinventing the holiday with these ideas will likely be remembered long after the time we can gather together again just like we used to. In fact, they may become your favorite new traditions!

Registration for small group ZOOMGRIEF programs is required, as handout are sent by email. As restrictions for gathering are lifted, some face-to-face programs will be resumed. These ZOOMGRIEF sessions will continue as scheduled. Sessions are open across the USA. Follow the website or the Wings Facebook Page for the latest information.



Sponsored by: Aspirus, Brainard Funeral Home, Helke Funeral Home, and Peterson Kraemer Funeral Home



# Find *hope & healing* during your **GRIEF** *with one of these books by Nan*

## **Blessed Are They That Mourn** ..... \$7.95

Written from the heart, Nan tells her story about their real grief experience and how the sudden death of her 21 year-old son impacted her future and loss of dreams. She candidly shares her attempt to resurface from unbearable pain when community and friends couldn't understand why her grief should last so long.

## **How a Fortune Cookie can Heal Grief**..... \$7.95

Did you ever think that a fortune cookie could offer a profound message of comfort, happiness and peace in a life stressed by grief? Nan weaves a modern parable of life and offers a ritual or project in grief work using the Twelve Gifts of Hope.

## **Ask Me. 30 Things I Want You to Know** ..... \$6.95

Our most popular book in its Second Edition! Offers "30 Things You Want to Know" about living beyond suicide—Helping yourself or Helping a friend. Teaches what to expect and how to respond.

## **Hitch Your Hope to a Star**..... \$7.95

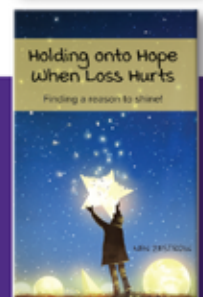
Here is a collection of journal writings about HOPE. Each shares a perspective through analogies and lessons learned. An excellent book that reassures that we are resilient individuals who survive the roller coaster experiences of life and grow from telling our stories.

## **When the Holidays Hurt**..... \$7.95

Holiday celebrations remind us of what we are missing after loss. In this book, find ideas to preserve holiday sanity and sanctity. Learn how to unwrap and add heart-warming, commemorative rituals into the holiday that honors and remembers your loved one who died.

## *New!* **Holding Onto Hope When Loss Hurts—Finding a Reason to Shine...** \$9.95

Accepting that "this is real" is the first step to finding hope. Nan believes that grief has the power to transform you. She believes our loved ones who died influence our future choices and who we choose to become after loss. Every dark cloud can have a silver lining of hope strengthened by not giving up or giving in. This book is a testimony that the sun will shine again.



Available at:

**Wings**  
A Grief Education Ministry

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

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