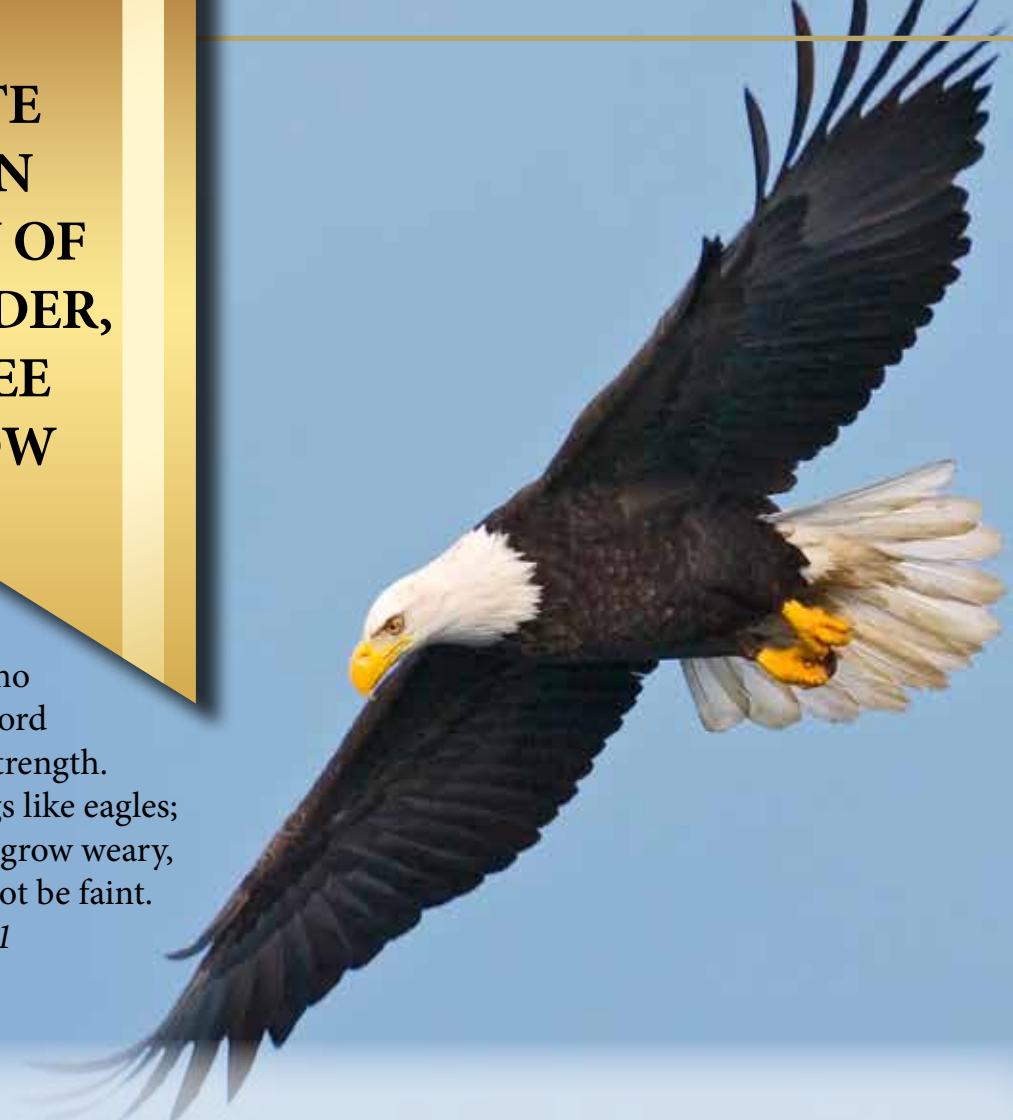


TRIBUTE
ISSUE IN
MEMORY OF
CO-FOUNDER,
GARY LEE
ZASTROW

But those who
hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary,
They will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31



Editor's Note:

This issue is a Tribute to my husband, Gary Lee Zastrow, who died unexpectedly on Jan. 15, 2023. Throughout 2023, I will be learning, once again, how to deal with “new grief” and sharing it with you.

This is the second darkest moment in my life. It is very different than the loss of my son, Chad, who died in 1993 at the age of 21 as a result of suicide. At that time, I had my husband to share the experience with, comfort me, encourage me, and we learned to understand each other's pain together.

I always knew that the grief journey IS and MUST BE...“A walk alone.” Not because you don't have support, family, or friends. But rather because no one can do it for you. They are all there to support you but this is something you go through and adapt to on your own.

One never is prepared for the death of a significant person in their life, even if you've done a grief ministry for 30 years. In April, we should be celebrating that 30-year milestone. Both of these men in my life have been the inspiration behind my writing.

Please walk with me as I step forward and review my “new” journey through grief. When I originally began the Wings magazine in 1993, I had a column that I always began with: “What I learned in my journey through grief.” I know that we are never done learning because when another significant loved one dies it's a whole new experience.

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, I hope you find something in this issue that soothes the pain and gives you hope to go on. If you are just reading it to know more about Gary, thank you for your time in feeling his spirit which touches my soul.

Wings February 2023
A Grief Education Ministry™

*Honoring the Past and
Rebuilding the Future*

www.wingsgrief.org

Published by Nan Zastrow



Gary Lee Zastrow

Born June 15 1946 | Died January 15, 2023

Gary lived the life of an adventurer often without ever leaving his hometown. He loved the act of discovery. He was always willing to take risks—and always was following a new dream. He turned his dreams into adventures and experiences, many with stories that will surely outlive him. He was a builder and salesman by profession, but a champion of the human spirit by default. He was a positive person who always sought ways to solve problems and find the “good” in any situation. He truly had the patience of a saint and the soul of an angel.

It is with great sadness, that Nan announces the death of her husband, Gary. (The best thing that ever happened to me in my life!). As a husband and father, he was more than just present. Through Gary's married life, he and his wife, Nan (Nancy), rode the adventures of their dreams together. Along the way there were ups and downs, tragedies and triumphs—all a part of the human experience. They were married June 17, 1967, in Wausau. Their first child, Jalane, was born in 1970 with special needs. A son, Chad, was born in 1971—and unknowingly created an even greater chapter of experiences that shaped the person Gary became.

Gary served his country as a veteran of the Army National Guards with the 632nd division. During his seven-year enlistment, he was called up for the riots on the Madison campus often facing his fellow schoolmates. Gary began his career in construction when he worked for Schuette Builders Companies in the 1970's. His job took him from Newnan, Georgia where a new factory was built and to Alaska where modular hotel units were being constructed. Home construction was in his blood since his childhood, when he learned the carpenter craft from his father. This foundation gave him the urge to build “spec” homes in the Wausau area from the 1990's to 2009. Many he lived in and then he would sell and build another. In a piece of raw wood, he saw the beauty of the grain. In a plot of vacant land, he saw nature wrapped around his sanctuary. And, in the design of a home, he visualized a place he loved to go home to.

Following his early dreams Gary decided to buy a hobby farm. His father, the late Herbert Zastrow, became his friend and partner in the hobby business that evolved from raising polled Herfords to a full herd of dairy cows. In the late 1980's he gave up his hobby of 17 years, due to the struggling farming industry and high interest rates that forced the “little” guys to fold. In addition to his hobby farming, he worked full-time. The housing market also was in trouble and his career took him to brighter beginnings as an outside commercial salesman for Crescent Electric for the next 16 years.

Gary's entrepreneurship was varied. He was a Building Inspector for the Town of Stettin from the late 1970s through the 1980s. At one point, he purchased flavored popcorn vending machines, to place around the Wausau area; but the company went bankrupt before they were ever delivered. And, of course, his love of construction in the 1990's, took him through the adventure of building spec homes until the market crashed in 2009.

But the most notable change in careers was his midlife career change to become a real estate agent in 2001. When others his age were talking retirement, Gary started a whole new career in helping other people follow their dreams. As a realtor for Coldwell Banker Action, Schofield, he created a following of people who sought the vision he had more than once through the years—home ownership.

In 1993, Chad Zastrow, the son of Gary and Nan died at the age of 21 as a result of suicide. It was a devastating blow that turned Gary and Nan's life into a new mission. Together, they founded Wings—a Grief Education Ministry™ that became their vision of hope for the bereaved. Beginning in 1993, Gary and Nan served the community with workshops, presentations, support groups, and HOPE. This was the greatest legacy they could give to the community in honor of their son.

Everyone who knew Gary seemed to radiate to him. Words to describe his character would be: undeniably patience, common-sense wise, problem-solver, honest to the core, trustworthy, great sense of humor, loyal-loving husband, compassionate, mind-your-own business, and a loyal friend. Raised with a strong German/Polish heritage, work ethics were strong, and retirement didn't seem to be an option. Always ready to learn something new, in 2018 Gary volunteered to continue his education about mediation and become a volunteer mediator for Judicare.

Gary was an only child, the son of Herbert and Lucille Zastrow, Town of Stettin. He was preceded in death by his son, Chad E. Zastrow. He is survived by: by his wife, Nancy; daughter Jalane. Nan's sister, Sally Johnson (Clarence/Ole) Wausau, and brother, Tom Bentz (Karen), Venice FL. Also, by a loved niece, Jennifer Johnson-Mroczeni (Glenn), Paige Sedlar and Dustin Sedlar.

He will be missed beyond words by his wife of 55 years, Nan Zastrow. She described him as her rock and like her son, Chad, who inspired their life, Gary was the “wind beneath her wings.” He encouraged her dreams of making their non-profit visible and reachable for anyone who needed it. They were both professional volunteers who served from the heart to help others. In the many years of working and companioning the bereaved, Nan always admitted that losing a lifetime, loving spouse is the greatest loss of all. Nan acknowledges that Gary's influence on her life will continue as his spirit will be with her always. Love never dies!



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What I Learned about Healing the Pain of Grief in the Early Days

By Nan Zastrow

According to my mentor, Dr. Alan Wolfelt, to Mourn means to be “torn apart.” I believe this. Heart, Mind and Spirit. Every part of your body pauses and absorbs the pain of loss. Your heart hurts. Your mind is overwhelmed. And your spirit is broken. Over the past few weeks, I tried to make a list of things that are helping me heal from my most recent loss of my beloved husband, Gary. I expect I will be adding to this list. I’m learning everyday. Though many may not all apply to you, try just one or two and see if it can make a difference.

1. Write personal thank you notes. Everyone who honors your loved one with flowers, gifts, food, cards, or their presence wants you to feel their connection with your loved one. A personal note establishes respect and gratefulness for them taking time to remember you in your hour of need.

2. Lean on a friend, but don’t cling. You need support for a lengthy time after significant loss. Not every day, every hour, or every moment...but you do need continued support. Clinging isn’t the answer whether that is family or friends. You need to “lean” on those that care. However, eventually, you need to live on your own.

3. Collect on the Offer of “Let me know.” Think of all the people who said, “Let me know if I can help you in any way.” Do it. Call them. You are not being weak or needy. Grief zaps your energy and your ability to do all you did before. Call a friend and don’t be embarrassed to ask for help.

4. Pick up a “characteristic” of your loved one and adopt it for yourself. What is it that people remember most about your loved one? It’s his/her legacy. It will stick with them for years when they remember him/her. Adopt this “personality characteristic” for yourself. What better way to honor who he/she was!

5. Select a mantra. This can be a verse, a poem, or a short phrase that gives you strength and courage for the days ahead and may be as simple as, “I can do this!” Repeat it often. I pasted a significant quote to my mirror to remind me to read and repeat.

6. Pick one thing you enjoyed doing together and figure out how you can do it alone. Sounds daunting. But if there was truly something you enjoyed together, it made you happy and it can again. You might have to change how you do it, but there are always options. If this one thing doesn’t work, try another.

7. Set up a new daily routine. Life has changed. It’s different now. A new or revised routine makes it easier to begin the day without your loved one because you are setting a pattern that’s comfortable for you. I set my alarm for a regular time. I brew a cup of coffee



and sit down and read a scripture lesson from a daily inspirational book. I might look at my phone or listen to the weather, but then I am ready to face the day.

8. Love your space. Recreate the space you live in every day. My husband liked it when I did seasonal decorating. So I'm continuing to do it. Creating a changed or heart-warming environment helps treasure the peace and happy times you spent together in the home. We moved to a condo and he kept telling me, "I'm so happy we moved here when we did." So my "love your space rules" continue: rearrange the furniture, hang the pictures, paint, or splurge on something that upgrades a look.

9. Notify. Don't procrastinate. It's inevitable that you will need to do so sooner or later. Notifying people, credit cards, organizations etc. is a very difficult thing to do. Each one is personal and may bring tears and pain all over. But, it's even more painful when you meet someone in a store or go to an appointment and have to say "My loved one died." And they respond with, "I didn't know."

10. Create some noise. The silence speaks volumes. When there are two of you in the house, there is always some kind of noise. Recreate a background either with music, television, or the world outside. I tend to talk to myself. It's only my voice, but I think he can hear me.

11. Create a mealtime ritual for one meal of the day. For a designated meal of the day, I light the memorial candle with Gary's picture on it and set it before me as I eat. I use dishes, not paper plates. His smile makes me feel things will be okay.

12. Duplicate something he did to make you laugh or smile. Once he gave me this crazy looking green stuffed toy. I named it Gringo. He would take Gringo and put him in different places around the house. For example, looking out a window, in the kitchen-because he was hungry, or tucked in bed. It always made me laugh or smile. Gary was like that: bringing home something to make me smile. I took Gringo out of the closet and started setting him in different places. Perks me up every time.

13. Create a "Circle of Friends" List. This is a special list of about 6 people you can count on to listen, not judge, and give unconditional love. Keep it handy. When the moment strikes that you "need a friend", start at the top of the list and go down til you find someone available to chat for a few minutes.

14. Wear your "good clothes" and jewelry. I always kept the "good things" for special occasions. My husband started urging me to wear them. "What are you saving them for?" he would ask. Make yourself feel better by wearing things that make you feel good.



15. Buy your own flowers. I love bouquets of fresh flowers and my husband often brought them home. There is no rule that says someone must send them to you. Buy your own. I typically enjoy them for a while and then take selected blossoms to the cemetery. I do this especially on holidays when people are around. I believe the flowers absorb their energy and love of the people around you, and I want to share that.

16. Don't let your creativity lapse. My husband kept telling me, "Don't lose your creativity. It makes you alive inside." I was sick before he died, and my wounded spirit couldn't ignite my creative thoughts. Gary kept encouraging me to "discover". What is it that can lull you into a sense of imagination, spontaneity, and motivation. Discover and create!

17. Get Active. Everyone will tell you this, but it does work. Continue or start an exercise routine that makes you move at least for 30 minutes every day. It could be a walk outside, using exercise equipment, bowling, or going to the gym. The key is movement. It activates the happy genes. If not happy...at least content.

18. Intentionally, plant a memory. This one happened by accident, but it's a great idea. In the bottom of my laundry hamper lies a business card of Gary's with his picture smiling at me. Every week when I do the laundry and get to the bottom, I see it and smile back. I'm going to leave it there. It's always makes this task a little easier.

19. Start a “How to book”. I always told him I was going to start a notebook of how to do things he automatically did. I didn’t do that, so now is the time. Recent things include how to change the furnace filter and how to play a DVD on the television.

20. Begin a “Meal Plan notebook. It’s hard to “cook” or make meals when you are alone. I started a book that lists “ideas for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.” I record things that satisfied me. Made notes on what I could freeze in single portions. I also recorded “take home” items from restaurants, if I liked them warmed up. (I’m not a left-over lover.) When you can’t decide “what’s for dinner”, this notebook really helps!

21. Find something that keeps your mind/brain “active.”

This would be my computer. Gary used to tell me I was having an affair with my computer. When Chad died, I confessed, “I always wanted to write, but I didn’t have anything to write about.” Chad’s death challenged that need. And now Gary’s will do the same. I have a new perspective now and this will be my way to express how I feel and how I travel the journey ahead.

22. Begin simplifying. Looking around I see just too many things we really haven’t used or don’t really need. We talked about reducing the clutter but didn’t get around to it. I’m going to do it now so someone else doesn’t have to deal with it after I die. Some things you need to hang onto for sentimental reasons. That’s okay for as long as you want them around. Read my article: [Your Legacy Isn’t About a Box of Stuff](#) at my website.



23. Show gratitude: It’s my desire to live consistent with my values. Showing gratitude is important to me and I want to do so with sincerity. Life is not about what I have or want. Gratitude turns what we have into enough. My values are Faith, Family and Friends. For these I am grateful.

24. Continue to honor your loved one’s resting place. Love never dies. And though he/she lives in your heart, it also does one good to stop and visit occasionally. I like talking to my son and husband when I’m there. Just seeing their names engraved on the stone reminds me they lived and loved. I feel their presence and the bonds we shared.

25. Get your own affairs in order. Update Legal documents. This includes wills, trust funds, power of attorney, and advance directives. Don’t think there is always time a little later. Death does not make an appointment.

26. Gradually move things around. Items such as pictures, clothing and personal belongings begin to play heavily on your mind as to what you should do with them. I found just moving some things out of sight at times helped. I started moving clothing into a different closet and personal items that someday I’ll need to distribute into an isolated area. You don’t need to deal with them right away. There is time to decide the right place for each. However, if it hurts, they don’t need to be an everyday reminder of someone loved missing.

27. Begin a file of “Where it is kept” or Important documents. Just let someone know where it is when needed. This list can include bank accounts, safe deposit box, passwords to accounts, insurance policies etc. Don’t let someone else saying, “I haven’t got a clue of where to look.”

28. Begin a file of your desires for your own funeral. If you want it to be memorable, plan it yourself. No one knows better than you what is important in your life and what you want family and friends to know. Box up memorable pictures. Pick out scripture verses and songs for the service. Maybe suggest a theme or colors, or “a particular message”.

29. Ditch the regrets. We all have the shoulda, “woulda” and “coulda” regrets after loss. I wish I woulda said this, or hugged him more, appreciated all he did more—and told him over and over again. I used to do that and he would say, “You don’t have to thank me.” I’d answer, “Yes, I do. I really appreciate you. I’ll say it again and again.”

30. Tackle your fears by adjusting your mindset. Change your cant’s into can’s and objections into plans. When you believe something is possible, your chances of achieving it are greater. There are so many things I thought he did that I just couldn’t do. I’m starting with a “maybe” mindset and trying it when realistic. Sometimes it surprises me when I accomplish the task.

31. Play feel good music when you feel down. There is nothing more invigorating than jacking up the music you love. Close the windows and doors and let it blast. Then sing along until your heart softens and the tears quit.

32. Appreciate those that continue to check in on you—for however long. One friend told me, “You may have to get a restraining order, because I’m going to keep checking.” Even if you are doing okay that day, value those that care enough to check in again and again. Let them know you appreciate it! Others will be on their way with their own lives shortly after the funeral.

33. If you had a purpose before loss, continue it or find a new one. I love the quote: “What is my purpose in life?” Answer: “The purpose in life is to find a purpose.” Most times you don’t have to dream up a purpose.

It will find you. Seize any opportunity that warms your soul. It may lead to your purpose now.

34. Honor the “one day at a time” approach. Each morning is a new day, a new beginning, a chance to make it better than yesterday. Yes, some days will “suck” but have your “pity party” and then give the day a new start. It’s okay to feel sad and sorry for yourself. But you are the only one that can heal your grief. It belongs to you. Own it. Grieve it. Heal it.

35. Grieve...and grieve well. You don’t need to apologize for tears, meltdowns, or moments of intense grief. To love is to grieve. It’s your heart mending and renewing for however long it takes. Then choose to live first and grieve second.

36. Fool others and you can fool yourself. This can help you get to reality and acceptance. Others will continually ask, “How are you doing?” You want to say, “I’m not.” If you can instead reply with something positive or productive that you are doing, it may camouflage what really hurts inside. They will respond positively. Eventually, the positivity may grow on you, and you may even fool yourself.

37. Treat life as a gift. Right now, you know too well that nothing is promised. Every day is a gift, that’s why they call it the present. Take it slow but progress into “life after.” Be grateful for those moments of joy and celebrate them.

(Note: I’m still learning and I expect I’ll be adding to this list as my grief evolves. Hope you get one idea to lessen the pain of loss.)



This article is copyrighted. I intend to expand and publish in a mini-book. You may share, but please don't do so without all credits (2023. Nan Zastrow, Wings-a Grief Education Ministry, wingsgrief.org)



EDITOR'S JOURNAL

NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

TAKING THE RISK “LIVE FOR WHAT TODAY HAS TO OFFER. NOT WHAT YESTERDAY HAS TAKEN AWAY.”

Note: I wrote this article before Gary's death.

Some text changed to reflect the unexpected outcome. Little did I know....

Mortality. We never think about it until we are faced with life's challenging circumstances. And then it is very vivid, frightening, and overwhelming. Subconsciously, in our youth, and often going forward, we all think we are going to live forever.

A doctor in the hospital, (shortly before Gary died), told my husband and me. You have two choices: “You can take the risk or not be here anymore”. When you put it that way, sometimes it's pretty easy to make a decision. This past year has been a horrible year for me and I'm just coming out of the cloud of unbelievable medical events. God was always there. Even when I felt abandoned and defeated. So many “good” things happened “just in time” for me that gave me that bump back to believing “everything will be okay,

Taking the risk for me was frightening, but Gary encouraged me so strongly along the way to continue to fight. “We'll do this together,” he kept telling me. Little did I know that my fight would work, but his just weeks later wouldn't when he took medical risks to improve his own life. I lost the best thing that ever happened to me in my life.

But this writing isn't only about Gary and me and our recent struggles. It's a reality story about understanding how precious life and death are. It's about reevaluating

what's really important. It's about counting your true friends on two hands and being grateful for their presence in your life. It's about preserving family, letting



them in during your struggles, and being grateful if you have those people to support you. It's about all the people you've met on your journey and being grateful if you have left one small thing (a smile, a word, a touch, or a memory) as your legacy of who you were in this world. It's about being thankful for what you have, not what you wish, want, or never got.

I present a ZOOMGRIEF class on How to Begin a New Year with Hope. And I realized this year how much that really applies to not just getting over the death of a significant loved one, but for every other loss, disappointment, misunderstanding, or setback in life. In it, I stress that we all have intentions, not resolutions, in a New Year. An intention is a choice or plan that involves action to improve thoughts, actions, and feelings. The only time it happens is when a person truly chooses to make it happen and then they must be ready. The beauty of a new year is... it's "new". Buddha says, "Every day is a new beginning." Taking this philosophy forward, it can be a fresh start.

This basically gives us the privilege and opportunity to correct any imbalance, blunder, missed opportunity, or desire in our life. It truly begins with accepting the challenge and creating a positive mindset to make it happen! That's where I am today. Last year and January of this year were a miserable catastrophic mixture of circumstances, and most days were accompanied by a loss of hope. I couldn't change that because my spirit was wounded, and I felt defeated and let down. I can only see that now, looking back. And you could not have convinced me otherwise at times throughout the year.

What I did re-discover was perseverance, due to a handful of friends, and especially my husband, that "walked with me" encouraging me. I was also revived by those people I was "coaching" going through grief, and unbelievable sadness. They hurt! And I remember that kind of hurt for the same reason. It's pretty hard to convince someone of hope when the pain is so unbearable that it doesn't seem possible that life can be bearable again. I sit with them and listen. Words are inadequate.

I walk in their shoes now, once again. Gary would want me to survive and somehow, God willing, I will! We all have resilience at some level, and we can build it to a greater level. I want to encourage others---"I've been there. You may not see it now, but there is a rainbow behind the storm. You will find Hope again." I'm counting on it! And by God, I'm going to find that rainbow!



I've been honored and privileged to carry on the mission of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry. I've heard countless stories of loss that seem so much more heart-wrenching than my own loss of my precious son, Chad Zastrow, 30 years ago and now my husband, Gary. You will never forget significant loss completely. I have been blessed to share a message of understanding the path and growing through grief. This was our mission. To continue to teach, share, and listen. This is the reason for Wings. This is the legacy I share with you. A message that even in the darkest moments of your life, you can choose to take the risk or not be here anymore (mindfully present with love and joy) to your family and friends.

Take the risk: If you feel stuck in your grief, take the risk, seek help and support. If you live with anger, fear, resentment, or regrets, take the risk. Face your adversaries and resolve your grudges. If family relationships have declined, take the risk, mend them. If your loved one died, honor them by living life again.

Risk will always be a part of our lives. It just is. Some things we can control, but most we can't. Set your

intention this year to change your mindset and whatever you doubt. Let it go, and make life happen! Every day is a new beginning. That's my intention and my challenge. I challenge you to do the same.

I'm privileged to have this beautiful message from Dr. Wolfelt after Gary's death. It was read at his funeral. Gary and I were students of Dr. Wolfelt, first meeting him in 1996. He has continued to be our mentor throughout the years.

About Gary

Reflections from Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D., C.T.,
Center for Loss and Life Transition
January 2023

I had the honor of meeting Gary and Nan in 1993 at a workshop I was teaching here in Wisconsin. I was instantly struck by Gary's compassion and desire to help his family, friends and community surrounding grief and loss. He and Nan shared with me their first issue of Wings magazine. What a privilege to watch them go on to touch so many lives through their 30-year heart-centered grief ministry.

Gary was not only Nan's husband, but he was also her best friend, confidante, and soulmate. They shared a genuine love of helping people experiencing grief. You rarely saw one of them without the other. Their passion for grief support originated from the death of their precious son, Chad. I witnessed them commit themselves to doing their own work of mourning in ways that inspired them to go on to companion so many hurting souls.

Gary exuded the core conditions we look for in gifted caregivers— genuineness, empathy, and warmth. He could create sacred space for people to take their grief and allow it to become authentic mourning. What will I most remember about my friend and colleague? Without doubt it will be his signature smile and unforgettable laugh. He could take someone that was in raw hurt and before they walked away they would experience hope- "an expectation of a good that is yet to be." What a gift this man put out into the world.

Yes, Gary made people feel instantly safe and cared for. He brought a persistent patience and unconditional love to those who were fortunate enough to cross paths with him. I imagine all of our collective memories include witnessing a man that was a dedicated husband and a true friend. My life has been enriched by coming to know Gary Zastrow. We often say, "Death ends a life, not a relationship." Thank God Gary left a legacy for all us to aspire to in our daily lives: Be kind, be generous, laugh often, and love with all of your heart.

Reader Feedback



My husband recently died and I found out a beautiful memory so many people mentioned about him. I always knew it was there, but never realized he shared it with so many.

What do you or others remember MOST about your loved one? What is that special “personality trait” that made him/her special?

My husband Jim was known as the Calming Force and the voice of reason in any situation. He was a magical presence to be around.

Donna
Surprise, AZ

I remember my husband’s genuine kindness and caring for others. Most of all I remember how much he made me feel loved.

Bunny
Boynton Beach, FL

The significant personality trait our daughter displayed consistently was her subtle ability to befriend individuals that other people tended to shun for a variety of reasons. Many friends who received her thoughtful compassion encouraged us at her funeral, very grateful that she “took them under her wing” and made them feel special.

Gary
Toronto, Canada

My son’s smile was infectious and when he was in the presence of others all were drawn to him.

He was affectionately known as the family “Ox” as he was strong and our heavy lifter when things needed to be moved.

Tara
Antigo, WI

My son, Brandon, died by suicide 1/9/22. He will forever be 41. We learned from his coworkers during his funeral that Brandon was considered fun to work with. He was also considered generous as he was involved in several fundraisers. He, his family, and his team of volunteers, for example, raised over \$100,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society after his son, my grandson Logan, was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma 5 years ago at the age of 13. He and his wife ran fundraisers for basketball teams in their community and their sons’ school. Brandon donated his time to kids. He was known as Coach B to many children from the teams that he coached. He and his wife also fostered dogs for a local shelter and rescue.

Lori
Blacklick, Ohio

Well,...I choose Gary Zastrow! The characteristic remember most is seeing a gentle man who smiled when he talked. Even for people who didn’t know him when they looked at his nice face, they could not help thinking, “Now, here is a nice man--a very nice man.”

Love, Bob Baugher (name included with permission)

My husband’s sense of humor

Flora
Hatley, WI

George was so effervescent. He reminded me of a puppy wagging its tail. Loved every holiday, loved life! He was my world, my person, the only man that ever loved me, we got each other, we clicked.

Kay
Oakridge, OR

For Dan (died Oct. 2010) He’s remembered for his sense of humor and fairness. Always had a ear for everyone, especially children and loved his beer and sports.

Ann

READER FEEDBACK...CONTINUED

My husband's laugh.

Meredith
Mosinee WI

What I cherished about my loved one was his communication ability. He was an excellent listener and truly cared greatly about others' thoughts and lives. He was so sincere. People loved having him around knowing he really did care about WHO they were.

Karen,
Florida

My mom Jane. She was a very good loving mother and wanted the best for me. Mom of course knew how many hard struggles I went through and always gave me wonderful support and love. I would have traded my life for mom's. I tried to protect mom from anything and everyone who would have tried to hurt her in any way. Hence, mom nicknamed me her "tiger" and cherish that forever. Mom was very smart and kind, but could read people so clearly, even family members who showed their true colors. Mom's love, support, and trust means so much to me and I followed mom's wishes to keep my promise to her. I love and will miss mom forever.

Debbie

We had a Celebration of Life for Jim in September. I don't know how many people told me they felt their lives were better because of having met Jim. He was kind and he was friendly and made them feel welcome.

My grandniece said she would always remember his smile and that he always seemed happy. What are some of MY favorite memories? I will never forget how he held me when we danced, or how safe I felt when he hugged me. And of course, I will always remember how much he loved to scare me! Jim died on July 5, 2022, and August 16, 2022 would have been our 64th Anniversary. It turned out that August 16, 2022, was my first meeting with Wings!

Carole
Weston, Wisconsin

Patrick had the biggest heart. He had compassion, caring, kindness, loving. Always willing to help others in need. He lived life to the fullest. Best friend to all especially me. He will live on through me. I will honor him every day and speak his name always. I am his soulmate, his partner

Renee
Marathon City, WI

The most memorable characteristic of my wife was always her reply to "How are you?" ... she would reply without fail and always with a smile ... "just peachy, thank you."

Dean
Wausau WI

My husband, Earl, was known for doing things Earl's way. He always thought outside the box. He loved helping others. He enjoyed all trees and wildlife. He planted many trees and gave trees to local elementary schools for Earth Day.

He enjoy brain storming about inventions and creating many unique things. His story telling and sense of humor is greatly missed by so many people. He worked hard all his life. He loved providing for his family. He enjoyed playing cards, being outdoors, hunting, fishing and making firewood. He was always up for an adventure! He was the Yin and I was the Yang! My heart is not whole without him!

Kelly
Rosholt, WI

One of the things I remember about my husband is that he was always willing to help people in need. One time he even wanted to give one of his kidneys to someone who needed one. I hope that we can meet again.

Arline
Mosinee, WI

Mom was known for her Moxy! At 14, Drs. said she needed heart surgery, she bravely said no. When life tried to get the best of her, she fought and won.

We honored her everyday, and as we said goodbye we remembered her for her amazing strength.

Nanci
Woodruff, WI

I remember my boyfriend Patrick's selflessness and sense of humor the most. He was the type of person who put everyone else before himself, and cared so much about helping out friends and loved ones in his life. He also was so funny and sarcastic, making everyone laugh with his stories and jokes. Patrick was such a fun person to talk to and enjoy a laugh with.

Rebecca
Wausau, WI

TAKE THEM WITH YOU

If someone you love did not make it on that trip you can take it *for them with them.*

If someone you love did not witness that milestone you can show them anytime you like.

If someone you love did not get to do *their* living you can finish those dreams on their *behalf.*

The beautiful thing about love you see is that death need not stop **life**

If you carry someone in your **heart** you can take them with you anywhere you like.

Donna Ashworth



ANNOUNCING A SEMINAR FOR THE BEREAVED AND CAREGIVERS

***In-person Event*

Tuesday Evening Sept. 12
and Wednesday Morning Sept. 13

Bob Baugher, PhD.
Grief Specialist | Death and Grief Educator

Watch for more details

Holding Onto Hope When Loss Hurts

Finding a reason to shine!

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

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

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

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

- Bunny, Florida



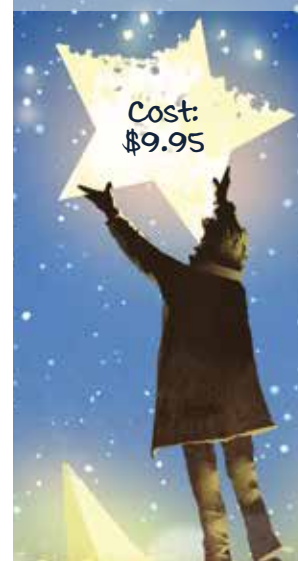
NAN ZASTROW

Available at:

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

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

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



What I will miss about Gary

- His contagious laugh.
- Ever smiling or trying to get me to smile even in tough times.
- His romantic brown eyes.
- Singing off key or mouthing the words.
- Bouncing the proverbial ball reminding me to keep life in balance.
- Telling me every day, “I love you. Don’t ever forget it.”
- Encouraging me with undeniable strength: “We’ll get through this together.”
- Planting flowers to make me happy or store-bought carrots in someone’s garden.
- Saying “we” instead of “I” or “me”.
- Buying me flowers “just because”, always with a single red rose.
- Rides—every single day since COVID.
- Sharing a banana every morning for breakfast.
- Long talks, in depth about life and death.
- Calling me on the land line because I never carried my cell phone.
- Sharing hopes and dreams and plans if we won the lottery.
- Laughing at our history together... we were so young.
- Together—cleaning, cooking, gardening,
- Snuggling under a shared blanket to watch a movie on TV.
- A little rivalry. Taking opposite sides in the football game.
- Encouraging me to “stay” creative, write, plan parties, create games and enjoy the moment.
- Reminding him that he was my “hero”—the best of the best.
- His patience in every task, situation, or challenge. Unbelievable!
- Proud to be married to him.
- Every day, thinking about all the things I will have to do by myself for the rest of my life.
- **And everything I ever took for granted.**



Death Is Nothing At All

By Henry Scott-Holland

Death is nothing at all.

It does not count.

I have only slipped away into the next room.

Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.

I am I, and you are you,

and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.

Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.

Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.

Put no difference into your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.

Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same as it ever was.

There is absolute and unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval,

somewhere very near,

just round the corner.

All is well.

Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.

One brief moment and all will be as it was before.

How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!



Be Good to Yourself SELF CARE TIP



Practice a new way to let go of expectations

Sometimes we must consciously choose a different path than the one we have gone in the past. You may need to “force” yourself to not compare how things used to be. Find encouragement in “change” and intentionally plan to do a particular task, thought, or place you went before to be “different.” Allow things to unfold naturally and be open to however it turns out. When we let go of how we think things should be, it allows us to find comfort, joy and peace in the present moment.



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. I hope you enjoy this new series. —TVB

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

the sixteenth President of the United States of America

The compelling story of the life of Abraham Lincoln is familiar to millions. Lincoln was born in a log cabin, was raised in near poverty, and was self-educated. He studied law and was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1836 before serving in the state legislature and as a member of Congress. Lincoln entered into a series of famous debates in the senatorial race in Illinois against Stephen A. Douglas, and these debates poll-vaulted him to national prominence.

In 1860, Lincoln was elected president, and his entire term of office coincided with the Great American Civil War. He spent his presidency trying to hold the Union together during the country's time of greatest trial. He was re-elected as president in 1864.

One night in the second week of April 1865 – the very week that General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox – Lincoln had a dream which seemed to foretell of his assassination. In relating it to his wife and others, he said, “I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered, and

before me was a catafalque on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. ‘Who is dead in the White House?’ I demanded of one of the soldiers. ‘The President,’ was his answer. ‘He was killed by an assassin.’”

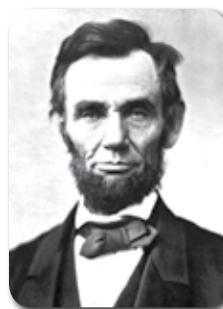
On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Lincoln was seated in the presidential box at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. to see the play *Our American Cousin*. Shortly before 10:00 PM, 26-year-old actor John Wilkes Booth, a Southern sympathizer, entered the box and shot the President. Booth then jumped onto the stage, breaking his left leg. Yelling “*Sic Semper Tyrannis*” (which means “ever thus to tyrants”), he escaped from the theater.

The bullet from the one-shot derringer entered the back of Lincoln's head. Later examination showed that its course was obliquely forward toward the left eye, crossing the brain diagonally and lodging a few inches behind the left eye. In the track of the wound were found fragments of bone, which were embedded in the anterior lobe of the left hemisphere of the brain.

The mortally wounded Lincoln was taken to a room in the Petersen Boarding House across the street from the theater where Lincoln died the following morning, on April 15th at 7:22 AM. His body was returned to the White House that day.

The embalming surgeon firm of **Brown & Alexander** were engaged to embalm Lincoln's body. The actual embalming procedures were done by **Henry P. Cattell**. Lincoln lay in state in the East Room, as in his dream, on April 17th. His solid walnut casket was lead lined and covered with black broadcloth.

On April 18th, about 25,000 people came to view Lincoln's body. On April 19th, sixty clergymen and President Andrew Johnson attended funeral services in the East Room of the White House. On that evening, Lincoln's body was taken to the rotunda of the Capitol, where all the next day it lay in state. Thousands more people, including the war wounded, passed the fallen President's casket.



Lincoln's remains were placed on board a seven-car funeral train on Friday April 21st at 8:00 AM. The officer in charge of the funeral train said, “History has no parallel to the outpouring of sorrow which followed the funeral cortege from Washington to Springfield.” The funeral train stopped in the following cities so that Lincoln's remains could be viewed: Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, Chicago, and finally Springfield, Illinois, where the train arrived on May 3rd at 8:00 AM.

Lincoln's body lay in the State Capitol in Springfield where 75,000 people passed his open casket. On May 4th, a funeral procession moved from the State Capitol to **Oak Ridge Cemetery**, where thousands of mourners listened to hymns and prayers.

On November 7, 1876, a gang of counterfeiters broke into the tomb to steal Lincoln's body. The sarcophagus was opened, and Lincoln's casket partially taken out. The counterfeiters planned to demand cash and also the release of their master engraver, who was in the Illinois State Prison. Luckily, a paid informant alerted the Secret Service, and the plan was foiled.

In 1901, Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's eldest son, visited the monument disguised as a workman. He said that his father's remains were still in danger of being stolen. Lincoln's body was then placed 13 feet in the ground and surrounded by more than 10 feet of solid cement.

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

FUNERAL HOME & CEMETERY NEWS
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FROM THE ARCHIVES

NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings – A Grief Education Ministry

IN THE PRESENCE OF ANGELS

This article was written about my son, Chad, but I've felt the presence of angels in the recent death of my husband, Gary. I decided to share it again.

“I can't say I've ever seen an angel; but I do believe they have intervened in my life, without showing me their presence. I continue to feel and believe in the presence of angels and could relate countless times that at least one of them has soothed my tears, given me courage, comforted me when I felt hurt, protected my loved one, guided me with direction, renewed my faith when I had doubts, and just held my hand.

Angels are everything I want them to be, whether they are the heavenly or real-life kind. I confirm that both kinds of angels exist! I can see visions of angels in the bright morning light, in the essence of my dreams, and in the realities of life's experiences.

That article still intrigues me because it was written at a time when angels brought me lots of hope. I collected Seraphim angels. I created an angelic Christmas tree. I felt comforted by the thought that these heavenly beings existed and brought goodness, protection, and peace into the souls of grieving souls. They were symbolic to some, but real to me.

On more than one occasion, I was also reminded about the real life angels and the messages they sometimes brought to me when I really needed them. Some brought messages that comforted me after my son Chad died (and now my husband)—because I missed him so much.

I've received messages like these:

On a misty autumn day, I visited Chad's grave to say a prayer. I needed a place to go to be all alone. Just a short time to gather my thoughts and strengthen my sense of hope. Some place where I felt close to God. Planted in the wet soil, near the stone, were two fresh carnations, tied with a bow. A message on a card read, “I miss you, Chad.” The young woman (I'm assuming a woman) who left this thoughtful gift is still a mystery to me. But she brightened my day with a ray of hope. She still missed Chad, just like me. It was nice to know that even people I didn't know missed him.

Only a few days later, I received a phone call from one of Chad's friends. I missed his friends. Someone was always at the house getting ready for the next hunting trip, gathering camping equipment, raiding the refrigerator, or watching movies, sprawled on the floor. The first year after his death (1993), it was common to see one of them at the door or on the phone, but as the years went by, life got busy...and in the natural sequence of things, we didn't see his friends anymore. But the phone call was a message reminding me how often others thought about Chad.

Even years after his death, I encountered people who knew Chad and made a point to tell me about their relationship with him. What better day could there be than someone out of Chad's past who was willing to speak his name and let me know he was not forgotten?

I haven't had those kind of encounters yet, since my husband, Gary's death; but know instinctively they will happen.

In recent years, I've been especially intrigued by angels of the earthly kind—those that happen into our lives, just because. These angels can touch, feel, see, and manage to know us on a very intimate level. We may actually know our earthly angels by name! We bond with them. We experience life with them. There is no question about their existence.

I've also met a lot of special angels during my journey through grief. Many of them I've met through our grief work and called them "friends." Like me, they were people struggling to make sense out of this turn of events in their lives that changed who they were and what their purpose was.

I've been blessed with countless angels who have served as my mentors. Oh, how significant that has been! God placed you in my path; and I had the sense to value all that you gave to me. Your encouragement and connection are priceless!

With great humility, I want to acknowledge all my angels. I can't name you by name because the list would be too long. And, more than one of you would protest, saying you don't feel worthy of your name being on my List of Angels. That's what makes you so special. You don't have to feel like an angel to be one. But, in my heart, I believe you are.

To all my angels: You were there when I needed you. You were there when the day wasn't as bright as I wanted it to be. You were there when the news I received wasn't as good as I wanted it to be. You were there when I didn't feel as strong as I thought I should. You were there to pat me on the shoulder with a sincere pat that meant "it's okay." You were there in tragedy and triumph. You were there.

You may have come to me in your own grief and allowed me to feel your pain. I felt humbled by the raw emotion because it reminded me of the price of my own pain/loss. You graciously allowed me to share my stories about Chad and Gary—because you really wanted to know about them. We shared the burden of buried grief. You allowed me to teach you about grief and welcomed my support on your own journey. What you didn't realize was that listening to your story and your grief only served to continually heal my own spirit. In those times, we were angels ministering to each other, bearing witness to life changed by loss.

Even on great days, my angels were there. You gave me accolades on something I wrote. You flattered me when I shouldn't have been flattered. You were there to laugh with me. You even found fun in laughing at me for my comical blunders. You were there to enjoy good times, fun times...great events. You were my past and my present. You shared old memories and helped me create new ones. You are family. You are a friend. You are a relative. You were my spouse. You are a neighbor. You are a casual acquaintance. You are a co-worker. You are someone I've recently met or someone I've known forever. You know who you are...but you don't know that you are an angel.

Let your light continue to shine. You radiate with goodness not only to me, but you bless those around you. You are special. You are appreciated. You are loved. You'll always be my angel. I'm honored to live in the presence of angels. God Bless Them, Everyone!

Footnote: Thank you to all of my "angels" here for me when Gary died. I could not have borne the burden of grief those first days without you. And I believe that angels will help me through this new journey as well for as long as it lasts. Be an angel. Be kind. You never know who you are helping in their darkest moment.

Wind Beneath My Wings

It must have been cold there in my shadow
To never have sunlight on your face
You were content to let me shine, that's your way
You always walked a step behind

So I was the one with all the glory
While you were the one with all the strength
A beautiful face without a name for so long
A beautiful smile to hide the pain

Did you ever know that you're my hero
And everything I would like to be?
I can fly higher than an eagle
For you are the wind beneath my wings

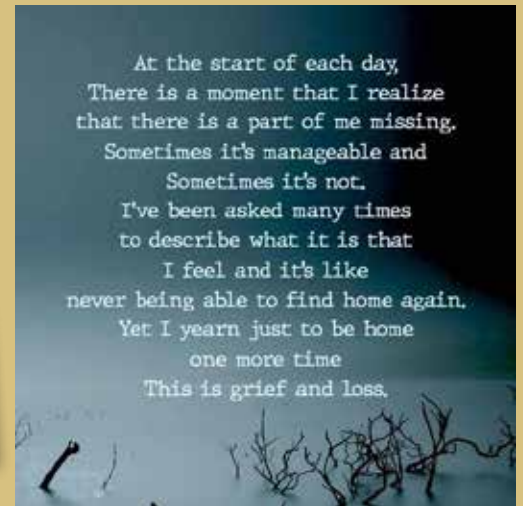
It might have appeared to go unnoticed
But I've got it all here in my heart
I want you to know I know the truth, of course I know it
I would be nothing without you

Did you ever know that you're my hero?
You're everything I wish I could be
I could fly higher than an eagle
For you are the wind beneath my wings

Oh, the wind beneath my wings
You, you, you, you are the wind beneath my wings
Fly, fly, fly away, you let me fly so high
Oh, you, you, you, the wind beneath my wings
Oh, you, you, you, the wind beneath my wings
Fly, fly, fly high against the sky
So high I almost touch the sky
Thank you, thank you
Thank God for you, the wind beneath my wings

Songwriters: Jeff Silbar / Larry Henley

MY CHRISTMAS CARD TO GARY..



How To Live Longer

An 82-year old man went to the doctor to get a physical. The doctor cautioned him about his age and sent him home with a lecture on proper life style. A few days later, the doctor saw the man walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

At his follow-up visit, the doctor said to the man, "You really must be doing great."

The man replied, "just doing what you said, doctor. Get a hot mamma and be cheerful."

The doctor replied, "I didn't say that. I said you've got a heart murmur. Be careful."

On the Lighter Side

Crazy Test

Sometimes when we grieve, we think we are going crazy. Here's a test to see how close you are to going over the edge.

Visiting the psych ward, a man asked how doctors decide when a patient requires psychiatric care.

"Well," the doctor said, "We fill a bathtub, then we offer the person a teaspoon, a teacup, and a bucket. Then we ask him to empty the tub."



"I get it," the visitor said. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's the biggest and he could empty the tub faster."

"No," the doctor said. "A normal person would pull the plug."



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



Tuesday, February 7, 2023
ZOOMGRIEF 6:00–7:00pm CST

Have you ever thought that your loved one who died is supporting you, reassuring you and even cheering you on from beyond? Do you believe in the possibilities of messages and symbols as “signs” that your loved one can connect with you? Do you continue to “talk” to your loved one to relieve the stress of grief and give you a sense of peace? If these questions intrigue you, you may want to attend our session on Visits from the Twilight Zone where our curiosity and inner spirit beckon us to believe in things we can’t see or confirm. Learn about the behaviors that may prevent you from receiving this gift. And learn what gifts are out there just waiting for your acknowledgement.

Marking the 30th Anniversary of
Wings-a Grief Education Ministry



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

Living River In Concert

Saturday
May 20, 2023
6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn & Suites, Imperial
Room, Rothschild, WI



Join us for this Spring Concert featuring the Living River Quartet who will present an evening of refreshing Christian songs, country, oldies, and much more. This Concert marks the 30th Anniversary of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry. The Founders: Nan & Gary Zastrow have provided grief education and support to the community since 1993. This concert celebrates the achievement of a small non-profit organization in the field of grief. However, the concert isn’t just for those who grieve. It’s for everyone who lives with compassion and Hope. Please allow us to share peace, joy, and friendship with you. Bring your family and friends, everyone is welcome.

This Concert is presented by Wings and dedicated to Gary Lee Zastrow, who died Jan. 15, 2023 who was a Co-Founder of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry. And also, as a tribute to Chad Zastrow, our son, who died in 1993. Both inspired the creation of our non-profit organization. Whether or not you knew Gary or Wings, everyone is warmly invited. This is not a time for tears, but rather a time to share music and the power of love with all of you. Registration is not required. For more information call 715.845.4159

GRIEF IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION



“To know the road ahead, ask those who are coming back.”

****All New Content**

Tuesdays, June 6, 13, 20, 27
Thursday June 29

ZOOMGRIEF 6:00–7:30pm CST

Life is a Journey. Grief complicates the journey. Grief is not an event that happens and then ends. Grief is enormous, brutal and the beginning of your great unknown. The hard truth is you know you can’t stay there forever. But how do you get through everything that seems to challenge you. Your journey may be filled with questions, emotions, and doubts. Learn how to build your confidence and hope as you take small steps forward. As I am new to significant loss again, I will be happy to share this journey with you. I’ve included many new thoughts from my evolving experience. No matter where you are in your journey, there is no right or wrong way. It’s yours. Unique to you. Death has a way of changing you; however, healing your grief has a way of finding the bright spot in living again.

Watch for the next set of programs, including in-person group beginning in August, 2023

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



Certified Grief
Educator | Facilitator:
Nan Zastrow
wingsgrief.org
715.845.4159



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