



From Us to You

**Welcome to Newsletter No. 4
October ~ November ~ December**

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Autumn forces us to re-evaluate some things. Our wardrobe is one of them! It is time to pull out the extra insulation! We need extra protection from the elements and the surrounding environment. This may also be true for you at this point in your grief journey. Extra or added precautions must be taken for you to get through this season of life.

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What to expect ?

I remember walking into my very first Jonathan Terry coffee morning with great sadness in my heart, wondering if I was doing the right thing, dragging my feet as if I had a huge weight on my shoulders and very apprehensive and anxious about what happened at these coffee mornings.

When I entered the room I could hear people laughing and I was so angry and I thought “Why are they laughing, don’t they know my husband has just died”. I was just about to turn around and walk out when a very kind, gentle, caring lady approached me and said “Hello, my name is Sue, you must be Joy, come in and join us”.

I have never looked back from that first morning and have attended every coffee morning since, planning other arrangements around the coffee morning just so I could attend. Why? you may ask. Well after that first meeting I left feeling better. As I sat with other people at separate tables, enjoying coffee, tea and lovely cakes, sharing stories about our loved ones and our families, I began to realise that I was in the right place, a place where I could talk about my husband over and over, a place where everyone understood that stabbing ache in my heart and why I couldn’t get out of bed in the morning and why I thought about nothing else



but my husband who had died. As I sat at that table a lady reached out, without saying anything, and gently touched my arm..... That meant a great deal to me.

I have made beautiful friendships and built a strong support network through the amazing people that I meet at each coffee morning. Slowly I have become stronger in knowing that I did not have to suffer this long road ahead alone and eventually I was able to help other newly bereaved who were attending for the first time and were probably feeling the same feelings that I did at that time. I know that we do laugh again, the heaviness in our hearts lightens and the memories of our loved ones grow stronger as time goes by and they are never forgotten.

By request - names have been changed

Let's Get Sharing - Your Stories

Broken Together

from Jessica (A Social Work Co-ordinator)

On April 1st, my grandmother passed away from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and congestive heart failure.

I was awakened by a telephone call early in the morning, with a message that everyone dreads. I could tell by my husband's face that something was wrong. I already knew the words he was going to say before he could say them: "I just spoke with your Dad, your grandmother passed this morning." As a hospital social worker, I felt I should

be able to handle a death - even a close personal one - "without a hitch".

I remember my first day back at work after my grandmother's death. My mind was not present. I was "down in the dumps" and lacked motivation. "How do I cope with a loss close to me while helping others cope with their losses now? I am surrounded by death! This is depressing!

Needless to say I have become more familiar with the stages of grief. I knew



.....

my grandmother was ill and dying, so the fact that she died was not a surprise. However, I still went through denial. After I received the phone call, I got up, got ready, and went to work. Her death had clearly not “sunk in” because I went to work smiling and acting like my normal self. My co-workers were nice and expressed their condolences, but I was not ready yet. I simply smiled and said “Thanks!”

The next day, I woke up angry? Why? I just was. My patience had left me, causing me to become frustrated over nothing. Then that night, after reading her obituary, I cried, sobbed, felt guilty for feeling angry, but most importantly, I realized I would never see her again in this life, hear her voice, see her smile, or feel her embrace.

Today, I still feel sad at times, although I accepted my grandmother’s death prior to her passing. I miss her a great deal and think of her daily.

In answer to Jessica

How do you overcome these emotions and function each day when you feel broken? I do not have an amazing resolution to this question other than: you just do. Even though Jessica did not want to get out of bed, she did. Even though she did not feel like smiling, she did. Even though she did not feel like being around people, she did. You just do. Even though her grandmother is in heaven, Jessica is still living and has multiple purposes in life. She has a husband and a family who depend on her. She has a job and people who depend on her to do her job. Getting back into a normal routine was a help to her. She began to realise her limits and tried not to be “Superwoman”. Triggers of grief sneaked up on her when she least expected them, causing her to cry. This was completely normal. Because grief is something in this world everyone experiences, we are not alone. We are all broken together.

“Helping and being helped by other people with whom one shares a common experience seems to provide an opportunity to feel hope and see new possibilities for the future”

“Let’s get sharing” is a space where you can read stories, narratives, poems and creative expressions contributed by bereaved individuals who want to share insights from their own grief journey. If you are interested in submitting a short piece, please do so..... it may help someone else.

Life is for Living *by Moira*

“Life is for the Living”, but is life worth living when you have lost your loved one? In my case, my partner, my love, my soul? Is it different to lose them suddenly or to have the last chance to say goodbye? I don’t know the answer to that, but I know that I wish I had had the chance to. My friend of 40 years lost her husband two months to the day after I lost mine, and she and her family were with him, for which I know they were grateful. Our roller coaster rides have been very different. Is this because our farewells were different? This I cannot say.

It has been nearly fifteen months, and the emotions are still running amok. There are still so many tears, his absence from my life still so deeply felt, but the tears are only shed when I am alone. What should be joyous moments are still saddened because he is not there to share them. It took me a good six months before I could talk of him without breaking down. I still feel my eyes start to glisten when someone asks of him.

Sometimes I feel that the 24 1/2 years we spent together were just a dream, but I look at our children, grandchildren, and photos of him and realise it was not, and I am so grateful for the time we had. I kept a diary, writing in it every day. Sometimes I find myself talking

out loud to him, just for a moment forgetting he has gone.

At twelve months I reread my diary, amazed at the roller coaster I have been on, how much my life has changed: a new home in a new area, a new career choice, a new grandson, our daughter’s wedding, facing my fear of going to our favourite weekend getaway, which brought back so many memories of good times shared. It was a day of smiles mixed with tears, and I was so glad I did it.

Is life worth living once a loved one is gone? Well the answer is yes, and although the journey has been fraught with so many challenges - emotionally, physically, mentally, and the journey is still going, it has made me a stronger (or at least I like to think so) person, and I will be forever grateful for the time I had with him, and for the love and care of those around me.

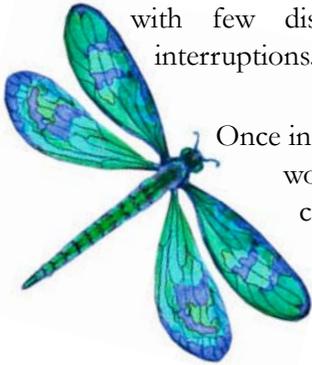
*We love them,
we miss them,
we grieve them
And so, we live our lives
to make them proud.*



Poet's Corner

The Dragonfly

Once, in a little pond, in the muddy water under the lily pads, there lived a little water beetle in a community of water beetles. They lived a simple and comfortable life in the pond with few disturbances and interruptions.



Once in a while, sadness would come to the community when one of their fellow beetles would climb the stem of a lily pad and would never be seen again. They knew when this happened their friend was dead, gone forever.

Then, one day, one little water beetle felt an irresistible urge to climb up that stem. However, he was determined that he would not leave forever. He would come back and tell his friends what he had found at the top.

When he reached the top and climbed out of the water onto the surface of the lily pad, he was so tired and the sun felt so warm, that he decided he must take a nap. As he slept, his body changed and

when he woke up he had turned into a beautiful blue-tailed dragonfly with broad wings and a slender body designed for flying.

So, fly he did! And, as he soared, he saw the beauty of a whole new world and a far superior way of life that he had never known existed.

Then he remembered his beetle friends and how they were thinking now he was dead. He wanted to go back to tell them, and explain to them that he was now more alive than he had ever been before. His life had been fulfilled rather than ended.

But his new body would not go down into the water. He could not get back to tell his friends the good news.



Then he understood that their time would come when they too, would know what he now knew. So he raised his wings and flew off into his joyous new life!

~Author Unknown~





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