



S.O.L.O.S



Survivors of Loved Ones Suicide
A Support Group for Survivors of Suicide Loss
8310 Ewing Halsell Dr. San Antonio, TX 78229

August 2009

Volume IV

For this month's newsletter I would like to begin by saying a big THANK YOU to Erik Brazones, he has generously put together the website for our SOLOS support group. He has done a fantastic job in creating, designing and having the website up and running. We are now able to reach out to people who may not otherwise have known about SOLOS. So once again, Thank You Erik, for all your hard work and dedication.

S.O.L.O.S Support Meetings

Date: The 1st and 3rd

Wednesday of every month

Time: 7:00 to 8:30pm

Location: Ecumenical Center

8310 Ewing Halsell

San Antonio, TX



COMMUNITY WALKS

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Eisenhower Park

October 24, 2009

Registration starts at 9am

Walk begins at 10am

You may already register online

www.afsp.org

Help Lines

National Suicide Hotline: 800-SUICIDE

Teen Line: 800-TLC-TEEN

Trevor Helpline: 800-850-8078

Hotline for gays, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth

Listening to the Pain of Our Children

“Until I was five, I thought my dad had killed my mommy” the ten year old little girl shared nervously with the others in the room.

As the facilitator of this group for the children who were learning how to cope with death, I was encouraged by the openness of this child's response. But personally, I felt stunned and shocked, because the child who had spoken was my daughter. Who would have thought that a child could think that?! What amazed me even more was that she had never shared her fears with me in the eight years following my wife's suicide....

Because of our lack of understanding of how children and youth express grief, and because of the misconception that children are too young to understand, children often stay stuck with their inward grief and never work through the mourning process. This leaves our children at emotional risk as they develop and mature....

The truth is that children do grieve, whether they are infants, young children or teens....

My three daughters were five, two and eight months old when their mother committed suicide...assumed that my two youngest daughters would not remember their mother and would not be affected by her death...they are for the first time given permission to grieve. Now, at the ages of nine and ten, they have reached a level of developmental maturity to express in words the thoughts that have been locked up inside them for so long.

These excerpts are from Listening To The Pain of Children by Scott Flaherty, New Brunswick, Ohio, was printed in Bereavement Magazine, Oct. 1992

What Recovery Will Not Mean

There are certain things that recovery does not mean. It does not mean that you forget, either your loved one or the old world. It does not mean that you have no relationship at all with your deceased loved one. And it does not mean you are always happy, never to have any more pain. Just as you can decide what recovery will mean, you can decide what it won't mean. Recovery will not mean that you are not touched by certain reminders, such as that certain song, that particular smell, or that special location. It will not mean that you do not experience the bittersweet combination of feelings that holidays can bring, as you rejoice with those who are still present and mourn for those no longer here. It will not mean that in certain events in your life you do not painfully wish for your loved one to be alive to be present with you, share in your joy, or be proud of you.

Recovery will not mean that you don't mourn any longer; it means that you learn to live with the mourning in ways that do not interfere with your ongoing healthy functioning in the new life without your loved one. For those who have lost someone they loved a great deal, the mourning will never cease entirely. This is described below in a passage written by psychiatrist Gerald Caplan discussing widows. It can be applied equally to other bereaved people.

In our earlier formulations we had thought that a (bereaved person) "recovers" at the end of the four to six weeks of her bereavement crises on condition that she managed to accomplish her "grief work" adequately. We believe that thereafter she would be psychologically competent to carry on with the tasks of ordinary living, subject only to the practical readjustment demanded by her new social roles. We now realize that most (bereaved persons) generally learn how to circumscribe and segregate this mourning within their mental economy and how to continue living despite its burden. After this time they are no longer actively mourning, but their loss remains a part of them and now and again they are caught up in a resurgence of feelings and grief. This happens with decreasing frequency as time goes on, but never ceases entirely. (Caplan 1974 viii)

Most bereaved individuals eventually come to terms with their grief and carry on with their lives in healthy and productive fashions. However, total resolution of mourning, in the sense of completely and permanently finishing it and never having being touched again by some clement of the loss, usually never truly occurs.

Submitted by Patricia Padilla, Thank You!

Taken from Therese A. Rando, How To Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies. New York: Bantam Books, 1991, pp 279-283

Dialogue With An Empty Chair

Why did you do this, Steve?

It was my decision, Mom.

Why didn't you talk it over, with your wife, or us?

Didn't feel like it. You know I always gave the impression that I could handle anything.

How did you think the rest of us would handle it?

Guess I thought it would work out alright There was enough insurance money to keep my wife and sons in comfort.

Didn't you think of our feelings?

I only had room for my own feelings.

I can't understand...you left an 11 year old boy waiting for you to keep a promise to run in two marathons with him... you left a three year old who kept telling his mother to leave a salad for Daddy.... You left a woman who pulled your office to pieces looking for a last message..... parents with retirement plans for fun with grandchildren. Was it an "off-the-cuff" decision?

(Shrugs) I suppose I must've thought about it off and on .. or I wouldn't have bought such a heavy insurance against your advice when I got married.

You were always bold, daring, and adventurous but, I thought, with a saving cautious streak. When you told me you were now a pilot with your own airplane, you gave me a mischievous look – "See Mom, no hands!" and you were disappointed at my careful lack of reaction. But you told me you gave it up when a friend was killed in flight – "Too dangerous." What happened to your love of life, yourself – preservation instinct?

I really don't care anymore.

We loved you very much. We were very proud of you, too. We freed you from responsibility to us. We watched you make your own way, we often said to each other "Steve's a survivor." When you saved a friend in college from suicide, you acted in a compassionate gentle manner. Yet you killed yourself in brutal, careless, public way. Why did you choose a way that would

Leave your family the consolation of an "accident".

I wasn't your little boy anymore, Mom. You couldn't look after me.... It didn't matter to me. Can you accept that?

I'm asking the questions here.

(wrings hands) No, I cannot accept it, any of it.....

To be continued.

*Reprinted from SBS Newsletter
Portland & Vancouver, January 1993*

No Second Chance

By Lyla (Lee) Jackson,
Kamloops, BC, Canada

You never said goodbye
You never told me why
You had to go
And leave me here alone.

You never gave a clue
That things were both'ring you
That Life was just too painful
To go on.

By talking, just perhaps
You might have let this pass
And learn that Life still
Has so much to give.

That just around the bend
Your troubles all could end
And boldly you could grasp
The 'morrow, and Live.

For nothing is so bleak
That of it, we can't speak
And nothing impossible
We can't overcome.

But now that you have fled,
Nothing could I have said.
Your final deed cannot
E'er be undone.

Can never bring you back,
Give you a second chance
To feel the warm sun's rays
Upon your face.

To hear the sweet bird song
To see a flower bloom
To know, on this Good Earth,
You had a place.

In memory of her sister Shirley, April 1999