



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

June 2009

Volume II

This month's newsletter is dedicated to all the Fathers who have lost a child to suicide and to all the sons and daughters who have lost their Father to suicide. In this article you will find a couple of letters written by my nieces Shasta and Savannah. In October of 2002, the girl's father, Gary Billings, died of suicide. The girl's parents had been divorced for several years and Gary was living in Wisconsin, and every summer the girls were fortunate enough to stay with him the entire summer. The letters written by the girls have not been edited and are an expression of their true emotions.

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

The Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation
2009 National Conference on Widowhood
July 17-19, 2009 San Diego, CA
For more information
www.sslf.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



Please be kind recycle & pass this to a friend

Choices

By Denise Zelenak Bullock, St. Clair Shores, Michigan

I thought today
of how losing you
has shaped my life:
Seizing my days,
haunting my nights.

You did what you thought
was right for you.
You made a choice.
And I wonder:
Did you even think of me
at all?
.....could you even think of me?

And now I know
it's time
that I make a choice.

I can't change the past,
or even deny my grief
but I can decide
to live with it,
and to learn from it.

I can choose to grow,
rather than be diminished.
I will let it be part,
but not the whole,
of me.

Yet, still,
I will always wonder:
Did you even
think of me?

*The best tribute you can make to a loved one, is
the life you live after the death.....*

*Life is not measured by the number of breaths we
take, but the moments that take our breath
away.....*

Did you know that...

Phil Spector song writer and producer is undoubtedly the single most important and influential producer in the history of rock music, his "Wall of Sound" stands as a milestone in recording history...

Harvey Phillip Spector was born December 26, 1940 in the Bronx, New York. His father Benjamin, under severe strain because of the family's indebtedness, died of suicide in 1949. In 1953, Bertha Spector, with Phil and his older sister Shirley, moved to Los Angeles where she worked as a seamstress. On a pe

On a trip back to the Bronx, Phil visited his father's grave. The inscription on the grave "To Know Him Was To Love Him" impressed him so enough that when Phil returned to Los Angeles he took those words and wrote lyrics to his first hit, "To Know Him Is To Love Him".

jk

To Know Him Is To Love Him sit

Written by Phil Spector
Recorded by the Teddy Bears

To know, know, know him is to love, love, love, him
Just to see him smile, makes my life worthwhile
To know, know, know him is to love, love, love, him
And I do

I'll be good to him, I'll bring love to him
Everyone says there'll be a day when I'll walk
Alongside of him
Yes, just to know him is to love, love, love, him
And I do

Why can't he see, how blind can he be
Someday he'll see that he was meant for me

To know, know, know him is to love, love, love, him
Just to see him smile, makes my life worthwhile
To know, know, know him is to love, love, love, him
And I do

Why can't he see, how blind can he be
Someday he'll see that he was meant for me

To know, know, know him is to love, love, love, him
Just to see him smile, makes my life worthwhile
To know, know, know him is to love, love, love, him
And I do

Never To Be Forgotten

By Vanessa Tucker, Rocklin, CA

Days go by, and I still cry.
Years go on, and I still long.
Time progresses forth, I still reminisce.
Without you here, my life
will never be complete.
To see you, to hear you, to feel you,
one last time and I'd be fine.
But I must wait until my day,
To run to you and be OK.
To feel your love,
once so close now so passed.
The hole on my life would again be
complete.
But until the day, God takes me away,
all I can do is live but miss you.
And as the days go by,
I may still cry.
And years will go on,
but I will still long.
And the time passes by and by,
but I still reminisce your time on earth,
when you were so close.

*In memory of my father, Felix H. Tucker Jr.
who lived from Nov.10,1947 to Feb.15, 1995*



One Month Later

by Janice Eastburn., Sacramento, CA

• Fridays are hard
• You left me on a Friday
• Wednesday are hard
• I found you on a Wednesday
• Thursdays are hard
• Because it's the day before Friday
• Weekends are hard
• Too much time that I can't spend with you
• Tuesdays are hard
• I'm back to work and you're not
• Mondays, ah Mondays, life seems almost
• normal
• For now I have Mondays, and that's a
• start.

*For Pat my best friend
Pat died on June 23, 1995*

Letter to Daddy
By Savannah Billings, 2002

Daddy,

I miss you so much. There are things that I wish that I could've told you. I wish you didn't think that me, Shasta, and April weren't going to your funeral. I guess we proved you wrong. It was the hardest thing that I've ever gone through. I'm not planning on having kids, but if I did, I just wish they could've met you. You are so wonderful, people may think their dad is great, but your daughters know the truth. You're the greatest and you always will be. There's not a day that goes by that I don't miss you. I love you so much and it's just unbelievable seeing you dead, it was so hard. I looked at you trying to decide if I was dreaming or not, but I wasn't. It was really hard you looked so peaceful but now I know that you're looking down on your daughters the ones who loved you so much. Who am I going to make enchiladas for, who's going to walk me down the aisle, and who's going to send me cards for every occasion? I miss you too much daddy.

Love always,
Savannah



For My "Hippie" Dad, the Greatest Dad
By Shasta Billings, 2009

Growing up with my dad was a wild adventure. My father was not the typical parent, and just one look at him would explain it all. He was the "hippie" dad, with long, brown hair past his shoulders, a full beard and mustache to the middle of his neck, and his constant uniform of faded blue jeans, flannel shirt, a wallet chain dangling past his knee, and the piece de resistance, a worn out trucker hat.

Ever since I was little, I can remember my dad sporting a trucker hat. My earliest memory of my dad was when I was three and he was holding me and on his head was a Rutledge Company hat. Hats were his signature item, and honestly, to see him without one was unusual, I think he even wore them while swimming.

Naturally, this made for a very easy gift to give: birthdays, Christmases, Father's days, and sometimes, just because. My sister and I found so many hats of different colors and shapes. Some had sayings on them that proudly claimed we had the "#1 Dad". Others had landmarks stitched on them from the places he took us during our summer visits.

Like most parents, when receiving a gift from their children, Daddy would act so surprised when he received our present. He would open the box, pull out the hat, give it a good look over, then grab us girls and proceed to give us the tightest bear hugs possible. Then he would take off whatever hat he was wearing and pop the new one on his head. It became a tradition, as common as the cake and ice cream for a birthday party, and he would wear the hat around no matter what it looked like. Our poor dad was a great sport, and during the '90's, fluorescent phase, he walked through town with a hot pink hat on his head, because we gave it to him.

As the years passed, our summer visits to him became less frequent. Lonely and depressed, in the year 2002, during the month of October, he took his life. When we went to empty out his house, we were surrounded by our little of tokens of love we had given him over the years. He had saved just about every hat we had ever given him; there were well over two hundred hats in his house. Looking back, I feel I took for granted his love for me, and him being there. He was the best father I could have ever asked for and I know he loved us, his hats prove it all.

Survivors of Suicide

By Jason Hunke, Seattle, Washington

Every seventeen minutes someone in this country commits suicide. There were more than 30,000 suicides last year in the United States, and experts estimate an additional 500,000 suicide attempts. The people who have committed suicide are as diverse as you can imagine – all races, ages, ethnic background, religious beliefs, sexual orientations and socioeconomic backgrounds. No labels work.

Similarly, no social labels can be used to describe the survivors of this tragedy. It is estimated that there are more than 3 million of us around the country – some of us have lost parents, others have lost siblings, and many have lost children, friends or other family members. Suicide affects men and women, children and adults all over our nation – and suicide affects me. I am a survivor of suicide. My dad killed himself.

It is estimated that for every suicide death, there are at least six people immediately affected. An incredibly conservative number by any standard, but at least a starting point to illustrate the ripple effects and widespread suffering caused by suicide. There is even a special time of year, early each May to recognize this tragedy – National Suicide Prevention Week. It comes once years like a holiday, but few people pay attention.

My father was a nationally respected corrections professional, an expert in his field, and very much committed to helping young people. In January 1994, he climbed up on a ladder in the garage of the Colorado house where I grew up and hanged himself with an extension cord. A gruesome image that I live with everyday. His suicide and my “surviving” it are constant elements of my life. They do not make up all of who I am, yet they have certainly changed the course of my life, altered my perceptions and taught me invaluable lessons about life, love and what is truly important to me.

This experience is something that “found” me, I did not seek it out. It is a hand of cards I could have never imagined having to play, but I must make the best of it, make my peace with it and make a difference in my own and other people’s lives because of it. For all the pain I have been through because of my father’s choice to end his

life, I have been blessed with new people and experiences that have made my life better. In losing him I gained a new part of myself that I might not have discovered. And as a survivor, there are some things that I have learned that many Americans don’t know. Survivors are much more common than most people think. Somewhere in your family, or among your friends, or maybe living down the street from you, the chances are pretty good that someone you care about has been affected by the suicide of a loved one.

When people hear about my experience, I get all kinds of reactions. Some people are shocked, some are saddened and some are disgusted. They question, “What kind of a man could kill himself?” or they ask what I could have done to prevent it. Could I have been a better son? Could my mother have been a better wife? Was Dad crazy? There are no answers to these questions and raising them serves no purpose. However, sometimes within a few days someone will approach me quietly and admit they, too, are a survivor of suicide. Our stories of loss are different, yet we are connected by this tragedy.

We have been touched by suicide and have been defined in an instant by a loved one’s choice to end their own lives. I want to use my experience to teach and to help people.

The shame that people feel around suicide is perpetuated by their fear of discussing it. The only way to make suicide less of a real life issue in our communities is to make it more of an issue in our ongoing conversations with our families, our children and our students. If you meet a suicide survivor just listen to his story. Let their stories teach you about strength, or life, or love.

If you are a survivor, don’t hide. Tell your story honestly, and don’t be ashamed of what you are living with. Your strength should be source of pride and esteem, not one of guilt or fear. Don’t let social taboos keep you from moving forward on your own journey of healing. Our common voice can be a valuable tool in educating people, and maybe even saving a life. Consider volunteering your services at a crisis center – phone workers,

event planners, and administrative help are always needed.

I regret that my father will not be around to get to know me as an adult. I miss his sense of humor, his guidance, his constant support and unconditional love, and even the advice he offered when I thought I didn't need it or was too stubborn to listen. I am sad that my father will not get to know the children I may one day raise, or the partner I may spend the rest of my life with. I cry when I realize I will not get to see my father grow old. But if I can turn his choice and my experience into something positive, something that will make a difference to other people, then I will have accomplished the very thing that my father tried to do with his life. To leave the world a better place for at least one person. And I believe every one of us has the power to do that.

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Hurting on Father's Day

By TCF, Tampa, FL

As the day approaches
I wonder how I will react.
Am I still a father?
I will sit quietly never allowing
friends and family to see how I
feel.
I miss my son, but I can't
allow myself to "break".
I must remain strong
And always be the "rock".
I wish I could let someone know
how much I miss my little angel,
How much I cry and how much
I miss hearing,
"Dad, I love you."
I am a father, but I will wonder
will
I just pretend, as usual,
that "it doesn't bother me?"
Remember me,
for I hurt too,
on this special day.

Reprinted from TCF Newsletter, Sacramento, CA
June 1995