

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 38

S.U.C.C.E.S.S

November 1995



November is a month that is between autumn and winter, and so is our grief *Between* is defined as: in the space or time separating two points, objects, or places; in the middle. In common; shared by; from one to the other; serving to connect or unite; akin to. This preposition truly defines our grief, but it also describes our relationship as *Fellow Travelers*.

During our grief we are *in a space or time separating two points and places*. In this *between* stage, we have been physically separated from our loved one, and we have to psychologically accept that separation. But, we have the promise that we will be in the same "place" with them in the future.

We are also *between* our long journey of grief and acceptance of our loss. We feel the mill of wanting to believe that this nightmare is just a dream, but then we wake up each morning to the reality that they are dead.



However, *between* also has a very comforting definition. We share a common loss and we are *servicing to connect or unite* by our communication with each other. We are *Fellow Travelers* and we are *akin to* each other's grief. I hope you will use your *Fellow Traveler* list of names

and addresses and come *between* those who will be observing an anniversary of their loved one's death this month. . .and adopt the habit of doing this every month. We need each other's support and love.

This past summer and fall have been exceptionally dry and this has prevented the autumn leaves from turning their usual pronounced colors. However, I have noticed that these leaves can still *clog* the drains and down-spouts of our home and will prevent the drains from carrying the excess water away when the rains do come. Our grief, like these leaves, may not be pronounced, but we may become "clogged" in the different stages of our grief and, thus, prevent it from draining S.U.C.C.E.S.S.(fully) from us. I want to encourage each of you to place a netting over that drain of grief so that it may pass through you, rather than staying and clogging your S.U.C.C.E.S.S.



November 23rd is **Thanksgiving Day** and what used to be a day of giving thanks, has become a day we would like to sleep through and not have to face. Since your lives have changed so drastically, you may also want to change the way you celebrate this Thanksgiving. In the November '93 issue of **The Hope Line Magazine**, the following holiday suggestions are given:

 Begin early to plan your coping strategies.



Decide what you can handle comfortably. Talk honestly with your family.



Don't be afraid to make changes; it really make things less painful.



This may be a good time to shop for Christmas if you want to avoid hearing the Christmas music, seeing the decorations, and being wished "Merry Christmas." Or you may want to shop by telephone or from catalogs.



Give a gift in memory of your loved one to your favorite charity or church.



Share with family and friends to let them know how you plan to observe the holiday and how they can best help you



Don't let your plans isolate you from those who love and support you.



Light a special green candle to quietly include your absent loved one.



You may want to volunteer to feed the homeless or invite those to your home who would otherwise be alone.

These suggestions are not a choice between pain or no pain, but they may help the pain to be less. I have found that the "dreading" is usually worse than the actual day. Make your plans and don't be afraid to change them. The important thing is to do what is comfortable for you and your family. Give yourself and your family permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holiday. May you be able to give. THANKS.



Grief Grafts

Karen Lacy's daughter, Mary (8), was killed in an automobile accident, 9-25-91. Karen is an inspiration to us all. She writes: *My first Thanksgiving alone made a deep impression on me as I read somewhere where a family said they had nothing to be thankful for because they had lost their child. Since I am in the same position, it made me think. I started thinking even though it seems my life couldn't be any worse than it is now, it could be. Just take a look around you and you'll always see someone worse (If than yourself. Me being involved in the accident, it could have been me, and normally would have the way my car looked I could have been a vegetable mentally and/or physically. It only took 3 years for me to get back to work, but all that time, except for 2 months, I could take care of myself and get around to do things I enjoy. I have much to be thankful for. So I made a Thanksgiving prayer that I would thank God for something everyday, not just for a season or when things are going good. I started out with small things that may seem to be unimportant. I like roses or chocolate. "Thank you God for Chocolate." Anything you like or enjoy doing, say "thanks, " it will enable you to think of alot more to be thankful for. The sun seems to shine brighter with a thankful heart. In I Thes. 5:18, the Bible says: "In everything give thanks, for it is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Thanksgiving is everyday for me, and it's never too late to start. They say if you do something for 21 days in a row, it becomes a habit. So I guess it has become a habit for me to be thankful.*

Mary's symbols are hearts and rainbows.



Karen Hall's husband, Denzil, and only child, Olivia, were killed in an automobile accident, 1-10-93. Karen shared her feelings after Thanksgiving last year: I pray you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving and that Christmas will be bearable. The holidays are so difficult! I was talking to our principal before Thanksgiving and he asked me how I was doing through this time of year and my response was, "I wish I could hibernate through the holidays." Anyone who has lost a child must feel the same way. I feel I am not worthy, but God has a purpose for our lives on this earth. I have a very supportive family and encouraging friends who share in my grief and pain. This fact I am so thankful for.

Denzil and Olivia's symbols are musical notes.



Leon and Jerry Jonas lost two sons, Leon Jr., and Wayne, in an automobile accident, 10-26-90. Jerry shared these ideas by Nancy Hogan for remembering our children.

The deceased child is a permanent part of the past and lives on in the shared memories and experiences of your family and extended family. Death ended your child's life but not his or her relationship to the family. The choice here is whether to deny the reality of the death and to fight the rage you feel for the senselessness of the loss, or to commit yourself to the nearly unbearable task of accepting reality and the seemingly endless suffering it brings.

One way to start this journey is to decide how you can and will shine your light on your child's memory. Within your family, special traditions can be created in which the whole family has a part. One family took helium balloons to the cemetery and, after a family service, let the balloons go and watched them drift up into the sky and become lost in the clouds.

For other families, donating books to a library (with the child's name in the books) is a form of tribute at birthdays, Christmas, etc. Having children remember their sibling in prayers or when grace is said is another form of remembering.

Keeping a diary of stories that friends and relatives remember, and sharing them with children in the family who are young, are valuable ways of remembering. Retrieving as many pictures as possible and completing family albums help some families keep a special place for their deceased child. Saving tangible items for siblings is another way to help the family remember the child's life.

In some societies there is a name for a man or woman who has lost a child. Instead of being called "father or mother bereft." Because our society has no recognized role for the bereft parents, it is left to the parent to create one.

It is most unfortunate that it is often close friends and family who shut off the past memories of your child. This is usually done to relieve the anxiety of the friend who is afraid he will hurt you more if he mentions the child's name.

The permanent reality of your child's death is no more real or important than the permanent reality of his having lived. You have a right to that reality, and helping friends and family learn and grow to understand this is worthwhile. Others who can't or won't learn and grow may not remain as close and involved in your new life as before. You will change. Your marriage and family will change. Your friends must also change to fit into your life as a bereaved parent.

Many people are waiting to take your lead – to learn how you want them to remember your child. Encourage others to tell your child and thank them. Tell them it helps you to give meaning to the child's

having lived by hearing his name. Reward people for taking risks by asking how you are: Tell them how they can help you by simply listening--that there aren't any magic words.

Hearing about your deceased child or telling your story helps you adjust to a world where your child is missing as a physical presence but remains as a rich and treasured memory. Learning how to cherish the irreplaceable memory of the missing member in your family is a healing part of grief

Leon's and Wayne's symbols are two roses and a car.



A CURE FOR SORROW author unknown

There is an old folk tale about the woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to the holy man and said, "What prayers, what magical incantations do you have to bring my son back to life?" Instead of sending her away or reasoning with her, he said to her, "Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use it to drive the sorrow away from your life." The woman set off at once in search of that magical mustard seed. She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked on the door, and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow. Is this such a place? It is very important to me." They told her, "You've certainly come to the wrong place," and began to describe all the tragic things that had recently befallen them. The woman said to her, "Who is better to help these poor, unfortunate people than I, who have had such a misfortune as my own?" She stayed to comfort them, then went on in search for a home that had never known sorrow. But wherever she turned, in hovels and

palaces, she found a tale after another of sadness and misfortune. Ultimately, she became so involved in ministering to other people's grief that she forgot about her own quest for the magical mustard seed, never realizing that it had in fact driven the sorrow out of her life.

Chester and Geneva Meyer's son, Clayton, died, 4-5-95. Chester describes his grief: *We are devastated by the loss of Clayton as you were with what happened to your precious son. I think the worst thing that can happen to a parent is to lose a child, no matter what the circumstances are.*

Sometimes we feel we don't want to go on without Clayton, but I am sure you have felt everything we have felt and are feeling right now.

There is a scholarship fund at Mount Vernon Nazarene College in his memory and also one at the high school here in Covington where he went.

Everyone says in time we will feel better, but it is going to take a long time. There will always be a deep sense of loss as long as we live--Clayton was just a sweetheart. We miss him dearly. He never gave us one moment of grief while growing up.

Kellie, the 16-year-old daughter of Dennis and Judy Carpenter, was killed in an auto accident with her best friend, Carrie, 8-14-92. *Judy explains the way she has been feeling lately: I just feel like a robot. I get up every day, wind the key and move around the way everyone expects me to--I'm here going through the motions of what everyone expects me to do and nothing more, and it's getting old--if you know what I mean. (And don't we all?)*

One of my teacher friends had the nerve to approach me after taking her daughter to college. She said, "Judy, I don't know how you do it--my house seems so empty and I can 'smell' Lisa

in every room." Blinking away tears, I told her I didn't know I had a choice. I don't remember anyone coming to me and asking if I thought I could go on if Kellie wasn't here anymore.

Don't some people say the cruelest things when they don't know what to say?

Kellie's symbol is a butterfly.



Geraldine Fitzgerald's daughter, Linda, died of Marfans Syndrome, 7-24-91, at the age of 28. Geraldine is now a lay minister for bereavement in her church. She sent this:

A Parent's Beatitudes

Blessed are those who realize they do not fully understand our pain because they have not walked this pathway.

Blessed are our ministers and spiritual leaders for guiding us when we're too confused to pray.

Blessed are those who do not say, "Time heals all wounds." because for us, time has lost its meaning.

Blessed are those who forgive our weariness on those days when it's a great effort just to think.

Blessed are those who bring flowers but sense that part of our "family boutique" is with the Savior.

Blessed are those who bring nourishing food, for our refrigerator abounds with too-rich desserts.

Blessed are those who have patience with our tears and ask not why we're still grieving.

Blessed are those who help us laugh again, for we need their love to make this happen.

Blessed are those who share their children with us, for we always see something of our own child in theirs.

Blessed are those who listen while we talk of our deceased child and who share the memories we hold of him/her.

Blessed are those who realize a phone call or card that says "I'm thinking of you." will help bring cheers to our days.

Blessed are those who share our grief with a big hug, for it warms the empty, lonely corner of our hearts.

Blessed is our beloved child, now with his/her Creator, for he/she was truly a gift from God and is now celebrating "Joy Unspeakable."

This Loving Memory was also included:

Death is nothing at all

I have only slipped away into the next room.

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

*Call me by my old familiar name,
speak to me in the easy way which
you always used*

Laugh as we always laughed together.

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

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

Let it be spoken without effort.

Life means all that it ever meant.

*It is the same as it ever was;
there is absolutely unbroken
continuity.*

*Why should I be out of your mind be-
cause I am out of your sight?*

*I am but waiting for you, for an
interval, somewhere very near just
around the corner.*

*All is well. Nothing is past; nothing is
lost.*

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

*only better, infinitely happier and
forever.*

*We will all be one together with
Christ.*



Linda's symbol is
an angel.

Casey, the 10-year-old son of Frank and Beth Russell, died in a train accident, 6-20-94. Beth sent a precious picture of Casey in a tree and explained: This picture comes with a story. When Casey died, the first thing that I said to my Dad (who is a preacher) is that I didn't know where Casey was. I remember my daughter telling me months before Case died that she had been witnessing to him while they were playing, and she thought he was ready to make a profession of faith. When he came in, I called him back to my bedroom to talk to him. I guess he did not have time because he said, "Can we just drop this subject?" I felt like that was just not the time to talk and I would get another chance later.

My Dad was going to perform the funeral and the morning before we left, Kerri, my daughter, who was 12, came to me and told me that Casey had made a profession of faith later on that day. She said they were in a tree and he accepted Christ. I told her to go and call her Papa, that he needed to know that before he did Casey's funeral. He told the story at the funeral.

This summer at our family reunion, he was preaching and used it for the topic of his sermon. I got a letter from my cousin about 2 weeks ago and she said her youngest child had a Bible study and shared alot of what my Dad had said at the family reunion. I know that Daddy has used it a number of times.

I just think that it is wonderful that Casey's life is a living testimony.

Casey's symbol is
a heart with "brave"
written in the center.



David and Rhonda Reeves' 5-year-old daughter, Cyanna, was killed in an automobile accident. Rhonda writes: *I was driving home from my parents. The road is "horrible." Hwy, 52, but I've driven it for years and years. I was driving in a snow storm and hit "black ice," and lost control of my Volvo in a curve. A guardrail entered my front bumper and exited through the rear window. Cyanna was the front passenger and Caitlyn was behind me in her car seat. To this day we still do not know why she was behind me. She was usually in the center of the back seat. I could have lost them both. Cyanna, 5 1/2, died at UK. at 10:00 p.m. on the same day and Caitlyn. 1/2, not a scratch.*

I have no memory from the time I left my parents until a week later. At the funeral I touched her face and told her "good-bye." I was in ICU for 5 days with multiple injuries. So many things I thought I could never forgive myself for or learn to live without her. God's grace has taught me one day at a time.

We are doing everything we can in her memory. In our community, we are planting trees; flowers; video library at our church; educational gift to elementary class, etc. We will survive by God's grace.

Rhonda also included these poems.

You were a miracle child
Starting with your birth.
How rejoiceful we are
That you shared a little bit
of Heaven here on earth.

You departed this life
In the twinkling of an eye

Oh, how we long for the day
That we can be by your side.

The memories are so fond
Heartbreak and sorrow so severe
We can feel your presence daily
As if you were right here.

Take care, my sweet angel
As you have gone to prepare a place
Friends and family will see you on the
other side
While you tend the pearly gates.

Love,
Dad and Mom

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR ANGEL
Cyanna Christian Reeves
July 26, 1989 to January 1, 1995

*Today is your birthday
My sweet heavenly angel,
And oh what a birthday
Must be like in Heaven.*

*Your 6th birthday is different,
From all the rest,
'Cause this year you're
Celebrating with Heaven's Best.*

*We will never forget
The day of your birth,
Or all the joy and happiness
That you gave to us
Your five short years on Earth.*

*Some day your family will join
You and Heaven's Best,
When it's time
For our eternal rest.*

*So keep us a warm spot
Right beside you,
'Cause we'll all be there
And hopefully soon.*

*We thank God for every day
That he blessed us with you.*

*Love you so much,
Dad, Mom and Catie*

In Memory of Cyanna Reeves
7/26/89 - 1/1/95

Today is your birthday

*and you turn 6 years old,
We know you're having a party
Upon the streets of gold.*

*We wish you were here
so we could celebrate,
Or we were there
guess we'll have to wait.*

*We miss you so much
but we know that you're fine,
We'll see you again soon, Cy Cy,
and we'll have nothing but time.
"Happy Birthday in Heaven."*

*Love always,
Aunt Tammy, Aunt Tracey & Tyler*

Todd Warner, the 25-year-old son of Charlie and Judy Moore, was killed in a motorcycle accident, 5-21-94. Judy shared an excellent gift idea: Last year I took many of my favorite pictures of my son with other family members and had them made into a calendar. It was the only gift my family received and all I was capable of doing. I took it to Kinko printing and they made the calendar. They can enlarge a picture to fit the 8x11 or place many pictures on one page.

Judy continues: I have traveled the road of grief before. Todd's father died when he was in the first grade. He had a congestive heart disease which Todd also had. Todd's heart was very enlarged and diseased but at least I still had him until the accident.

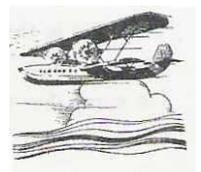
We are often searching in grief not only for answers but for peace. I have traveled a lot this year as an escape from pain and in search for answers. I found the pain to be less when away from home and among strangers who did not know my son died. Strangers who did not ask stupid questions like, "How are you?" Upon returning home the intense pain would always be there to greet me.

So I kept traveling and searching.

Fourteen months after Todd's death, I found myself in a small plane flying through the valleys and over the mountains from Milford Sound to Queenstown, New Zealand. It had been a long trip that day, due to the heavy snowfall. It was a beautiful sunny, crisp winter day that July in New Zealand. The small plane had not been in our travel plans. My family wanted to add this option to save another long five hour bus ride back through the snowy mountains. My three children were excited about this adventure and so I agreed even though I do not enjoy heights and get claustrophobic.

Since I quickly agreed, I figured God must know what He was doing. In fact, in the ten minutes of preparations to leave, I was amazingly calm.

The take-off and view was breathtaking. I began to take pictures of this beautiful scenery God had created. It was thrilling to see this spectacular mountain area by flying through the valleys and over the rivers and mountains. I remember just taking a picture coming over a mountain top and viewing God's rays of sunlight coming through the clouds. All at once the most peaceful feeling came over me. In that moment, I was aware of the presence of Todd outside that plane. He was in a different form and place than me. But I felt his presence and his contentment. I became aware the next few minutes that Todd could go anywhere at anytime. He was free from his body and the pains of life. As a spirit, he was free and happy. As the tears rolled silently down my face, I felt total peace. I had finally found the peace I had been searching for.



I knew I could quit running and start rebuilding my life which would not include my son. My life would no longer be dominated by the overwhelming presence of grief.

When we got off the plane, my family asked if I was alright. They said I looked strange. I shared the experience and we stood with soft snowflakes falling on us crying and hugging.

It was a strange setting being in winter halfway around the world in July. But God works in mysterious ways if we only trust Him.

I am beginning to make choices for my future not by the circumstance I find myself in. I am taking actions and being responsible for the direction my life will take.

I am not free from pain. There will always be the pain of loss of my son, Todd. But I am finding I can be a more productive person. I often cry silently and know that God sees the tears falling down the sides of my heart. Even though I hurt, many days I have forced myself to get out, be around people more. I am just beginning a nine month course in clinical Pastoral Education. I am not sure where God is leading me, but I know it is a step forward. I am continuing to work as a nurse on a limited basis in ICU.

Know, you are where you are not by accident but by the design of your Creator for your own development or for the development of those around you.

Abdul Bahap

Carlos, the 34-year-old son of Clifford and June Morris, husband of Lois, and the father of Mary Joyce, was killed in an automobile accident, 8-12-93. Clifford wrote: It seems as if everyone seems to think or forget in this time span, but it means a lot to know we have fellow travelers. I'm sorry that this had to happen to any of us, but since it has, we and you are the only people who know that death seems

to be so final. Now, we know better--but we must travel on until we part this life.

Our daughter-in-law started a Scholarship Fund for Carlos with the First Methodist Church in Barbourville, KY. Carlos loved school and education, so we thought this would be the best and would be his wishes and thoughts to further someone's education.

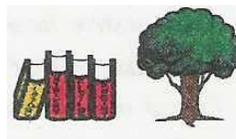
Clifford had a wonderful suggestion, to compile a picture album of portraits of parent and child(ren). Perhaps we can do this at our picnic next year. He suggests that we could then look at the album and remember the child and parents in prayer, and also send cards and/or call. We could have them Xeroxed at a Kinko.



Carlos' symbol is the scales of justice since he was a lawyer.

Geoffrey, the 20-year-old son of Mary Ann McCelvey, ended his life after being suddenly stricken by a devastating mental illness. Her husband, George, died 7-30-93. Mary Ann shares: *As you can imagine, the end of summer is a sad time for me, but I know I've made it through before and I will again. By the time the leaves are beginning to turn, my cloud begins to lift and feel I can resume my life again.*

George's symbol is a book and Geoffrey's symbol is a tree.



Shelby, the 18-year-old son of Jaybo and Rowena Warner, died due to complications from Hodgkin's Disease, 10-28-92. Theresa Noe, his sister, sent the following poem that was written by a friend of Shelby's who had cancer and is now in remission.

*never thought I could miss someone
As much as I miss you.
You were a very special friend
so loving, kind and true.*

*I never knew you all that much
Until that precious day
When you came to talk to me,
To hear the things I needed to say.*

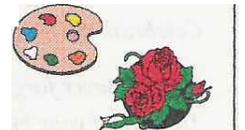
*You gave strong encouragement
To help a teenager through
The hardest obstacle thrown her way,
so*

*God sent me help, he sent me YOU
Even though you're gone
Your spirit is always here.
All I do is look into my heart,
And I know you're near.*

*Shelby, you will always be close to
my heart and I will never forget you or
the things you've done for me.*

*I love and miss you,
Sherry Kincaid*

Shelby's symbols are an artist's pallet and a rose.



I don't know if you saw the movie, **Forest Gump**, but it had many wonderful **GUMPisms**. These are only a few:

- * **My life is like a box of chocolates. It's full of nuts!**
- * **Do not cry over skim milk.**
- * **Let me say this: bein' an idiot is no box of chocolates.**
- * **If you are ahead, shut up and stay there.**
- * **Don't trust nothin' but your instinct.**
- * **Never mix water with chocolate**

