



The Companion

Welcome to the PSFC Newsletter!

As we know, the holidays can bring added stress. It may be time to start new traditions or continue with traditions that we know those we've lost enjoyed. We want to provide information, inspiration and resources; and, we hope you look forward to receiving "The Companion" every other month.

Ah, the holiday season, the time to be Merry & Bright – right? Let's get real. It's not always "Merry" and it's not always "Bright" for us survivors. Whether this is your 1st, 2nd or 20th holiday season without your loved one's physical presence, there is just something missing.

Many of us know to throw out any thoughts of "time heals all wounds", "it gets easier with time", or even the one that says, "they are still all around us", right? While the last one may be true, it does not mean we don't feel sad because they are not here with us tasting the cookie dough, eating turkey, watching TV, going hunting or just joining in family time. What matters is, they aren't here, and we can't hug them or hear their voice and it hurts!

I wish I could wave a magic wand and wish them back to us. I would do it for me and I would do it for you, but I can't. What I CAN do is let you know you are not alone, and you can get through this season day by day. You do this by putting one foot in front of the other and by not having too many expectations for yourself. You also do this by setting the expectations for others and keeping it real for them as well.

Everyone who is important to you will already know that your loved one is missing and that you are sad. So, set expectations not only for yourself, but also for others. Others may feel like they cannot laugh or show joy because they don't want to hurt your feelings. Let people know that, while you are sad, you still want them to enjoy their holiday and that you might even join them in a song, or nibble on some turkey, or whatever; but, that you may also cry or be sad at any moment. Be very clear that you will TRY to join them in some of their festivities; but, at any given moment, you might just have to excuse yourself for a moment, an hour, or from the entire event. Remember YOU are the one who matters now and YOU must take care of YOURSELF.

If you are usually the host or hostess, sure you can do it – if you want to or feel up to it, good for you – go for it and enjoy! But you may not have it in you to put up a tree or cook for a house full of guests, and that is OKAY too. Do not feel bad to say, I just can't do it this year. Now some of you will say you must attend to other members of your family, especially children who are eager for the holiday. You may feel the need to make their holiday bright and not cry. But, trust me, kids are perceptive and they know you are sad. Be honest with them. Tell them you love them, but that you are sad because you are missing "name". Ask them if they would like to light a candle, add a special ornament to the tree, or look at pictures from past holidays where "name" is present. Not only will you share in special memories, you will show them that it's okay to say the person's name and share in your love. It's also okay to have an empty chair at the table in their honor.

Whatever you do, keep it simple. Make sure others know it is not because you don't love them or they did anything to upset you; just tell them that you are keeping things simple in honor of "name". Remember that memories and sadness have a way of sneaking up on us, so be prepared. You may think you can just "grin and bear it" or "fake it to make it", but you may also be fooling yourself. Remember, it's okay to find joy and to laugh and it's okay to cry and feel sad; because, even in the merriest of moments, we still miss them and with great love comes great grief. It can ebb and flow throughout the day or moments. Be prepared, be present and be real with yourself and others.

Now my whole point of this little chat is to remember that if we don't say their name, no one else will because they don't want to remind us of "name" – but we are already remembering, right? So, acknowledge the elephant in the room, say their name, share their memories. Keep their spirit in your holiday because, yes, they are forever present in our lives. Their lives are like a precious gift, our memories are precious moments and we keep them alive in our hearts. Just keep it real this holiday season!

Peace and blessings, Jeanette

J's Corner

*"Your life was a blessing,
your memory a treasure.
You are loved beyond
words and missed
beyond measure."*

-Author Unknown

WE OFFER SUPPORT

General support meetings: 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month.

LGBTQ support meetings: 2nd Thursday of the month (starting January 2018).

Sibling support meetings: 4th Thursday of the month (starting January 2018).

**Support groups meet
from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at
211 E. Franklin St., Appleton, WI**

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Program

Saturday, December 2, 2017, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Fox Valley Technical College, Rm. E130 AB (Use Entrance 10 off West parking lot). Guest Speaker: Erin Davison from Channel 5 News. This is a free event, open to the public.

QPR Class (Question, Persuade and Refer)

A proven methodology for saving a life from suicide. Monday, December 4, 2017, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at 211 E. Franklin St., Appleton, WI. Registration is required via email at registration@preventsuicidefoxcities.org.