



# Heartbeat of Grand Junction

2022  
Mar-Apr

A newsletter for people who have been bereaved by losing a loved one to suicide



## **Heartbeat**

### **Second Saturday Coffee**

**Mar 12 & Apr 9 @ 1:30 PM**

Four Winds Coffee

1235 Bookcliff Ave, Grand Junction

### **Third Tuesday Support Group**

**Mar 15 & Apr 19 @ 7 PM**

First Congregational UCC

1425 N 5th St, Grand Junction

## **The Compassionate Friends**

### **First Tuesday**

**Mar 1 & Apr 5 @ 7PM**

Messiah Lutheran

811 N. 11th St, Grand Junction

Info: Betty Hancock @ 970-434-3822

## **Other Local Grief Support**

### **HopeWest Hospice**

(970) 241-2212

[hopewest.org/grief-support](http://hopewest.org/grief-support)

### **GriefShare**

**(Christian)**

[Griefshare.org](http://Griefshare.org)

### **The Stephen's Ministries**

**(Christian)**

[stephenministries.org](http://stephenministries.org)

*March's support group meeting topic will be centered around Rest.*

Rest is especially important during grief. Without adequate rest the emotional roller coaster of grief may be magnified and more difficult to manage.

Physical Rest is sleep, resting our eyes, or shivasana (in yoga)

Mental Rest is what we experience when involved in a meditative hobby.

Spiritual Rest can be found in a comforting mantra, prayer, or contemplation.

Creative Rest observe, to think, to journal, create art, or build something new.

Emotional Rest creates comfort, relaxation, and a feeling of calm.

Sensory Rest occurs in a quiet place with minimal sensory distractions.

*April's support meeting topic will be a discussion of Renewal practices.*

Losing a loved one to suicide is a disaster, and understanding responses to distressing events can help you cope effectively with your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, and help us along the path to renewal.

Time to adjust to our new reality sometimes takes longer than we think it should.

Asking for support can be difficult but very effective if we do it with intention.

Communicating our experience is different for everyone. Which ways work best?

Finding a support group that suits your schedule and mode of attendance.

Engaging in healthy behaviors helps us renew and grow stronger.

Establishing or reestablishing routines can help establish comforting patterns again.

Heartbeat exists to help survivors absorb the impact of a self-inflicted death, to offer comfort, understanding and acceptance, and to support each other toward healthy resolution to the grief.

*Heartbeat of GJ  
Steering Committee*

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Alice Monroe

Something that is rarely talked about in the grief journey is the evolution of one's spiritual journey through grief. Maybe it's too soon to notice the changes, if any, in a spiritual belief system through the process of grieving if one is newly bereaved. Regardless of one's belief system, it's interesting to observe and ponder such an aspect. Merely observing without judgement may provide some insight itself. Just as in the grief journey itself, having no right or wrong ways to navigate the course, observation may lead to some interesting, surprising, and possibly profound learning. The only thing to really be aware of is not allowing it to be a detriment to your health and wellbeing.

Many people rely on what they have learned or been exposed to in belief systems to assist them in getting through this awful time in life. Tremendous upheaval of challenging life events such as this loss can cause a seismic shift in perspective; or at least to swing way off course only to return to one's basic beliefs. Perhaps added depth or understanding occurs. At any rate, it's something to consider. One might want to make notes or keep a journal of observations which may be interesting to look back upon further down the grief journey road.

Here are some questions one might ask in tracking one's process. Note that it is process not progress. What were my beliefs before the loss occurred? What are my core beliefs at this time? What were they at the beginning of the journey? Have they changed? How have they changed? Did it cause me to explore other belief systems? Did I return to my original ones? Did I adopt new ones? What insights did I gain? If the loss had not occurred, do I think I would be at the same understanding now?

Again, no judgment, only observe, and see what this ponderance has provided. It's something to consider.



*Heartbeat GJ is grateful to our sponsors for providing meeting space to host our groups and for printing our newsletter*



# Reflections

## The Need for Community by Gretchen McGeeney

If nothing else, something has become very clear during the last 2 years of isolation. The need for getting together and being with others is very basic to health and wellbeing. Whether that occurs in going to events, holding family celebrations, providing the opportunity to collectively mourn those we've lost, attending faith communities, going to school or work, or simply connecting in person with friends doing activities we enjoy, the benefits have been sharply brought to our attention. Research tells us that those who have a strong support system in times of difficulty, loss, and life's challenges often do better at learning to integrate those events into one's life and more aptly survive in a healthy way.

The pandemic has forced us to search for ways to stay connected using technology. Just look at all the technological ways people can stay connected that were either relatively unknown or had to be developed in order to continue basic life sustaining provisions to all the people in isolation. Innovation and trial and error on everyone's part was necessary to navigate this huge challenge.

Not unlike other entities, Heartbeat had to be innovative in continuing to provide support for those suffering the loss of a loved one to suicide. Socially distanced meetings were held in a park, and then 2 meetings were held over the ZOOM format, until we once again could meet in the church building that hosts our regular meetings. We even reformatted our annual Candle Light Memorial Ceremony for 2 years into a Candle Walk around Sherwood Park. Our annual June picnic became a social in which we played various games, still using social distancing protocols. What a relief to finally interact in person with other survivors!

We each have to find what works to help process the grief journey. Innovation and trial and error are part of the picture. If you would like the in-person connection of a support group experience, come to our monthly meetings or our monthly coffees. We still practice socially distanced protocols for the safety of all. Coming to a meeting for the first time can seem like a daunting, scary endeavor. But we welcome anyone, and each person becomes like family.

*A Memorial Pine Tree Dedication is tentatively set for sometime in May. Watch for further information in the May/June newsletter. The plan is to tour each site that trees were planted and do a short Dedication ceremony. A map of sites will be furnished.*

*Please contact Gretchen for further information*

We welcome articles, poems, suggestions, and event submissions. Please send them to [gjheartbeat@gmail.com](mailto:gjheartbeat@gmail.com). To borrow a book from Heartbeat GJ's library, please call Lee Sullivan at 970.245.9188

My dad had the most perfect penmanship. He attributed it to his Catholic school education: Whether he was writing with his left or right hand, his handwriting was better than most people's. As the story went, he broke his right arm three times in a year and got no slack from the nuns. They smacked his left hand with a ruler until his handwriting looked just as nice with his left as it had with his right. After my dad died, I found comfort in almost anything with his handwriting on it. One might think this had to do with what he wrote, and of course, sometimes it did. But more often it was just that he wrote it. A grocery list, a random phone message, whatever. Throwing away anything with his handwriting on it? Unthinkable. Well, unthinkable until it started to seem a little unrealistic to keep every scrap of paper around the house with his handwriting on it. At some point, things slowly had to go.

When my grandmother died several years later, I went through this all over again. She was my dad's mom and, not only was her handwriting sentimental in and of itself, but it also reminded me a lot of my dad's. As I cleaned out her house I knew I couldn't keep everything, but there were some things I couldn't part with – letters and recipes mostly.

Recently I have been thinking about ways to preserve handwriting of those we love and I have stumbled upon some really cool ideas. I figure I might not be the only one with some handwriting-nostalgia, so today I am compiling some of these ideas in case you are looking for ways to hold on to your loved one's handwriting without having a room in your house piled high with every scrap of paper they ever wrote on. I have linked back to the source where possible, so click on the image to go to the site.

*Handwriting Tattoos:* I know more than a few grieverers with one of these babies. A good tattoo artist will be able to replicate anything you bring in that your loved one wrote. It may be best to seek a tattoo artist who specializes in text to make sure you get something you are really happy with. There are a zillion examples, but here are a few:

*Framing Recipes:* This is from yours truly at WYG. My grandmother's recipes had her beautiful handwriting and seemed a perfect decoration and memorial for my kitchen. You can always just throw the recipe itself in a frame, but if you click the image below there is a tutorial on how to blow the recipe up and frame it at a larger size.

*Create a Handwriting Scrapbook Page:* Though this blog hasn't been active for many years, The Good Grief Scrapbooking Blog provided 24 scrapbooking prompts to remember loved ones. They had a great handwriting prompt and some of the submissions are really cool.

*Handwriting Jewelry:* If a tattoo seems a little too permanent, you can still wear your loved one's handwriting in a more temporary way. There are TONS of jewelry makers who will take something your loved one wrote and turn it into a beautiful necklace, bracelet, keychain, etc. Etsy is a great place to start. A search for handwriting jewelry there brings up nearly 4,000 options, so I am guessing you'll find something you like!

*Overlay Writing on a Framed Photo or Art:* If you have a card, letter, or something else that is meaningful that your loved one wrote, you can use photoshop to impose the handwriting onto an image that you may also find meaningful (or just a nice image that you want to use!). If you have a little photoshop knowledge, this tutorial will help you get it done! If you don't, you can order custom handwriting-photo overlays from this Etsy store.

*Binding Letters into Books:* This is such a neat idea. I am a disaster when it comes to crafty things, and this looks like it takes some skill, but for those of you who are more ambitious and talented than me, it could be a VERY cool memorial.

*Framing Just About Anything with Handwriting:* I love this look and it could be just about anything – grocery lists, postcards, letters, recipes, or anything else. This I saw on Pinterest (shocking, I know) and the link took me here, but I couldn't actually find the image there. If anyone knows the original source, please comment to let me know!

*Recipes on a Cutting Board? Yes again!:* Will the creativity never cease? I am OBSESSED with this idea. Obsessed. I saw this one first on the Nutfield Genealogy blog, but I have links to some Etsy sellers too.

by LITSA WILLIAMS from WhatsYourGrief.com  
<https://whatsyourgrief.com/9-creative-ways-to-preserve-handwriting/>

## A LIFE IN BROKEN PIECES



*A Life in Broken Pieces* by June Favre is Heartbeat Grand Junction's newest addition to our lending library.

"In an effort to understand the years of a brother's battle with clinical depression, June Favre sets forth an account of the good times, the desperate times, the confusing roadblocks and the digressions. In this personal portrait, June is firm in her belief that solutions will be found to alleviate the pain and suffering of depression.

June Favre was born in north central Kansas, USA. She has studied in the US, Mexico, France and Ireland; earning a BA, MA and PhD. Her loves are family, friends, traveling, music, art and animals. She lives part time in Colorado and part time in Athenry, County Galway."

"When I die I'm going to dance first in all the galaxies...I'm gonna play and dance and sing." - Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

### "Hope for the Withered?" by Cherlyn Crawford

In the years following the suicide death of our son, three days into his senior year of high school, I found great comfort from wise people of the past. History is full of people who suffered as much or more than I have, and I found hope in remembering I am not the first person in history to feel totally bereft of all hope. Each of us has feelings that are valid, and I don't want to minimize anyone's experience by comparing them to others. Still, I found comfort in knowing other people survived intense suffering, loss and grief. This made me consider that perhaps (and I mean I felt only like 'perhaps') I could get through this too.

The Holy Bible has a Book called The Psalms. These are poems and songs written from all emotional perspectives. I found (and still at times) dwell on these words of despair, knowing that those who wrote these went on to be amazing witnesses to the power of LIFE. One example:

"Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry come to thee! Do not hide thy face from me in the day of my distress! Incline thy ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call!

For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. My heart is smitten like grass, and withered; I forgot to eat my bread. Psalm 102:1-4 RSV)."

How can I plant flowers or enjoy spring when my heart is withered like dead grass? How can I nourish my body with healthy food when I don't find pleasure in anything? There is an old saying "Fake it 'til you make it" that may have helpful insight. Take a short walk around the block if nothing else. Get a bit of sunshine or fresh air. Sit on a chair with your bare feet grounded to the earth or grass. If you aren't allergic to grass (like I am), go ahead and lay right down on the withered brown earth, stare at the sky, or just close your eyes and rest. Draw energy from the earth just like the plants do. Watch birds work at survival. Start a simple journal where you write three things positive about your day. Ok, so maybe they are just 1) I breathed all day long, 2) I drank at least 4 good glasses of clean water. What a blessing. There are people in the world who don't have clean water to drink. 3) It was trash pick up day so all that stinky garbage is out of my house and neighborhood. Spring flowers will start to bloom, of course, they need rain to do so, so you have to accept those cloudy days in order to get the flowers. Hmmm...sounds kinda like life. Hang in there. Your heartbeat friends are here to help. You can survive, and maybe some day you can look back and say, "Oh my, I have started to thrive!"

"Love is really the only thing we can possess, keep with us, and take with us." - Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



# *We Remember*

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*It is with loving hearts that we remember our loved ones and hold those surviving family members and friends in our thoughts and prayers during the difficult times of birthdays and death anniversaries. If you are receiving the newsletter and would like to see your loved one included please use the form, included in this newsletter to give your consent to publish the information and submit your request.*

In memory of Jeffrey Little  
March 20,1973-April 10,1991

In the shadow of his life is love  
In the shadow of his death is pain  
In spite of the hurt I am so glad he lived  
I would not have given up one minute  
Even knowing that I would lose him

We love you so much and will hold you in our hearts  
As long as we live

Mom, Dad and Damon



# WE REMEMBER

Please include my loved one in *We Remember*

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

DOD: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional donation of:

\$

In memory of:

From: (*Name and relationship*)

**Detach and mail to:**

Heartbeat of Grand Junction  
PO Box 1245  
Clifton, CO 81520

**Email to:** [gjheartbeat@gmail.com](mailto:gjheartbeat@gmail.com)

**Find us:** [heartbeatgj.com](http://heartbeatgj.com)

## A FEW ONLINE RESOURCES

### Alliance of Hope

[Allianceofhope.org](http://Allianceofhope.org)

### AFSP Loss Survivor Support

[afsp.org/find-a-support-group](http://afsp.org/find-a-support-group)

### Colorado Grief Care

[coloradogriefcare.org/mesa-county](http://coloradogriefcare.org/mesa-county)

### Creating Connections for Healing:

A Zoom-based Peer Support Group for

Those Grieving a Suicide Loss. 1st

Wednesday of every month 6:30-7:30.

[jcurtis@frontier.net](mailto:jcurtis@frontier.net) / text (970) 216-6441

### Friends for Survival

[Friendsforsurvival.org](http://Friendsforsurvival.org)

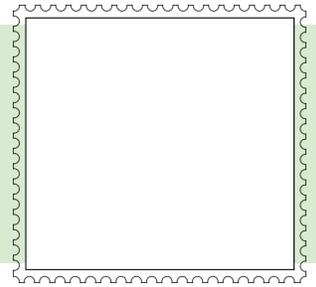
Virtual support groups, non-urgent loss

support line (800) 646-7322

*In Case You Missed It:* The Daily Sentinel has been publishing a series of articles on a range of Postvention issues, history, and services, written by Sandra Eisenberg & others. In December, Gretchen coauthored “Postvention is Palliative” which highlighted the work of Jim & Margaret Palo, two Heartbeat GJ’s founders. The article says “The Mesa County suicide loss support movement began in 1980 when bereaved parents Dave and Margaret Palo founded The Compassionate Friends peer support group. Understanding the need for grief support specific to suicide loss, Margaret and another bereaved mom formed Heartbeat of Grand Junction in 1992. Over the decades, these two groups have held space for thousands of Western Colorado family members and friends. The following quote from Margaret in 2015 speaks volumes to the life-saving aspect of peer support, “I spearheaded the founding of the local chapters of The Compassionate Friends and Heartbeat to help others. I soon realized that my involvement was of great benefit to me. I realize that both have been lifesavers for me and are probably the biggest reasons I have survived as well as I have for the past 37 years.” THANK YOU Margaret! WE LOVE YOU!!!

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*Heartbeat of Grand Junction*