



15 Things I Wish I'd Known About Grief

Teryn O'Brien

After a year of grief, I've learned a lot. I've also made some mistakes along the way. Today, I jotted down 15 things I wish I'd known about grief when I started my own process.

I pass this onto anyone on the journey.

1. You will feel like the world has ended. I promise, it hasn't. Life *will* go on, slowly. A new normal will come, slowly.
2. No matter how bad a day feels, it is *only* a day. When you go to sleep crying, you will wake up to a new day.
3. Grief comes in waves. You might be okay one hour, not okay the next. Okay one day, not okay the next day. Okay one month, not okay the next. Learn to go with the flow of what your heart and mind are feeling.
4. It's okay to cry. Do it often. But it's okay to laugh, too. Don't feel guilty for feeling positive emotions even when dealing with loss.
5. Take care of yourself, even if you don't feel like it. Eat healthily. Work out. Do the things you love. Remember that *you* are still living.
6. Don't shut people out. Don't cut yourself off from relationships. You will hurt yourself and others.
7. No one will respond perfectly to your grief. People—even people you love—will let you down. Friends you thought would be there won't be there, and people you hardly know will reach out. Be prepared to give others grace. Be prepared to work through hurt and forgiveness at others' reactions.
8. God *will* be there for you perfectly. He will never, ever let you down. He will let you scream, cry, and question. Throw all your emotions at Him. He is near to the brokenhearted.
9. Take time to truly remember the person you lost. Write about him or her, go back to all your memories with them, truly soak in all the good times you had with that person. It will help.
10. Facing the grief is better than running. Don't hide from the pain. If you do, it will fester and grow and consume you.
11. You will ask "Why?" more times than you thought possible, but you may never get an answer. What helps is asking, "How? How can I live life more fully to honor my loved one? How can I love better, how can I embrace others, how can I change and grow because of this?"
12. You will try to escape grief by getting busy, busy, busy. You will think that if you *don't* think about it, it'll just go away. This isn't really true. Take time to process and heal.
13. Liquor, sex, drugs, hobbies, work, relationships, etc., will not take the pain away. If you are using anything to try and numb the pain, it will make things worse in the long run. Seek help if you're dealing with the sorrow in unhealthy ways.
14. It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to need people. It's okay, it's okay, it's okay.
15. Grief can be beautiful and deep and profound. Don't be afraid of it. Walk alongside it. You may be surprised at what grief can teach you.



We Remember Our Children

Who have Birthdays and Death Dates
in March and April

Emily Andrews	8/02/97 ~ 3/14/16	Robert Larson	3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10
Pounh Bahri	10/25/88 ~ 3/04/14	Glen Irvin Leonard II	4/13/71 ~ 12/07/09
Bryan Christopher Bingel	1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08	Henry Lewis III	2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02
Matthew Bingel	4/23/87 ~ 4/23/87	Erika (Brummett) Lott	4/06/77 ~ 11/05/13
Christopher Wesley Blok	3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09	Kyle Ludeman	4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13
Danielle Mae Burmeister	3/26/11 ~ 3/26/11	Derek Meffert	4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10
Autumn Marie Coffie	4/16/88 ~ 12/29/14	Ella Miller	4/27/02 ~ 7/23/10
Sarah Beth Cole	8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11	Christina Morgan	7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02
Jason Michael Colson	3/09/84 ~ 10/01/08	Shelby Nicholson	4/22/92 ~ 1/07/09
Christina Lynn Curtis	3/01/74 ~ 12/25/07	Linda Thompson Plewes	7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02
Tresa Eastes	3/07/67 ~ 7/08/03	Matthew Allan Ruane	9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02
Antonio Ford-Flores	2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10	Lionel Andres Salvador	3/30/13 ~ 3/30/13
Jacob Thomas Fulton	4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15	Jacqueline Simoes	11/05/66 ~ 3/15/06
Raven Gileau	6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10	Karl Dewan Smith	11/20/83 ~ 4/25/04
Ahmad Givon Glenn	3/06/83 ~ 12/04/06	Kevin Michael Stanphill	3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09
Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik	5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13	Graham Stevenson	3/30/85 ~ 9/22/07
Kourtney Michelle Hale	5/29/80 ~ 3/14/10	Beckett Josef TePaske	4/04/12 ~ 5/12/15
Kristin Marie Harkness	3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08	Neale Thompson	4/07/71 ~ 4/09/93
Cody Darrin Johnson	9/11/02 ~ 3/06/09	Austin Trenum	3/26/93 ~ 9/27/10
Kashif Johnson	3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07	Brian Floyd Weakley	1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
Leslie Ann Kramer	4/20/71 ~ 12/17/06	Kyle Robert Wilson	5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07
Kwadwo Amoako Kusi	3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08	Neil York	4/29/93 ~ 4/25/15

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Children" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your child's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of March and April, please provide us with your child's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

We, as bereaved parents, help grieving parents and families rebuild their lives after the death of a child.

The mission of Bereaved Parents of the USA

**Caring and Sharing
Support Meetings:**

4th Sunday @ 3 p.m.
First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bleachermom2000@aol.com

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)
3rd Wednesday @ 6 p.m.
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA

For more info contact:
Beverly Ruane
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

IMPORTANT: With our new website and publishing our newsletter on the website, your child's name, birthdate and death date may be on the website. If you have any objection to your child's name and information being on the website please let Jodi know as soon as possible at bleachermom2000@aol.com.

If you have experienced the loss of a baby during pregnancy, at time of birth or as an infant, please contact Mary Mozingo at mhmozingo@gmail.com.



Check out our Chapter Website

<http://www.bpusanova.com>

Our sincere sympathy to the following families on the recent death of a loved ones:



Gwen Bolton on the death of her daughter, Lesly on October 27th. Lesly was the mother of Christopher Andre' Waters Jr. who died in 2007 at the age of 10.

Sandy Barrett on the death of her significant other, Rick Retzloff on February 3rd.

Rich, Valerie and Christina Larson on the death of Rich's mother, Betty Larson on February 21st.

Dear all of my special friends in the BP Group, I want to thank all of you who worked so hard to take charge of all of the food and drinks at Rick's calling hours.

You guys did a wonderful job and it was so nice to see all of you. The food was delicious and we really enjoyed all of the food that was sent home with us.

I'm doing ok, but still can't believe that Rick is gone. I miss him so much and especially miss talking to him every night at 1 a.m.

Thank you again for all that you guys have done for Josh and me. We really appreciated it.

I love you guys! Sandy Barrett



There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in any little way, we would love your help. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.

I could really use volunteers to plan our special events (Picnic/Balloon Release, Butterfly Release and Service of Remembrance). Volunteers are also needed to help with the Gathering, which we are hosting, August 4-6. Other areas of need are in Fundraising, Publicity, Outreach, and helping at the Memorial Garden.

If you would like to volunteer to help our chapter, please contact Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com or 703-656-6999.

HAPPY 28th BIRTHDAY in HEAVEN KRISTIN

February 19, 2008... Only four more weeks and Kristin will be 19 years old...19 on the 19th...another year to celebrate our beautiful daughter and the day we were blessed with her birth on March 19, 1989... but that celebration never occurred because just three weeks before her birthday, Kristin made the worst choice possible which ended her life, and also ended any celebrations we would ever share as a family again on March 19th...Kristin **is** and **will be** Forever 18...

We did actually "celebrate" one more of her birthdays...her 19th on the 19th that year...My husband Tom, our children Jessica (26) and Eric (23), plus a few of Kristin's closest friends went to the restaurant we'd gone to each year to celebrate all three of our children's March birthdays, the Outback. After each of us had ordered, Tom placed one side order of Kristin's favorite, Macaroni and Cheese. When the order arrived, we passed the bowl around the table, and after everyone had scooped up a spoonful, we all toasted Kristin with our spoons held high in celebration, wishing her the "Happy 19th Birthday" she would never have a chance to share with her family and friends.

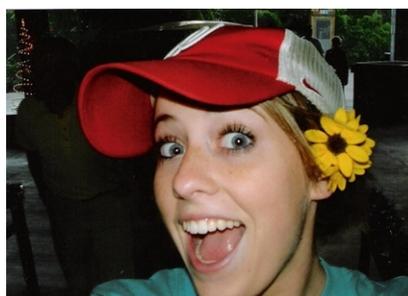
I was watching a television show just yesterday and a mom came on whose daughter had died in a car accident following a night of heavy drinking with friends. It was March 2013 and Arielle was just 21 years old. Her mom used a metaphor saying that each of us have an on-going book of our lives, and following her own daughter's bad choice that night, Arielle's book was now closed...her story had ended.

Sadly, Kristin's story came to an end on February 22, 2008. It was a terrible ending to her story, but all of the previous chapters are filled with so much laughter and love, and the most amazing stories of travel, family, friends, and Kristin's sometimes inappropriate (yet hysterical) behavior and comments. It was hard to be angry with her when she got that impish grin and said, "Come on Tom and Linda, you know you want to laugh." We did because we just couldn't help ourselves. She truly was probably the funniest person I've ever known...and I miss the laughter she brought to the world. I could share many examples of her sense of humor, but those stories would fill a book...perhaps a short book, but one bursting with a life fully lived with laughter and a tremendous amount of love.

There have been nine more birthdays that Kristin has missed since missing her 19th on the 19th. Other bereaved parents continue to "celebrate" their child's birthday, but it is still too difficult for me, although March 19th will be consumed with thoughts of her and the party she's having each year in heaven with all of her other angel friends, especially Nicole and Christine who have been by her side since they passed as well within three weeks (Nicole) and one day (Christine) of her.

The months of February and March aren't primarily filled with sadness and loss as we celebrate our daughter-in-law Lauren's birthday in February, our son Eric's birthday in March, and our daughter Jessica's birthday in March as well... and we have a new member of our family, 17 month old Camden, who has been lucky enough to have shared a few more recent birthdays with his Aunt Kristin as he awaited his own birth on November 3, 2015 to his chosen Mommy and Daddy, Lauren and Eric... and now Kristin has a niece she's getting to know in heaven before her birth this June to Eric, Lauren, and big brother Camden. More books of empty pages, just waiting to be filled with stories of our growing family...

Kristin, your "book" may have ended at 18, but our love for you continues for an eternity... I will never forget our mantra as I left your room each night for most of your 18 years and 11 months, or over the phone when you weren't at home in your own bed... "I LOVE YOU as BIG as the SKY, and even BIGGER, and even MORE..." Happy 28th Birthday in Heaven Kristin! I Love You as Big as the SKY, "Poopsie," and miss you every day, Mom XO



Dear Matthew,

Another year without you has come upon us. I can't believe it's been 15 years; 15 years! The day you died is just as vivid in our minds today as if it were yesterday.

You have missed so much. We have missed so much. When you left us, you had one nephew. There are now a total of six: five nephews and one niece. I know you would have been a great uncle. They all know you, except of course the baby, as if you were here. We've missed out on your life. I wonder how many other grandchildren your dad and I would have had. I wonder what your wife would be like, your children, your career, and your life in general. Dad is still playing darts. Rachel had been playing but took time off for the baby. She's really pretty good. I know you would have still been playing, too.

You were always such a kind generous soul. Yes, you and I always had our conflicts. After all, you were a teenage boy, but nothing that couldn't be handled. I'd welcome all of that back just to have you here.

You are so very sorely missed by everyone. When you died a piece of my heart died; but because of who you were, knowing it's what you would want and the other joys God has provided since you left, I can go on with life. No matter what, though, you will always be missed and loved. I miss you and love you, my baby boy.

Love always,

Mom, Dad, Erin, Monica, Rachel and all of your family.



Who You'd Be Today

Kenny Chesney

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
I wear the pain like a heavy coat
I feel you everywhere I go
I see your smile, I see your face
I hear you laughing in the rain
I still can't believe you're gone

It ain't fair you died too young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away
God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing no one could take your place
Sometimes I wonder who you'd be today

Would you see the world,
would you chase your dreams
Settle down with a family
I wonder what would you name your babies
Some days the sky's so blue

I feel like I can talk to you
I know it might sound crazy

It ain't fair you died too young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away
God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing no one could take your place
Sometimes I wonder who you'd be today

Today, today, today
Today, today, today

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
I wear the pain like a heavy coat
The only thing that gives me hope
Is I know I'll see you again someday

Someday, someday

Hello Everyone!

As of this writing, it seems the groundhog was wrong this year, at least for the moment! Hopefully, the above freezing temperatures (at least during the day) will continue. Spring is just around the corner.

It's that time of the year again to ready our memorial garden to be as beautiful as always. There are actually weeds growing already; or maybe they never died! I think some weeds survive the winter no matter what. At any time you are at the garden, please bend down and pick a few weeds as you walk through. Every little bit helps. Soon we will be pulling weeds, trimming the dead plants from winter to allow new growth, plant some new plants that didn't survive the winter or were annuals, and others to provide color; and spreading mulch. Each year the garden looks so bleak and I'm always concerned that nothing will grow back even though I know it will. Next thing I know there is growth and the garden bursts forth in greenery and color!



A workday will be scheduled to do necessary care. As soon as a date is decided you will be notified. Please make sure to check your email and mail for dates. When you find out the date, please let me or Jodi know so we know how many to count on. The more there are working the quicker things are completed.

Also, once things are planted and growing, the garden needs to be maintained with weed pulling and watering. Please let me know if there is a certain day that would work for you to go water. That way we can set up a schedule. If for some reason you were not able to go sometime on your scheduled day you could let me know and we could get someone else. Of course, if there is a good rain it doesn't need watering but at the garden that seems to rarely happen. It usually rains all around the garden! If we get enough people you may only need to go water a couple of times in 2 weeks. In the beginning, the newly planted plants and flowers will need consistent watering until they become established. Then in the hot summer extra watering to keep them from drying up. Those that don't know where the water source is please let me know when you want to go to the garden and I'll meet you there to show you.

The memorial garden takes a lot of work to maintain its beauty. I've been told it's the favorite garden on the monastery grounds. It's very difficult for one or two people to adequately care for it. Jodi and I both will be going there as much as we can but we both live 45 minutes to an hour away. It would be a great help for those that live closer to help out and anyone else that can. Whenever you do go, whether scheduled or randomly, and do something at the garden, please let me know so we don't make a trip to water, etc. thinking it needs to be done.

Thank you in advance for your help and your help in the past. The Bereaved Parents Memorial Garden is a beautiful peaceful place to go to walk through, sit, and reflect on our children. It's an honor that we all have been given the privilege to enjoy and it belongs to everyone. Please help us keep it beautiful so we may continue to honor our children. If you would like to put a memorial stone in the garden for your child, you are welcome to do so.

You may contact me by texting my cell 703-395-9546, home 540-628-4758 or email ruane.beverly@yahoo.com. or Jodi. I look forward to seeing you at the garden. Happy Spring!

Hugs, Beverly

Garden Work Day

Saturday, May 6th

At 10:00 a.m.

BPUSA Memorial Garden
On the grounds of
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia
Monastery
9535 Linton Hall Rd.
Bristow, VA 20136

If I had a flower every time I thought of you,
I would walk in my garden forever...



DO YOU LOVE SWEET FROG?

JOIN US FOR A FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT

Bereaved Parents of the USA, Northern VA Chapter

Event date: Wednesday, March 29th

Event Time: 3:00 to 9:00 PM

BRING IN THIS FLYER, OR TELL YOUR CASHIER

25% of the sales generated from this event
will be given back to the organization!

(We cannot accommodate usage of other discounts in conjunction with this program)

To find out more, email: marketing@mysweetfrog.net

13796 Smoketown Rd.
Woodbridge, VA



Fundraiser for BPUSA
Wednesday April 26, 2017
11:00am-9:00pm

14389 Potomac Mills Rd
Woodbridge, VA

Donating Back: 15%

Go to the link below to RSVP:

<http://www.groupraise.com/events/28175-bereaved-parents-of-the-usa-nova-chapter-at-ornery-beer-company>

JOIN US IN A **Fun Raiser** TO SUPPORT BPUSA

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

*When our loved ones miss us,
They toss a penny down.
Sometimes just to cheer us up
To make a smile out of a frown.
So don't pass by that penny
When you're feeling blue.
It may be a penny from heaven
That your loved one tossed to you.*
~ C. Mashburn

COINS CAN ADD UP QUICKLY!
EVERY DONATION LARGE OR SMALL MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

CONTRIBUTE AS A CHAPTER

Each \$5 raised by a chapter = 1 ticket to be entered into a Drawing for:

First Prize of \$100 for your Chapter Treasury
Second Prize of \$75 for your Chapter Treasury
Third Prize of \$50 for your Chapter Treasury
You need not be present to win!

For example:
A \$50 donation will "earn" a Chapter 10 tickets
A \$100 donation will "earn" a Chapter 20 tickets

CONTRIBUTE AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Any donation will result in a penny "template" to be posted
in memory of your child or sibling at the Gathering

To donate online go to www.bereavedparentsusa.org and click on our donate tab.
If you are donating as an individual: In the "in memory of" box, type "Pennies" and the name of your loved one which will be written on a penny "template" to be posted at the Gathering.
If you are donating as a chapter: In the "in memory of" box, type "Pennies" and the name of your chapter and we will fill out ticket stubs for your chapter to be entered into the drawing.

Or mail your check, payable to BPUSA, to:
Kathy Corrigan, 5 Vanek Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603



Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gathering

August 4-6, 2017 | Washington, DC

Please join us for a weekend of Hope & Healing

REFLECT... and be inspired by our inspirational speakers who offer hope for the future. Learn about the mourning process and how to move forward in your grief during our interactive workshop sessions.

RENEW... old friendships and make new connections with fellow bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who understand what you are going through. Take off your "mask" and share your grief in a safe and affirming environment.

REMEMBER... your child as you take part in our Candle Lighting Ceremony and Slide Show Presentation. Honor their memory by taking good care of yourself during this healing weekend.

Our speakers for the 2017 National BPUSA Gathering:

Kelly Buckley
Dr. Doug and BJ Jensen
Ron Kelly
Sarah Kravits
Anna Whiston-Donaldson
Gareth Williams
Tom Zuba



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Northern Virginia Chapter Information Form

It is time to update our records, so please fill out this form and return it to the address below as soon as possible. Even if you have been in the Chapter for a long time, please update your information.

If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time everyone within the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA wants to say that we are sorry you have the need for this newsletter but we hope our newsletter will be helpful on your journey. Please complete and return this form so that your child may be remembered in our newsletters and on our website.

Please print, filling in all applicable blanks. This is for internal use only.

Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail: _____

Would you like to receive the newsletter in the mail _____ or electronically _____ or both _____

Child's Full Name: _____

Male _____ Female _____

Child's Birth Date: _____ Child's Death Date: _____

Cause of Child's Death: _____

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) _____

Note: The information you have given above will be confidential (*used for internal purposes only*) unless you answer "yes" to the following questions and then only for the stated purpose.

1. Do you want your child's name to appear in the newsletter and website "**We Remember You**" section with birth and death dates? The newsletter is also published on the website. Yes _____ No _____

2. May we include the above information in the BP/USA Northern Virginia Chapter directory? Yes _____ No _____

3. Is it ok for us to use your child's name, birth and death dates on our website? Yes _____ No _____

Please return to: The Bereaved Parents of the USA, Northern Virginia Chapter, P.O. Box 7675, Woodbridge, VA 22195

Bereaved Parents of the USA Credo

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journey. We attend month gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness and feelings of hopelessness, so that hope can be found anew. As we accept, support, comfort and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other that survival is possible. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and the triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it matters where we live, what our color or our affluence is or what faith we uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children's deaths. Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer what we have learned from each other to every more recently bereaved family.

*We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA.
We welcome you.*

Chapter Contact Information

Jodi Norman, Leader
P.O. Box 7675
Woodbridge, VA 22195
Phone: 703-656-6999
Bleachermom2000@aol.com



Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Someone Cares About You

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.



Attention: If you do not wish to continue to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, please let us know by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing bleachermom2000@aol.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

Bereaved Parents of the USA
Northern Virginia Chapter
P.O. Box 7675
Woodbridge, VA 22195