



Good Grief NEWS

Good Grief of Kansas, Inc

PO Box 12865 Wichita, Ks 67277
Website: www.goodgriefofkansas.org

316-612-0700

January 2026
Email: info@goodgriefofkansas.org

The Mask We Wear

Michael Domingos, McKinney, TX

Ber3eavement Magazine Sept/Oct 2003



As we stumble through our journey of grief, life lessons can come from the most unexpected places. A couple of years ago I went to see Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. I had always been intrigued by the story, so seeing the play for the first time was captivating. The Phantom's name was Erik. He was a man with many talents, including music, architecture, magic, and science. Yet, despite these gifts, people were afraid of him because of his disfigured face. To conceal his identity, the Phantom wore a mask and lived beneath the Paris Opera House.

Erik fell in love with an aspiring young singer named Christine and began to share his musical gift with her. As he played for her beneath the Opera House, Christine crept behind him to remove the mask. Slowly she reached around him until she felt the cold texture on his face. Sensing what was about to happen, Erik desperately turned to hide the horror beneath. But it was too late. Looking into the eyes of the Phantom, it was impossible to tell who was more frightened.

As I continued watching the play, I began to empathize with the Phantom. I realized that I had not been that different from him. In the months following my wife's death, I would face the mirror each morning and I, too, saw a mask in the reflection. While the Phantom hid behind an expressionless piece of ceramic, I wore a prosthetic smile to show that I was "okay". I would clench my teeth as a display of perseverance, and the muscles in my face would strain from this act. As I continued pretending to be "okay," my grief was suffocating underneath. As if trapped under ice on a lake, the emotions frantically looked for way to break through. Pieces of my mask began to chip away revealing the pain underneath. Like the phantom, I was afraid of what others might think when the mask was lifted.

Thankfully, there is a supportive environment where we can express our grief. We can remove the mask of being "okay" that we wear in our everyday lives. It is a comforting sight to look around the room and see that others have removed their masks as well. It is this comfort that allows us to share our experiences and affirm our individual feelings. Through the experiences of others, we realize that we are not alone.

Attending a grief support group also helped me to gain a new perspective on everyday life. After my first visit, I donned my mask again but with a renewed sense of hope. I knew that I only had to wear it for a few days until the next support group meeting. The Prosthetic smile seemed to fit easier with each passing day. Each visit to the support group would bring healing oxygen to the wounds beneath the mask. The muscles in my face relaxed from the twisted knots, an authentic smile overpowered the cosmetic smile that I had been wearing.

The mask had not been violently ripped off my face but gradually removed of my own accord. Although the scars remained, it felt good to feel the air on my face again. What I learned from this experience is that as a society we still struggle with the subject of death. Using the analogy of the *Phantom of the Opera*, imagine the perspective of Christine as she stood face to face with the Phantom. To look beneath the mask of somebody grieving would be like seeing our own mortality. Our mask serves as a buffer between society and the fear of death. At the same time, the anonymity of a mask can protect us while we are grieving as it covers the jagged edges of our emotions. Although it provides a coping mechanism, the mask will deteriorate and expose what it is underneath. It is our choice what this reveals. It is by allowing these feelings to breathe that the wounds of grief heal. As for the *Phantom of the Opera*, the play ends and life continues. One day I may look in the mirror and see that mask again. Thankfully, Halloween only comes once a year.

****All meetings are for those that have lost a loved one,
be it a spouse, child, parent, sibling or friend.**

You are welcome to attend any or all meetings as needed.**

If you would be interested in training to be a facilitator for one of
our groups please contact



SCHEDULE OF GROUP MEETINGS

Please keep in mind.....

All meetings begin at the designated times

Mondays: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

SOUTH WICHITA

Discover Church (1826 W. Maple)

Facilitators: Deona Madrigal, Christy Rector

Tuesdays: 10:00 - 11:30 am

CENTRAL WICHITA

RiverWalk Church of Christ - (225 N Waco)

Use **South Office Entrance**, Fireside Room

Facilitators: Marjorie Watkins, Donald Septer

Tuesdays: 6:30 - 8 pm

WEST WICHITA

West Heights UMC - (745 N Westlink Ave) Use North parking lot off Delano St,
Building **Entance A2 "CHAPEL"** (just west of A1 Entrance)

Facilitators: Tom Downer, Christy Rector

1st and 3rd Wednesday: 7:00 - 8:30 pm

CENTRAL WICHITA

W.A.Y. (Widowed and/or Young) For those, ages 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's)

RiverWalk Church of Christ - (225 N Waco) **SW Entrance, Fireside Room**

Facilitators: Kendra Spencer

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS

Mondays: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

CENTRAL WICHITA

RiverWalk Church of Christ in downtown Wichita (225 N Waco) Note: **Go to the
NW door #7 closest to the river.** If the door is locked, please knock loudly.

The Monday night meetings begin at **6:30 pm**

If you have questions or plan to attend this group, **please call the facilitator** prior
to attending your 1st meeting so session handouts may be prepared for you.

Facilitator: Jim Yoder 316-727-0663

Tuesdays Bi-weekly: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

ARKANSAS CITY

THIS GROUP IS NOT MEETING AT THIS TIME

*If you or someone you know is in need of help, be sure to contact
the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255.*

You are welcome to attend
any support group of your choice.

It is normal to feel confused,
forgetful, crazy, lost and alone,
plus a wide range of other
emotions.

It may not feel like it just now,
but it does get better . . . let us
help. ***Please commit to attend
at least three times.***

The first two times may be
difficult but you will begin to feel a
difference in your grieving as you
are able to share about your loss
and other issues that come along
at this time.

You might want to visit several
groups until you find the one you
feel most comfortable with.

BAD WEATHER POLICY

Wichita:

If there is a threat of
severe weather...

If EARP (Emergency Accident
Reporting Plan) is in effect no
meeting will be held.

Outside Wichita:

Check with your facilitator.

Never put yourself at risk.

***If you think the weather
too dangerous, do not attend
the meeting.***

Office Hours:

Mon and Fri 8 am - 10 am

Mailing address:

**PO Box 12865
Wichita KS 67277**

Office Supply Needs:

Envelopes:

#6 Security (\$Tree envelopes are fine)

Copy Paper:

White 8.5x11 White 11x17

Schedule of Regular Socials:

Tuesdays: Breakfast at 9:00 AM

Livingstons - Webb & 21st

(Hosts: Cindy Swan, Mike Hertzler)

Thursdays: Lunch/Brunch at 10:00 AM

Country Breakfast Café - 2804 S Seneca St

(Hostess: Lois Pardee)

Saturdays: Breakfast at 10:00 AM

Spears Restaurant - 4830 W Maple

(Hostess: Janet Cook)

January 2026

*Give every day the chance to become
the most beautiful day of your life*



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Brunch / Lunch 10 am Country Café 	2	3 Breakfast 10 am Spears Restaurant
4	5 SOSL Wichita 6:30 pm South Group 7:00 pm	6 Central Group 10 am West Group 6:00 pm Breakfast 9 am Livingston's	7 W.A.Y. Group 7:00 PM	8 Brunch / Lunch 10 am Country Café	9	10 Breakfast 10 am Spears Restaurant
11	12 SOSL Wichita 6:30 pm South Group 7:00 pm	13 Central Group 10 am West Group 6:30 pm Breakfast 9 am Livingston's	14	15 Brunch / Lunch 10 am Country Café	16	17 Breakfast 10 am Spears Restaurant
18	19 SOSL Wichita 6:30 pm South Group 7:00 pm 	20 Central Group 10 am West Group 6:30 pm Breakfast 9 am Livingston's	21 W.A.Y. Group 7:00 PM	22 Brunch / Lunch 10 am Country Café	23	24 Breakfast 10 am Spears Restaurant
25	26 SOSL Wichita 6:30 pm South Group 7:00 pm	27 Central Group 10 am West Group 6:30 pm Breakfast 9 am Livingston's	28	29 Brunch / Lunch 10 am Country Café	30	31 Breakfast 10 am Spears Restaurant

Contributions for last month(s) totaled \$ 6821.33

THANK YOU for your donation which makes it possible for Good Grief of Kansas to continue to serve the bereaved.

December Contributors:

Janet Cunningham

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Remember to send your donation to:
 Good Grief of Kansas
 PO Box 12865
 Wichita, KS 67277

Thank you™

designed by: www.freepik.com

Memorial Gifts

*In loving memory of
 Phyllis Gadaire Sauer
 By Terry Sauer*

*In loving memory of
 Otis Jefferson*



Love Gifts

At this time there are no dues or fees to belong to Good Grief of Kansas. However, your gift is very important.

We depend on donations from individuals and organizations to meet our program expenses and to keep the Good Grief office open.

Please help make sure that others who need Good Grief will hear the message that we can and will help them through their grief. Gifts may be designated in honor or memory of a special individual or occasion. We also appreciate monetary gifts to help with the expense of producing and mailing this newsletter.

Note: For memorials with a special remembrance date, submit information one month early for timely publication.

Donations can be sent to:

Good Grief of Kansas
 2622 W Central Suite 401B
 Wichita, Ks 67203

January Birthdays

Charles Brown	3
Katy Gonzalez	3
Don Yeley	4
Chasni Gifford	11
Janet F Cook	13
Angela Carter	15
Ginny Charles	17
Marjorie Watkins	18
Irene N Soto	19
Lois M Pardee	21
Leslie Dulac	23
Errol Munsch	23
Carlos Cervantes	25
Karen Gooch	27
Lex Rhoadarmer	27
Suzanne Birch	28



A Basic Plan for Survival

Choose to survive –

We must make a conscious decision to be active participants in our own healing process.

Feel the feelings –

We must give ourselves permission to grieve deeply for a season.

Stay connected –

While on the healing journey, we must ask God and safe, supportive people to be our traveling companions to share our sorrow, ease our fears, defuse our anger, and process our guilt. In relationships, we have a much better chance to reclaim our joy.

Practice acceptance and forgiveness –

We must give ourselves grace and truth and time to eventually accept our losses and forgive ourselves and others.

Slowly get back in the game –

All the while we must gently and gradually ease ourselves back into reality.

Be the “new you” –

We are forever changed, yet essentially the same, living, breathing, loving, inherently precious children of God.

Share our experiences –

We can now be seasoned traveling companions for other survivors on the recovery road.



By Linda Flatt, Henderson, NV

Bereavement Publications, Inc.

November/December 2003

Ways to help support Good Grief of Kansas:

- 1) Donate online at www.goodgriefofkansas.org
- 2) Dillons Community Rewards at www.dillons.com
- 3) Facebook Fundraiser
- 4) Mail the coupon below with a donation in the envelope found in your monthly newsletter

Donate Online



I Want To Help Support Good Grief of Kansas

Enclosed is a memorial gift in memory of (Name) _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift in the amount of \$ _____

Enclosed is my monthly support of:

\$20 ____ \$25 ____ \$50 ____ \$75 ____ \$100 \$ _____

Send Memorial acknowledgment to:

Name _____

Address _____

City State, Zip _____

☐ **ANONYMOUS PLEASE**

I would like more information

My phone # is () _____

My Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____



Coping with Crossover Days

Although our Gregorian calendar spreads the year quite generously over twelve months and three hundred and sixty-five days, important events have an uncanny knack clustering. Perhaps you have noticed, instead of choosing to happen in well-spaced intervals, they do nothing for months or even years on end but then suddenly explode into frenzied activity. Fine, of course, when it showers us with competition prizes or free holidays, not fine when a hurricane hits or we lose our jobs, and just witness the conflict of emotions when we end up with a mix of the agreeable and distressing events. For those of us already riding a roller coaster of grief, this latter constellation can often prove to be the most testing.



Let me give you two examples. On a cold but sunny day in February 1974, I skipped along to my student classes at a university in Scotland, stopping off at the mailbox beforehand to post a birthday card to my little sister back home in England. Before the day was through, however, I had been called out of class. My father had died suddenly that morning. I took the night train down south and arrived at seven the next morning. I found my mother weeping and my eight-year-old sister sitting expectantly in front of a stack of presents. The postman delivered my card, sent from a different world less than twenty-four hours previously.

Trying to choke back the tears while at the same time struggling to emit squeals of delight as the birthday child unwrapped her parcels, intensified the pain a hundredfold it seemed.

Sometimes, it is not the event itself, but simply the juxtaposition of related events or anniversaries that trigger off conflicting demands and feelings. My two sons celebrate birthdays within 48 hours of each other, with one of my youngest son's best friend filling the gap in the middle. During the childhood years, mid-September denotes three whole days of partying, presents and pampering! How things have changed. My oldest son died and the best friend was killed in an accident two years later. The only one left, Ben now dreads this week more than anything as he visits his brother's grave on one day, his friend's on the next and then faces birthday goodwill on the third.

Most people experience these drastic switches at some time. And don't they go on for a long time? They stick stubbornly, refusing to go away, challenging us anew year by year. The good news is, with practice, we do slowly develop better coping strategies. The little sister's birthday remains indelibly connected to our father's death on February 28, but when for the first time, a leap day moved in between, it gave us a breather! What's more, we *allowed* it to be a breather. After 5 years of not knowing how to spend his birthday—so he didn't much, this year Ben discovered to his surprise that he could indeed grieve for his brother and friend for two days running, bring them flowers and have a special birthday chat to them, but then throw a party for himself. He, too, has learned to allow himself to feel, if not enthusiastic, at least not too bad about it.

In fact, when you think about it, the strange fusion of such opposite events can come to feel like a unique intimacy, a special hug, in which the unaffected may not partake. As a child, my sister spent years being cross with Daddy because he left right before her birthday, but now she has moved over to feeling that she alone shares this special day with him. My son detests his birthdays that relentlessly forced him to overtake his elder brother and friend in age. He still does. But the rage is tempered now by the realization that the three boys remain bonded forever by the calendar and past shared birthdays. By celebrating his own day, he can honor the others well, keeping their birthdays alive too.

Shock helps us to stagger through such events directly as they happen—we don't really need to ponder over how we will manage. We just do it somehow. Practice and maturity help us weather them in the following years, as we learn bit by bit how wonderful it can feel to share a link, and we are reminded that even if it brings tears to our eyes and a constriction in our chests, that stab of pain always means love. A special love-pain for the crossover days.

Random Thoughts

Do you know what you have taught me? Do you know what I have learned? Do you know how you have changed me? Do you know how I go on?



There are incredible voids in life. There comes an overwhelming sadness. There are the tremendous gifts of love and of sharing; there are the deepest pains of loss and suffering.

I have learned that I see more with an open heart than with open eyes, and it is when I feel like I have hit the bottom, that I find the roots and foundations that hold me together. When it looks like I have gone nowhere, I find myself in unknown territory. When I am too tired to go further, somehow I am guided to new beginning, and the distance between the flames of a bonfire and the stars that dance among the pine trees is nothing.

The God I thought I knew is not the one whom I have come to know. More can be accomplished in remaining still than in all the movement I might try. A moment can seem an eternity, and a lifetime is never long enough.

Love does more than endure, love becomes the strength that keeps me alive. I can love beyond the physical and feel comforted by love that is no longer spoken. I hear clearly words that are unspoken and am guided by wisdom from beyond. When I think I am ready, I find that I have more to learn.

Tears will never stop, and memories are never forgotten; laughter can happen; peace can reign. Darkness provides illumination, and light can be blinding. Passion never leaves us, it merely changes form.

Friends can mean well and hurt deeply, and strangers understand what they don't know. When I open my arms for a hug, and no one steps in, then I must remember how to love myself, and I am capable of doing so.

I cannot take away another's pain, I can only allow myself to be present with the pain. I cannot create the healing, I can only encourage the desire to do so. I cannot convince another that it will be better, only that it will be different. The most difficult thing to do is to do nothing...more is spoken with silence with words.

I still get angry and annoyed, but I know now the worst that can happen – until the next time – and so I try to let the “little things” slide away.

I am more patient and more kind, less tolerant of ignorance, but more willing to understand.

I know that I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of an individual who is lost. What I was so sure of is no longer, and things that I thought I forgot now come back to me as truths. True reality is not tangible and often not logical. When I least want to participate in life, life presents me with the most beautiful gifts. There are gifts that I give that I never knew I possessed, and gifts I receive come unexpectedly and without ribbons or bows.

Sometimes life seems unfair and unjust, yet it is all we have to work with. Sometimes it feels like it is too much effort to go on living, yet to give up is betrayal. Courage takes many forms, and to be “strong” can seem so very weak.

Pain strengthens, love heals, life is, sharing helps, the source of peace is in turmoil, joys surprise us, there is more, there is different, there is the legacy that nurtures, there is hope.

These are the random thoughts of a griever, a lover, a helper, a teacher, a student and a friend.

by Cecelia T. Periciballi-Clayton; Newton, NJ
Bereavement Magazine Jan/Feb 2001



When my grief cocoon
allows me to spread my wings,
my spirit will soar

haiku by Diantha Ain



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Good Grief News

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Kathy Harbert	Kendra Spencer
Marsha Huffman	Cindy Swan
Deona Madrigal	Marjorie Watkins
Lois Pardee	Jim Yoder
Christy Rector	

MISSION STATEMENT

Good Grief of Kansas provides grief support for persons who have lost a loved one through death.

Program Outreach:

- Widowed Support Group
- Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group
- Other Adult Family Loss Support (parent/child)
- Social Support
- Seminars/Workshops
- Community Presentations
- Counseling Referrals



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TREASURER NEEDED

Good Grief of Kansas is looking for a new treasurer for our organization.

Our current Treasurer is ready to retire her position. If you would be interested in or know of someone that would be interested in filling this position we ask that you contact our office at 316-612-0700 for more information.

*Please note, this is a
volunteer position.*