



AIR FORCE FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Air Force Families Forever

“Ensuring that the families of our fallen Airmen are never forgotten by providing immediate and long-term compassionate support.”



Summer 2014

Men and Grief

By Lisa Athan

<http://www.griefspeaks.com/index.html>

If you are a grieving male:

The world may not see you as the bereaved person that you are. Because of your gender, in our society, you may be seen only as the support person - a role you probably play very well.

If you have been taught from an early age that "big boys don't cry", you may feel ashamed of crying. Other people may not be comfortable with your tears. Don't hold the grief in. Find a safe place or someone to share with who isn't afraid of your grief.

People may mistakenly tell you to be strong or may tell you that you are strong for holding it in. Don't confuse grieving with weakness and *not* grieving with strength. Holding in grief is very hard on the body and can make you physically ill.

Gender may affect the way you grieve. Try hard not to behave as others think you should - but as you need to.

Keep these in mind when a man you know is grieving:

- Our culture discourages men from openly emoting.
- At the same time, men have been judged for not emoting and therefore may find themselves in a double bind.
- A man has physical differences which can impact his way of healing.
- A man's way of healing may be less visible and more subtle.
- A man's grief is often connected more with the future than with the past.
- Just because a man is more silent does not mean he isn't grieving.
- Every man is unique in the way he approaches his own healing.
- A man's healing can be influenced by his tendency toward independence.
- Men may prefer time alone in order to heal.
- Men may respond to their loss more cognitively.
- A man is likely to find ways to connect with the pain he feels with an action he can take.



Men and Grief, cont'd...

By Lisa Athan

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Invisible Grief

Many men avoid grief in one of the following ways:

Silence, Secrecy, Action, Anger, Addiction

When men experience loss, they often get overlooked. When others fail to acknowledge their losses, men tend to feel isolated, misunderstood and compelled to keep their grief a secret.

We have different social expectations on men and women. Men are conditioned to repress their emotions. Often what lies beneath isn't what is visible on the surface for men. Men who learn to open up and share their grief will have many benefits to their emotional and physical health, as well as for their relationships and marriage. They will also feel more energy and happiness.

Men need to find other men to talk with. Men's support groups can be very helpful for this. Counseling can be helpful for those who feel stuck. Seeking professional help is a sign of courage and willingness to heal.

Keep these in mind when you, as a man, consider *your own* grieving process:

- You will grieve in your own way, influenced by who you are, how you're made, what you've experienced, and how you've been raised.
- You're likely to seek a map to understand grief's terrain.
- You may use fewer words than those around you.
- You will be inclined to use your strength to connect with and heal your pain.
- You may choose to tap into your grief by taking action more than through interaction.
- You may place value on independence, quiet, and solitude as you grieve.
- You're likely to find meaning in caring for those around you as one aspect of your grieving process.
- You may wish to honor your loss through action that impacts the future more than talking about the past.
- You can use your courage to stand in the tension of grief.
- You can build on this experience and use it for your own growth. ³

In Memory of SSgt Sean DiCicco
1st Special Operations Maintenance Squadron
Eglin AFB, FL

*Dad takes daughters on the water to watch
their big brother's plane take off right over
their heads. They loved it, screaming his
name with the fly over and wing dip.*

The pilot saw us :)

~ John "JD" DiCicco



Internet image

SrA Ryan Matthews

Father's Day is celebrated in a subtle manner in our family. My husband is very low key. He is a very devoted family man. One of my memories of him being a "proud dad" was when we were attending a get-together and I overheard him share with others that Ryan was serving in the Air Force. The pride that came from his voice really caught my attention.



I like this photo of my husband with our boys (Ryan on the left) on a weekend getaway. Ryan left this world so young that I don't have a lot of older pictures of him. When my kids were young, I was camera happy and then they got older and shied away from the camera. I wish I would have known how important a picture would become.

By Chrissy Matthews

The Day God Took You Home

A million times, I've
needed you

A million times I've cried

If love alone could have
saved you,
you never would have
died.

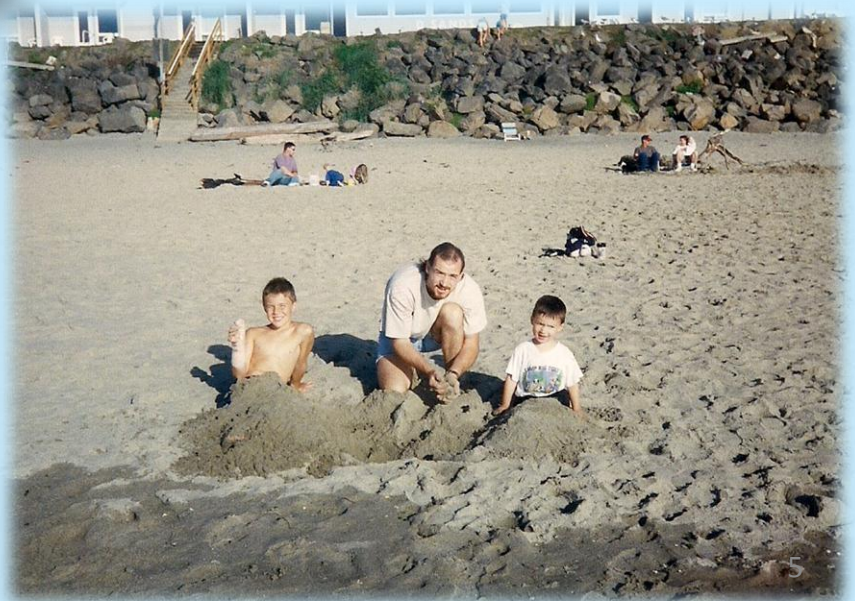
In life I loved you dearly,
In death I love you still.

In my heart you hold a
place,
No one else can ever fill.

It broke my heart to lose
you,

But you didn't go alone

Part of me went with you,
The day God took you
home.



Celebrate Our Hero From the Clyburn Family

Notice of Address Change

I want to let you know that I have moved. I received a call on Tuesday, May 27, 2014 from GOD, the Chief architect, who informed me that my new home was ready and I could move in immediately. You know that I have been sending my lumber, packing up, and getting ready to move; but there were some minor finishing touches on some of the lumber that only the Chief Carpenter Jesus Christ could do. Well, my new home is finished and it's such a beautiful place. Of course the streets are paved with gold and every day is Sunday here, I've been told. I have lived in many places before my new home was prepared and none of the other compare. There is Peace, Joy and Happiness here with only serenity everywhere. I could go on and on about my new home, but I have to get fitted for my robe. Let me give you my address:

SSGT Johnny Andrew Clyburn
Jesus is The Way
God's Town, Heaven 06544

P.S. I don't have a telephone yet, but just call GOD. If you don't know HIS number, HE is listed in the Bible on every page.

A Memorial Event for SrA Daniel Johnson



4th Annual

SrA Daniel James Johnson
Memorial Golf Classic

www.danieljohnsonfund.org

Monday, August 25, 2014

Hawk's View Golf Club
7377 Krueger Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Registration & Lunch 10:00 a.m.

Shotgun Scramble 11:30 a.m.

Dinner & Auctions 5:00 p.m.

Contact:
Will Johnson
Memorial Fund Chairman
wj2942@yahoo.com

Josh Peterson
Golf Classic Coordinator
jpeterson@phantomranch.org
(262) 363-6940



About Daniel

Senior Airman Daniel James Johnson, an EOD technician, was killed in action on October 8th, 2010 while deployed in Afghanistan with the U.S. Air Force. Dan lived his life with enthusiasm, zeal, and integrity. In order to honor and celebrate the life of their fallen hero Dan's family hosts an annual golf outing to raise funds for a fitting memorial. Because Dan was an avid rock climber, the funds will be used to construct a climbing wall at Phantom Ranch Bible Camp, a non-profit youth camp where Dan worked faithfully for many years.

Invite
your
friends!

Single Player \$150

Four Person Team \$600 Bring a foursome to participate in the event.
Golf registration includes lunch, cart, 18 holes of golf and dinner.

Dinner Only — \$35 per person

Register at www.danieljohnsonfund.org .

Interested in sponsoring, promoting or donating auction items to this event?
Email danieljohnsonfund@gmail.com or call (847) 546-3060.

SrA Daniel Johnson

A life well-lived

By Tammie & Bill Johnson



Pearls of Wisdom

Everyone I know has "expert" advice and oftentimes will offer it without an invitation. I am going to offer a little of my own "pearls of wisdom", if you can call it that. I do not claim to be wise, but I have learned some valuable things along my journey since the death of my husband, David.

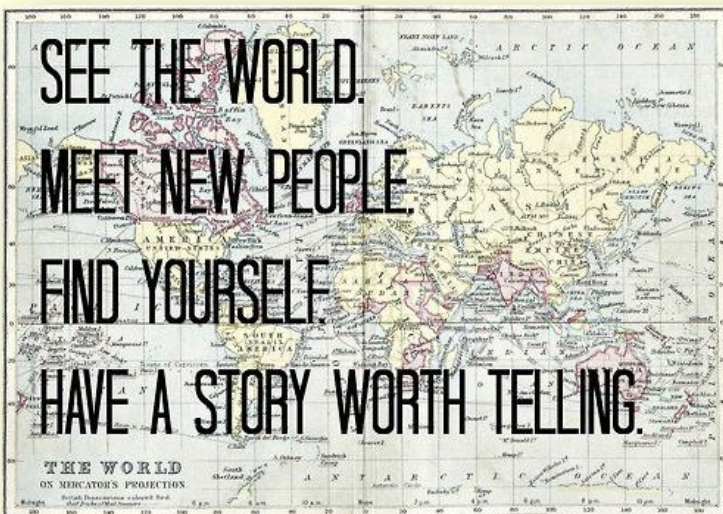
After David died, we finished up the school year in Virginia, then moved to a new home in North Carolina to be closer to family. We left MANY friends, who were our support system. Moving to a new place is always met with a little anxiety, but we always had David there, and he was our connection to our military family, so our anxiety was eased just a little. This time was different; there was no David, there was no military "family" where we moved, and our friends were not there to welcome us home. It has taken me almost a year to "get it", since the actual move!!

One thing I have learned is if you want to stay in your bubble, and stay in your "sad place", people will let you. They cannot read your mind and they cannot know how you feel if you do not reach out and speak up. The world is a busy place, people are busy. They do not purposefully ignore you, they just are not aware of the things you want, desire, or need. More times than not, in my experience, if we just simply talk to people they will be ready and willing to help you in any way they can.

I am not suggesting you tell your life story to every person you meet, but if you want to meet new friends, or sit by a person instead of an empty chair at church...be proactive!! Take a walk, wave and say hi to your neighbors; ask someone you don't know very well if you can sit next to them. Take an art class at a local art gallery, or try a new craft at the local craft store. I have actually done all of these, and I have to admit, it has made me feel just a little less anxious on this journey.

Remember...one day at a time...and always keep HOPE alive!

~ Carolyn Lincoln



Baby It's Cold Out There

By Linda Ambard

Baby, it's cold out there. Loneliness creeps up on a person. In unexpected traumatic death, there is no preparing for being alone. Phil died in the prime of his life. He had finally realized many of his dreams coming true and felt the need to give back. I didn't think he was in danger; he had deployed numerous times in 26 years of service and I worried more when he was living on a compound in South America fighting the drug wars. I looked at his deployment as an inconvenient road bump to what came next—the first assignment without our children. Our last child left the house the same year he deployed.

Like many military families, my circles narrowed through the years. Without even noticing, I had become really good at three-year friendships. I could instantly connect with my neighbors on base, but when one of us PCS'd three or four years later, the friendship became shallow. I could run into these people ten years later and immediately take up where we left off. I lacked 911 friends—you know, the ones that know what you need without uttering a word. The friends that will come and just breathe with you. Cry with you. I never thought about how I had put everything into Phil and the children. With the children out of the house, I looked forward to more time with Phil. I looked at the deployment as a waiting period for what came next; I never considered what I would do if he didn't come home.

The shock and the pain of losing one as violently and unexpectedly as I lost my Phil created a body slam so deep that I felt physical pain. I withdrew. Three years later, I am looking around and wondering about where I fit. I feel like the society misfit at times. I am too young to have had to plan a funeral and bury a husband who was younger than me. I am no longer a military spouse, yet I work on a military base. I am at an age where most people still have children in the house. I have no idea where to live because home was a person versus a place after living the nomadic military life my entire adult life. I am too old to go home to my momma, and too young to live with my children. The connections I have made through this loss are all far flung connections.

I long for a friend to call when I feel blah, want to get a pedicure, or talk to when I doubt myself. I long for giggling and venting. People who camp establish a fire fairly soon after finding the site to pitch their tent. Fires provide more than warmth. Fires provide companionship and security during the *cold* night. Deep friendships do the same. I am the problem, however. I am wary. I have always held myself at a distance due to shyness and insecurity. Having Phil in my life deepened that chasm. I struggle with wondering if there is anything else besides work, far away children and friends. I often wonder where I fit. I look in the mirror and the face that stares back is mine. The person that needs to change and to reach out is me. I am broken somehow, but I want to fix me—need to fix me because it is cold where I stand. *Fire*

Widow's Retreat

North Dakota/Minnesota/South Dakota Region

Some friends of mine are opening a Retreat Center near Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, this summer. A group of military widows, including myself, will be attending the first "Survivors of Heroes" retreat, and I really want to share this opportunity with other military widows in the North Dakota/Minnesota/South Dakota area.

When: July 31-August 4

Where: Holbrook Farms Retreat, 51383 Bucks Mill Rd. Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

Weekend includes: lake day, pontoon rides, paddle boarding, guest speakers, spa time, great food and drinks, live music and more

Get to know other great women & help be part of the planning team for future events!

Thank you!

Sarah Ziegler Merwin

Widow of Eric Ziegler, 6/28/11

R.S.V.P. holbrookfarmsmn@gmail.com or 218-234-0825



ANGELVERSARIES

"WHEN OUR LOVED ONES BECAME ANGELS"

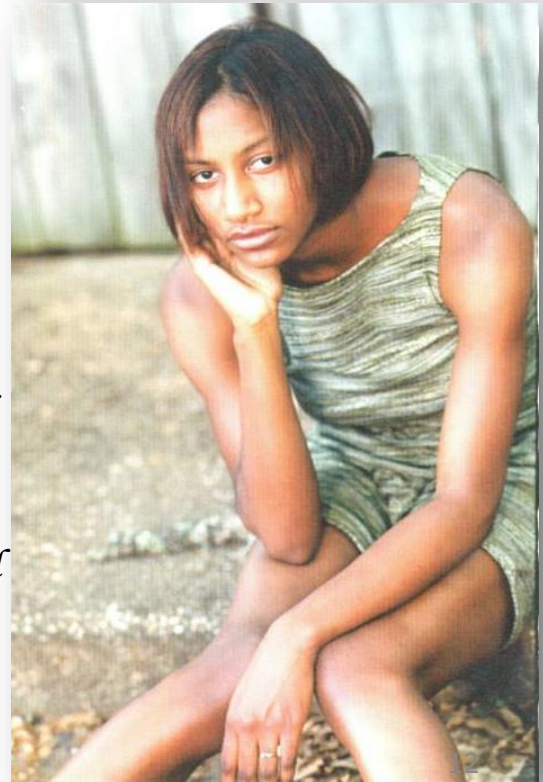
Terri Tuttle: *"The angelversary of my only child, Wesley Tuttle, is July 22nd, 2012. I miss him & his laugh so much, & the great times that we shared. I'm still trying to understand why I survived cancer twice, only to lose my reason for living, my sonshine. Love ya, my Wesley, baby, boo ba la!"*

*In memory of SSgt Wesley Tuttle,
R.I.P. 6/21/89 ~ 7/22/12*



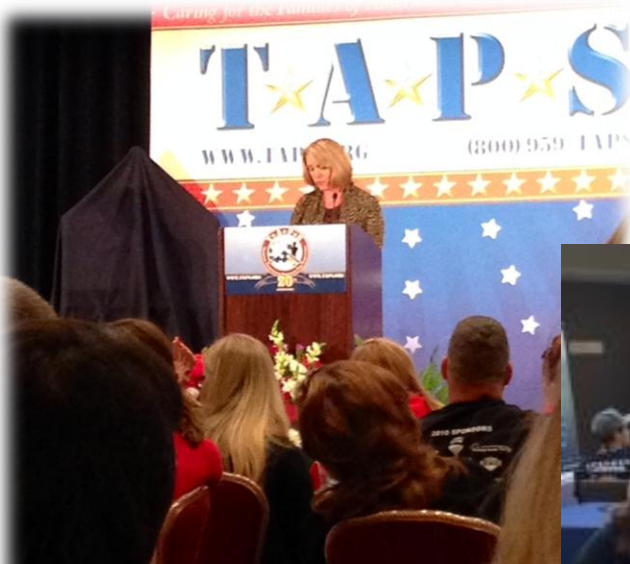
Sharon Kidd: *"June is coming to a close and I miss you as much today as I did five years ago on June 1, 2009. It's your Angelversary and life continues to have its challenges, sacrifices, trials, and tribulations, but most of all life has proven to be victorious for me as I continue this process without you here in the physical. We are still survivors and we all treasure every memory of you. My dreams of you have become less, but the memories still hold true. I still weep when I think of you from time to time as well as smile when I look at your pictures. It helps, Jess, to talk to other mothers and sometimes fathers who are experiencing similar life challenges. I don't have to talk as much as I used to, because now I am able to listen to others and be a service to them during their time of grief. It's a gift that God has blessed me with and I want to make Him proud. You will forever be in our hearts! I love you and miss you dearly, my dear sweet angel, on your Angelversary!" ~ Mom!*

In memory of SrA Jessica Tarver, My Beautiful Daughter! August 30, 1984 ~ June 1, 2009





AF FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK





TAPS SUMMER 2014 EVENTS:

JULY 10-13 Southern California Good Grief Camp Out, Camp Pendleton area

JULY 10-13 San Diego Widows Retreat, Recreational Adventure

AUG 4-6 North Carolina Good Grief Camp Out, Fort Bragg area

AUG 6-10 Austin TX Adult Children Retreat, Action Adventure

AUG 14-18 Alaska Widows Retreat, Challenging Adventure

AUG 20-24 Montana Men's Retreat, Action Adventure

AUG 22-24 Wisconsin Survivor Seminar & Good Grief Camp, Greenbay, WI

SEPT 3-7 Moab, Utah Wilderness Adventure Siblings Retreat, Challenging Adventure

SEPT 10-14 West Virginia Widows Retreat, Challenging Adventure

SEPT 12-14 Camp Pendleton Survivor Seminar & Good Grief Camp, Camp Pendleton, CA

SEPT 19-21 TAPS Colorado Good Grief Camp Out, Fort Carson area

[HTTP://WWW.TAPS.ORG/EVENTS/LIST.ASPX?ID=89252](http://www.taps.org/events/list.aspx?id=89252)



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