

Calvary in Touch

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**CALVARY
HOSPITAL**

Where Life Continues

Welcome to the Second Issue of Calvary in Touch

Greetings and welcome to *Calvary in Touch*. This issue centers on Valentine's Day and offers suggestions for coping with the death of loved ones on this special, romantic day.

This month, our Spotlight is on Arnold Spector, whose wife, Isabelle, was at Calvary Hospital. Arnold describes Isabelle as "the love of his life."

They were together for over 60 years.

Arnold's reflections give us some insights on how he has coped with this devastating loss.

This issue also includes information on how young children and adult children cope with the loss of their parent (or parental figure) on Valentine's Day.

We hope that you find the information contained in this newsletter helpful and informative as you travel through your journey of grief.

Dr. Sherry R. Schachter,
Director of Bereavement
Services



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Although the days are getting longer, February remains a time of cold and harsh weather, keeping us inside and making us feel less vigorous and at times even sluggish. Right in the middle sits one of the year's few "partner holidays;" anniversaries and New Year's being the others. A tough month all around – especially now that the winter holidays are over! All our memories of past holidays may come flooding back.

If you are having trouble sleeping during your bereavement, get up and get going. It is not helpful to toss and turn trying unsuccessfully to return to sleep. Try to be active as the day lengthens (maybe a walk, indoors or out, before sundown). If you're not a walker, go for a ride, learn some stretching exercises, or rearrange the furniture.

Look toward the next Leap Year (2012) by putting some "jump" into your February activity patterns. If you start now, you may have established a good habit by the

beginning of Daylight Savings Time (March 8).

Although cards, roses, and chocolates seem to monopolize the day for living sweethearts, you have every right to use February 14 -- even the whole week -- to celebrate all the joyous and fulfilling aspects of your loved one's life with you. Claim the holiday by:

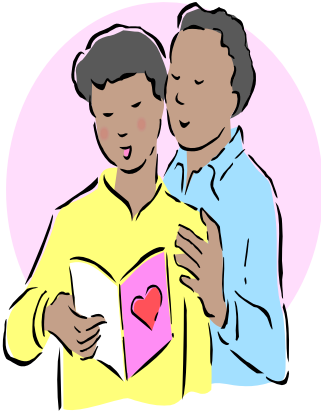
- Sending flowers to yourself and the deceased. Enjoy them at home, place them as tokens at places you shared.
- Choose a card that you can imagine receiving from your loved one and mail it to yourself.
- Find another that you can "send" by putting it among some cherished photos or memorabilia of your beloved.
- Give yourself a box of chocolates (small pieces of dark chocolate chilled in the

refrigerator are less likely to vanish in one seating!).

- Engage in a shared activity that the two of you would have enjoyed -- include someone else who is bereaved or a member of another generation, perhaps your children or an older neighbor.

Because Valentine's Day falls on a Saturday this year, claim February 14 for yourself. Plan ahead and set it up to be restful, renewing or comforting. Book a massage, get a haircut, or engage a few trusted friends to share dinner with. It is often helpful when we can plan ahead and prepare ourselves for what we expect will be a challenging day for us. Love yourself and your memories!

Remembering Your Parental Figure



As Valentine's Day approaches, we wanted to take a moment to acknowledge one of the most important relationships in a person's life -- our attachment to our parents or parental figures. If you are old enough to love, you are old enough to grieve.

Our relationships with our parents can be such a part of our identity, pervading all or most aspects of our lives. Whether or not you had a close, loving relationship with your parents, every human relationship is also affected by some kind of ambivalence or conflict.

This ambivalence, however, doesn't mean that we do not want to hold onto the love that existed in our relationships with our parents.

With love there is inevitably loss. Children and adults alike journey through the grief process when faced with the death of a parent.

Helping Children Grieve

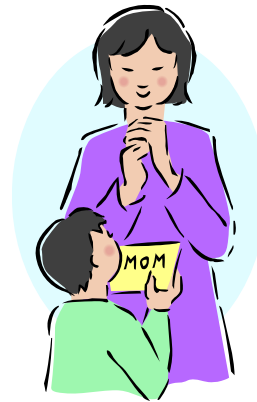
Young children need to be given the space to remember the love that existed in their relationship with their parent. They do this by being able to share memories with trusted peers and adults, draw pictures about their feelings, and use other mediums such as music and puppets to express themselves.

Children also need to find ways to continue to connect with the love they shared with their parent and come to see it as something that exists inside of them. We help them to accomplish this by teaching them about the invisible gifts our parents leave behind in us. This could be the parent's caring voice, the moments of learning, or a sweet hug shared.

Even when a parental relationship has been fraught with conflict, children still have the need to find something positive to connect with. As one eight-year-old girl in our group shared about her

conflicted relationship with her father, "I remember him angry a lot, but my love for him is stronger right now. I remember when he held my hand tightly the first day of school and when he taught me how to ride my bike, it was the best! That's what I remember the most."

One six-year-old boy connects to the love he shares with his mother who died by hugging his soft stuffed monkey that she gave him when he was four, taking it with him when he feels fearful and unsure of himself.



Helping Adults Grieve

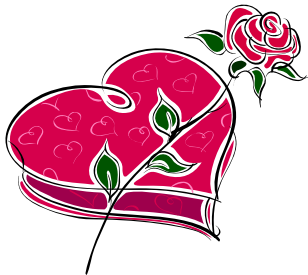
No matter what your age, you are still your parent's child. Grief is ever-present when a parent or parental figure dies in your adult years. Adult children also need to find ways to connect to the love that exists in their hearts for their parents. Ambivalent and conflicted feelings need to be dealt with as well, but acknowledging the love is especially important. Adult children need to give themselves permission to create rituals to remember and develop an awareness of the parental voice they want to hold onto and the parental voice they want to discard.

One woman was the daughter of a famous poet who had a long history of alcoholism and violent behavior. She found a way to connect to the love she has for her father by visiting the gardens he loved and that they used to visit together. The fond memories she has of him remind her that there were also positive aspects to their relationship.

Love comes in many different forms and often needs to be shared and expressed, especially when suffering a loss. There are many different ways to remember our parents on Valentine's Day. You can write about the love you shared, visit a place you used to frequent together, light a candle and say out loud the things you loved about your parent, or do something loving for someone in need.

Whatever you decide may be right for you to do on this day, allow yourself to celebrate your parents -- for all that they represent to us -- without forgetting to remember the love.

"If you are old enough to love, you are old enough to grieve."



Spotlight on: Arnold Spector



The Spectors

Arnold Spector, a long-time resident of Hartsdale, New York, was married for 60 years to his beloved wife, Isabelle, of blessed memory.

Calvary Hospital

In 2006, Isabelle was at a very well-known and respected hospital, being treated for her lymphoma. “They didn’t really care for her there. My wife deserved much better care,” said Arnold.

When one of the hospital’s nurses suggested to Arnold that Calvary might be the right place for Isabelle, he called us that same day. Within 24 hours of that initial call, a Calvary nurse arrived to examine Isabelle at her previous hospital and confirmed that we could help her.

The following day, just two days after Arnold first contacted Calvary, the Hospital admitted her.

“Calvary Practically Turned My Life Around”

As weak as she was, Isabelle knew the difference in care right away. “She was finally able to smile. On her first day at Calvary, she whispered to me, ‘Thank you.’”

On that fateful first day, the female Rabbi took the crucifix off the wall. “Being that we’re Jewish, that gesture meant a lot to us.”

At the time Isabelle was admitted, the Spectors’ two adult children and one granddaughter lived far away from New York City. Thanks to Calvary’s 24/7 visiting policy, they were able to visit their mother and grandmother throughout her stay.

Despite the vast improvement in the care his wife was receiving at Calvary, Arnold was concerned with what the rest of the family thought. He needn’t have worried.

“My children assured me I did a great thing by bringing her here.”

When Isabelle succumbed to lymphoma approximately one month after being admitted to Calvary, she and Arnold had been married for 60 years.

“I was the caregiver for my wife for months leading up to her death. It was my pleasure to serve her.”

Having been through the experience, Arnold is not surprised to hear that caregivers often neglect their own care. Isabelle somehow knew that.

“On the day that she died, I was getting ready to go home for the night. Isabelle whispered to me, ‘Take care of yourself.’ I didn’t realize those would be the last words she would ever say to me. Isn’t it something that she cared enough to tell me that at the end?”

Calvary is there for the entire family

Immediately after his wife passed, Arnold started attending Calvary’s long-time bereavement support group for people who have lost their spouses or partners. Attendees include both men and women.

“I found so much relief in that support group. Sherry Schachter was so kind and helpful to me, I don’t know what I would have done without her,” Arnold reported.

“People have no idea what a tremendous help it is to talk with people who know exactly how you feel.”

Arnold wasn’t surprised to hear that sometimes people -- especially men -- are reluctant to take advantage of bereavement support services.

“If people only knew that there is absolutely nothing to be ashamed about in asking for help. No one will judge you for what you feel or experience.

“Support groups are a tremendous help in this very difficult situation. They will vindicate whatever emotions you may have about your loss – even guilt or relief.”

Most people attend bereavement support groups for up to one year. Two years after his beloved Isabelle has passed away, Arnold still finds it useful to attend his group every other week. “I’ve made some nice friendships in my group and I find it comforting to be there regularly. Isn’t that what a support group is all about?”

Monthly Calendar (All bereavement groups are free and open to the community)

- **Brooklyn Day Spouse Group (Bruce Page)**
Every Monday from 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
- **Brooklyn Evening Group for Adults Whose Parents Have Died (Bruce Page)**
Every Monday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Bronx Day Group for Parents Whose Adult Child Has Died (Sherry Schachter)**
Every Monday from 11:00 AM -12:30 PM
- **Bronx Evening Group for Adults Whose Parents Have Died (Maria Georgopoulos)**
Every Tuesday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Bronx Evening Group for Bereaved Adult Siblings (Bruce Page)**
Every Wednesday from 6:15 PM - 7:45 PM
**New group Starting Feb.18*
- **Bronx Spanish-Speaking General Bereavement Group (Yovani Santiago)**
Every other Monday.
Please contact Yovani at 718-518-2569
- **Bronx Young Spouse Group (Bruce Page)**
Every Tuesday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Next Steps (Bronx) (Sherry Schachter)**
Every other Tuesday from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
- **Precious Moments (Bronx) (Maria Georgopoulos)**
Groups for children, ages 6-11 years, Monday afternoons. 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
- **Teen Bereavement (Bronx) (Maria Georgopoulos)**
Groups for teens ages 12-18 years, meets Wednesday afternoons. 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
- **Teen Bereavement (Bronx) (Maria Georgeopoulos)**
Group for teens ages 12-18 years, meets Monday evenings. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
**New Group*
- **Bronx Day Spouse Group (Bruce Page)**
Tuesdays from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
- **Monthly Christian Memorial Service**
Bronx--Saturday, Jan. 10 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Saturday, Feb. 14 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Brooklyn
Sunday, Jan. 25 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
- **Jewish Memorial Services**
Bronx -- Sunday, Feb. 8 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Brooklyn -- Sunday, Feb 1 10:00 AM
- **Friday Matinee (Bronx)**
Friday, Jan. 9 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
"The Bucket List"
Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman star as a billionaire and scholarly mechanic who meet in a hospital while undergoing treatment for cancer. They compose a bucket list of things they want to do before they die.
- **Friday Matinee (Bronx)**
Friday, Feb.13 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
"Things We Lost In The Fire"
Halle Berry and Benicio Del Toro tackle the subject of grief after a sudden traumatic death and the way it affects family and friends.

New Support Group: Who Knew Us Better?

The death of a sibling is a unique loss. For many of us, our sisters and brothers are reliable confidantes and important sounding boards for a host of life issues and choices. We laugh together declaring that there are many secrets that no one in the family knew but our sister or brother. Sibling loss leaves a big hole in our hearts and support systems.

On Wednesday, February 18, Calvary will sponsor a new **Evening Support Group for Bereaved Adult Siblings**. As with our other support groups, the group will meet for six consecutive Wednesdays. Participants will be able to continue in future six-week sessions as long as they wish.

To register for the Sibling Loss Support Group, call Bruce Page at (718) 518-2196. There is an intake interview. There is no charge for the program.

Key Contacts in Calvary's Bereavement Department

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