

'Transforming loss.. into living again with faith, hope, and love'

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Those of you who are in the middle of this process right now KNOW what I am talking about. For me, some days it felt like I was spiraling up and down and on a nonstop treadmill at the same time! When was the pain going to STOP?

In our lives, we all have choices and decisions to make and I hope others won't try to make them for you out of their own fears or issues. We've all heard the phrase 'I know what's best for you...this is what you need to do.' Many are uncomfortable around bereaved parents because they just don't know what to say or do ~ and that is exactly why individual and group support from other bereaved parents is so vital.

I truly believe we all have the power within us to 'heal' ~ sometimes, however, we just need to walk beside someone that is farther along on that road to help us see that and feel that hope of embracing life once again.

It is only when you go through the pain that you can feel the joy again ~ as strange as it sounds, working through the pain is like a healing balm for our hearts and lives, so that over time and with much grief work we can reach some sense of wholeness once again, albeit different.

As difficult as it is, **embrace your loss and follow it through to a new meaning and purpose in life** ~ EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR CHILDREN'S LIGHTS IS LEADING THE WAY!

©DLG



*I hope our time together offers you the support,
encouragement, and information you are seeking
that may lead to renewed hope, meaning, joy,
and light in your life...*

Consultation Fees:

Thank you for choosing to share your Family's journey and concerns with me. I **do not charge** for Grief Consults with Bereaved Parents living with the death of a child/adult child from **any** cause (or consults with other adult familymembers or friends), however donations are certainly appreciated.

The FOD Family Support Group would benefit from your donation. We are an **all volunteer** family-based international Support Group and a 501c3 tax-exempt Non-Profit Corporation. **Donations are tax deductible.** Your donation will help us cover copying, postage, website fees, phone calls to Families US and abroad, and Conference expenses, as well as for Clinical/Research Funds. No donations are used for administrative salaries. If you write a US check, please make it out to the 'FOD Group' and mail to the address listed. We also have a secure PayPal donation link on www.fodsupport.org. You can designate your donation for Grief Consults.

THANK YOU from ALL of our Families!



Fatty Oxidation Disorders
Family Support Group
www.fodsupport.org

Our Mission is clear...to connect and network with FOD Families and Professionals around the world. Through our online newsletters, website, phone calls, and Email List, we provide **emotional & grief support (non-denominational)**, practical information about living with these disorders, and inform Families of new developments in screening, diagnosis, treatment, and research.

Awareness of these rare genetic metabolic Fatty Oxidation Disorders is imperative for early diagnosis and treatment, prompting us to be committed advocates for Expanded Universal and Comprehensive Newborn Screening and longterm follow-up care for FODs and several other metabolic disorders. We do not want other Families to needlessly go through what we experienced.

From our Family to yours, we want you to know...

~ You are NOT alone and 'We Are All in This Together' ~

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR BEREAVED PARENTS & FAMILIES

~ Living with the Death of a Child ~



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No fees charged ~ Donations accepted
that will benefit
Non-Profit Corporation ~ FOD Family Support Group
Federal Tax ID # 83-0471342

My Professional Role ~

I am educated and trained as a Grief Counselor and working as a **Grief Consultant for individuals living and coping with the death of a child of any age and from any cause.** I also offer support to adults living with other losses (ie., spouse, friend).

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My pro bono grief support services via face-to-face consultations, emails or phone calls, however, are not a substitute for you seeking local personal or group therapy from a mental health therapist in regard to your grief or other issues. I am not working from the perspective of diagnosing or treating specific mental health concerns. My counseling/consulting/spiritual philosophy entails more of a growth model for proactively transforming one's grief versus the medical model of diagnosing and medically treating a mental illness.

However, there may be instances where a possible mental health issue (ie., grief depression moves to clinical depression) may best be treated via medical treatment and/or one-on-one therapy. I will definitely let you know if I think further diagnostic assessment or treatment may be beneficial to you. It will then be your responsibility to seek that help from a medical professional.

For more information about my practice and my grief counseling education and training, my 'resume' is posted on my website. Additionally, my perspective on Parental Grief titled 'Creative Building Blocks ~ Holistic Healing of a Fractured Heart' @DLG is on the Coping & Healing page.

Once again as stated above, personal consultations with me should not replace seeking other types of professional therapy or medical help when necessary.

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Please note that all consultations will involve Adults 18 years and older. If you'd like an appointment or more info, please call or email. Also visit my website to either complete the Grief Intake Form online or print it and bring the completed form to your appointment. If you don't have internet access, allow extra time before your appointment.

My Personal Experience ~

After the sudden death of our own daughter, Kristen, in 1985, I found it very difficult to find someone that was not only trained in the area of grief, but was also a bereaved parent and someone I could talk with one-on-one that truly understood what I was going through.

Fortunately, my husband, Dan, and I found a supportive chapter of The Compassionate Friends in Champaign, IL for group support, but I was unsuccessful in finding more personal support one-on-one.

It was at that time that I decided I had to do something so others wouldn't feel as alone as I did, but I wasn't sure what that *something* was. Then in 1991, I made the decision to pursue a Masters in Education with a Counseling emphasis in order to learn more on being with and facilitating the grief process of Parents and Families who have experienced the death of a child/children or other family members.

That was also the year Dan and I founded a national Support Group in memory of Kristen to network other Families in the US living with a rare metabolic disorder and often the death of a child as well. After completing my graduate degree in 1993, I felt more confident in offering my emotional and grief support to the Families of our Support Group, as well as others. **We have since expanded our Mission to support local bereaved parents living with the death of a child/adult child from any cause, not just our specific metabolic disorders.**



I strongly believe my professional graduate training and my personal experience with a child's death, a surviving child's chronic rare metabolic disorder, a father's death at a very young age, and the death of many other family members and friends have helped me in my own grief journey and in assisting others find their way along their own challenging road.

'Finding the Light in the Darkness'

Throughout my entire life I have tried to see the 'light' around me no matter what 'darkness' has been presented to me. That was never so evident, and most challenging, than when **we experienced the sudden death of our daughter, Kristen, from an undiagnosed metabolic disorder.**

Anyone who has had a child die can relate to that darkness ~ that ripping apart of oneself, one's family, and one's life ~ emotionally, cognitively, spiritually, physically, socially ~ all in a split second...the second you realize that your child has REALLY died. As excruciatingly painful as that is, however, we DO have a choice about how we will work through the chaos of that darkness.

We can either stay in it and 'die' ourselves or allow ourselves to embrace the darkness and work through the grieving process in order to get through to the other side ~ to not only see the light but to enhance that light the rest of our lives! For me, it's been a **union of Kristen's light and love with my own unique light** ~ which has 'birthed' the FOD Group and changed my career from teaching to Grief Consulting.

Finding that union has been extremely painful and confusing, yet at the same time releasing and exhilarating. It has been a learning over and over and over again that pain and joy CAN coexist and it is the experiencing and expressing of both those human emotions and everything in-between that promotes an active grief process.

That **process is not just a one-time event or 'inside head job'** ~ it is a **lifelong journey that requires A LOT of Faith, Hope and Love...and a lot of endurance and patience!** In order to make MY process ACTIVE instead of passive, I found that it was, and continues to be, necessary to **work internally as well as externally ~ individually, with family and friends, and within my own community and beyond.**

My work with bereaved parents and the FOD Group is a reflection of what Kristen meant to all of us ~ Love, Light and a great deal of JOY! Yet, getting to that point of finding meaning in her death AND life and a renewed purpose for my own life did not happen overnight. Working through her death occurred over many years and it intertwined with 'recycling' earlier losses and personal issues. As quickly as many would like us to 'get over it' ~ IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY!

Understanding this multidimensional process was one thing ~ ANIMATING it was another story! I believe there are **'six eyes of grief'** that impact how one sees their own process, as well as how one can be transformed over time by being aware of and open to those factors that can be stirred within you and then animated to move you toward a different kind of 'healing.'

These 'eyes' [**Individuality , Intrapsychic , Interpersonal, Intergenerational , Interactional, and Integration**] are discussed in my 'Holistic Healing of a Fractured Heart'@DLG article. These dimensions of grief played a huge part in how I perceived grief for myself. As much as I respect all the grief experts and their own writings, I have come to learn and own what my own process looks like through my own 'eyes.'
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