

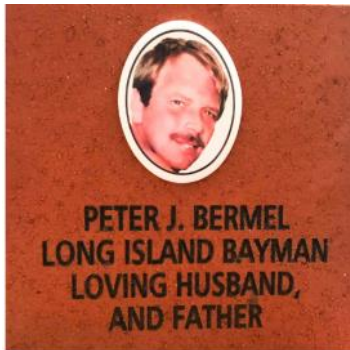


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**HOPEline** is a **monthly newsletter** of **HOPE FOR BEREAVED**, a nonprofit community organization providing hope, support and services for the bereaved. The **purpose** of **HOPEline** is to help those who have experienced the death of a loved one. Each month, **we share information and ideas** from bereaved people and professionals to help you through your grief journey. Please know you are not alone. **HOPE is here to help you.** To talk with a compassionate, caring professional, **please call us at 315-475-9675.**

## Order a Picture Brick TODAY!


Space is Limited



We are accepting orders for 8x8 photo bricks. The bricks come with 4 lines and a permanently affixed raised tile with a photo of your loved one. The cost is \$325. You may also purchase a symbol for an additional \$25 and/or up to 2 extra lines for \$15 each. The space is limited so we urge you to reserve a spot by contacting **Kim**

**315-475-4673** or  
**kbermel**

**@hopeforbereaved.com**



Your hands were strong yet gentle as you held us in your care. You taught us by example every day. No matter what we needed, you were always there. We meant the world to you and you to us which is the reason it was so difficult to say goodbye. You left an emptiness inside our hearts. It seemed somehow you would always be with us; we never learned to let you go.

*Your loving family,*  
Diane, Chip, Kathy, Austin,  
Ashley, Katie, Chris, Carrie,  
Cecelia, Carleigh, Patrick,  
Meaghan, Maeve and Charlie.

**Charles W. Rock**  
Jan. 16, 1942 – Oct. 12, 2019

HOPE for Bereaved thanks its  
2024 Celebration of HOPE sponsors!

## Jeff & Dot Booher



### Countryside

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Dear Friends of HOPE,

As October begins, our team is working diligently in preparation for the upcoming **Celebration of HOPE**, taking place on Friday, October 25th. Everyone is pitching in to ensure this year's event will be a memorable *evening under the stars*. We want to remind you that donations, memorial baskets, and other items should be dropped off by October 23rd to help us finalize everything.

Fundraisers like this are crucial to our mission. Because we do not charge for any of our core services, we rely heavily on the generosity of our community to keep providing free grief support to those in need. Your support truly makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.

I am also excited to share some updates about our team! We've recently hired for the new role of Director of Development, and we're excited to welcome Mike Valenti. Mike brings a distinguished career dedicated to service and support. With a wealth of experience and a compassionate approach, he is ready to help advance our mission. Mike previously served as the Founder and President of the Fire Fighter Cancer Foundation of New York, where he was instrumental in supporting firefighters with occupational cancer. He also served as the Northeast Director for the Fire Fighter Cancer Foundation, advocating for cancer awareness and prevention among firefighters. Mike is a certified firefighter, instructor, EMT, and Critical Incident Stress Management Specialist, bringing a robust skill set to his new role at HOPE. He'll be working to strengthen existing community partnerships, build new ones, and ensure HOPE's financial stability so we can continue serving our community for another 46 years.

We'd also like to welcome Alexandria Fabrizi, an intern from Syracuse University. Allie is a rising senior studying Human Development, Family Science, and Public Health. She is passionate about working with youth and families, and after graduation, she hopes to use her skills to support underserved children and families across the country. Allie chose to intern with us at HOPE because of her desire to positively impact the Syracuse community. She will be updating our youth resources and assisting with our Celebration of HOPE preparations. Her background, combined with her personal experiences with grief, makes her a valuable addition to our team.

I feel optimistic about the future of HOPE, our community, and the individuals we serve.

With gratitude and warm wishes,

*Kelly*



**From Executive Director**  
**Kelly Ocampo**

## Leaning Into the Discomfort of Grief by Renee Hagar-Smith

When I lost my husband to suicide three years ago, a strange phenomenon began to happen:



people no longer knew how to respond to me. They were unsure how to talk to me, if they even should talk to me, how to comfort, or how to stand beside me in my grief. I could see my friends and loved ones were confused, and in the confusion swirling around me, I wasn't sure how to express the pain I was feeling.

There was shame, regret, confusion, and a whole lot of awkwardness on every side.

It took some months following my husband's death for me to be able to understand that if I wanted others to connect with me on a deep level and support me, I needed to learn how to lean into the discomfort. If I expected them to step up and become comfortable with the uncomfortable, I needed to take that step myself.

Instead of miring in the hurt of not feeling supported, I began to realize that I needed to ask for what I wanted from others. It wasn't an easy place to be. But neither was feeling alone.

I began to cultivate a place inside me where I could talk openly about the suicide, about my own feelings of shame, and about how the people in my life could support me. Some people dropped off. Some people asked me to not discuss suicide and grief with so much honesty.

But some people stepped up.

And more than the feeling of support that I received from the loved ones who came forward to be there for me at that time, was the feeling of strength that standing in the power of my own authenticity brought me. It helped me start to process the more challenging emotions and pain that I had tamped down in all the trauma.

I began to remember that I was still a human. Not just a product of grief, but my own person still. Separate from the grief, and still letting that grief stay a part of me. I also began to understand on a deeper level that life is messy. So very messy. But that I could begin to accept the messy parts of grief.

And the messy parts of me.

Because then I didn't have to do the "right" thing in each moment. Or the things that was right for others. I could do the authentic thing—the thing that felt right to me in each moment. Maybe that was sobbing. Maybe laughing. Maybe getting in my car and driving as far as I could. But whatever I needed in each moment, I began to give myself permission to experience without judgment.

I began to see that this space of uncomfortableness could be a beautiful space if I could only embrace it. Because within this space, there were no rules. No grief timeline or view of how it was supposed to play out.

Leaning into the discomfort taught me that the most profound growth often occurs in the spaces we fear to explore.

*Renee is a Mindfulness & Compassion Life Coach, Leadership Trainer, CNY Leaders' Circle Founder  
(learn more at [renehagarsmith.com](http://renehagarsmith.com))*

# Grief and the Myth of Closure

*By Ashley Davis Bush*

When faced with grief we often ask, “When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I be able to breathe again? When will I achieve some closure?” The idea of closure in our culture is one of tidy endings, a sense of completion. The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to be rid of this pain. We would like to shut out the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings from our lives, putting all of this pain behind us so that we can feel joy again.



For some of us, we expect “closure” to happen after the funeral or memorial service or after a loved one’s room has been cleared out. For others, we look for closure after a personal ritual, or after the first anniversary comes and goes. “Surely then, we will have closure,” we think. We pray.

But what an odd concept really, closure....as if we could turn the lock and throw away the key, as if we could truly close the door on our emotions and our love for someone lost. The truth, of course, is far more complex. The ‘closure’ that we all strive for loses its relevancy in the realms of loss and love.

Closure may work well in the world of practical matters – with business deals and real estate transactions. But closure does not apply to the human heart, not in a pure sense. It isn’t possible to permanently close the door on the past as if it didn’t exist. And why would we want to anyway . . . really? If we so thoroughly detached from our loss, we would not only close the door on the pain but we would also sever the connection to our loved one.

In losing someone dear to us, it’s important to remember that the relationship itself is not over. Death cannot take away the love that weaves its way through every fiber of our being. Love will always triumph over death in this regard. We want to hold our cherished memories close to our heart, recognizing that our love is an essential part of us. In fact, we want to open the door, not close it, onto the reality of living with loss.

Perhaps it is better to drop the idea of closure and think instead in terms of healing and growth. We can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing; we can find ways to move on while holding our relationship with our loved one forever in our hearts; we can channel our pain into meaningful activities to honor our loved ones; we can even learn to smile again, breathe again and love again.

Our loss becomes love transformed, transformed from that which relies on physical presence to something more pure. So let us not strive for closure. When we do that, we unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And, truly, that would be a loss too terrible to bear.













HOPE  
FOR  
YOUTH



10/2024

Dear Friends,

In many ways, Autumn is the most beautiful time of year.  Nature seems to put out her best colors, often with clear, crisp days. But the Fall can also bring dark, stormy days  with cold winds. Our grief journey can be like this: the "good"  days may feel like the former, while "bad"  days are more like the latter. The Autumn weather is a period of great change , as we transition from one season into the next. Our journey through grief  is also one of transformation. Although sometimes painful,  we are growing  and learning  as we adjust without our deceased loved one. The storms of grief are necessary to cleanse and prepare us to blossom!

Love, Mark 



Dear Friends,

Vol 3 #7 10/2024

*When we haven't eaten in a while, and often before a meal, we may experience hunger. When we feel hungry, our body is telling us that we need food and drink as fuel to replenish ourselves and remain healthy. Certain features of our grief journey can be compared to the sensation of hunger.*

*We miss our deceased loved one. We crave more. We wish we had more time with them, perhaps have more feelings of closeness or connection with them, or maybe more periods of feeling at peace with their loss, and our ability to move on. Our pain from yearning (grief) tells us we need more fuel to restore ourselves as we advance on our journey. The fuel can be a variety of coping tools, for example: keeping a journal, recalling occasions with our loved one, artistic expressions, talking to others about our feelings, and exercise, to name a few. In short, the fuel is any energy spent on self-care, and bringing us closer to our deceased loved one. Whatever we choose, we must not avoid our grief, or we will starve. Rather, we must lean into our grief; this translates into better decisions along our journey.*

*As in physical hunger, we should only eat what we need to stay healthy; we then go about our business until we feel hunger and eat again. On our journey, we can grieve intensely for a time and then function in daily life (as best we can). And when we feel the "hunger" again, we can revisit our loved one as needed. This will lead to a healthier and growth-filled journey for each of us!*

Take Care -Mark

*Please forward your questions, comments, and ideas to [mail@hopeforbereaved.com](mailto:mail@hopeforbereaved.com)*

# Celebration of Hope

## 10.25.24

6 - 10 PM

*an evening under the stars*

Visit our website for tickets, sponsorship opportunities, memorial ads, and additional information.

Join us in our new location!

**Palladian Hall**

101 South Salina Street

We are seeking donations for our silent and live auctions. Any item or professional service is welcome: **Sporting Goods \* Electronics \* Outdoor/Garden \* Children's Items \* Event Tickets \* Getaways \* Gift Certificates \* Art \* Toys \* Jewelry \* Restaurant, Golf and Grocery Certificates** are very popular! Pick a theme and FILL A BASKET in memory of a loved one, with a picture or write-up of the person.

We welcome NEW items that you have received but don't need or use.

**Donated items may be dropped off at HOPE prior to OCTOBER 23rd.**

### SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

*\*All groups are 6:30 to 8:30 PM unless otherwise noted*

1st Wed. | October 2nd - Widows/Widowers, Engaged & Significant Others

2nd Tues. | October 8th - Family & Friends

2nd Wed. | October 9th - Survivors of Suicide

3rd Tues. | October 15th - Death By Drug Overdose

3rd Wed. | October 16th - Bereaved Parents (Death of all ages, infant, newborn, & miscarriage)

3rd Wed | October 16th - Senior Widows/Widowers

*\*10AM to 12PM*

3rd Thursday | October 17th - Parents without Parents

Meetings are held in-person at the

**Center of HOPE  
4500 Onondaga Blvd. in Syracuse**

and through Zoom.

One-on-one counseling is available.

Call us at 315-475-9675 for an appointment. Counseling can be done in person, by phone, or over Zoom.

There is **no charge** for counseling, but donations are always welcomed.



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**OCTOBER 2024**

## MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITY

### *Celebration of HOPE*

For a donation in any amount, we invite you to share a photo and name of a loved one to be featured at our upcoming Celebration of HOPE.

These memorials will be part of a special slideshow, honoring and remembering those we've lost while keeping their memory alive in our hearts.

Email us at [mail@hopeforbereaved.com](mailto:mail@hopeforbereaved.com) or call us (315.475.9675) to share your loved one's memorial.

