

My Journey: The First Season After Loss

At times, the only thing that helps you process your grief is resonating with someone else's experience. Facebook became my online journal where I could share thoughts that swirled around my head and images that helped express my heart. I hope you find these helpful as you navigate your days... you're not alone.

This is a collection of my Journey through the first 15 months. I started writing *Thursday Thoughts*, where I continue to share my journey. If you would like to receive them, please email me peggy.griefrecovery@gmail.com with Thursday Thoughts in the subject line

12.18.2018

Here are details for Connor Green memorial service.

12.19.2018

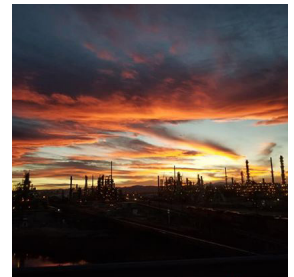
I can't make sense of the loss of my son, Connor Green, or see what the good is supposed to be. In the meantime, I am so overwhelmed by friends and families support, asking how they can help. Help me in finding the good. I ask that each and every one of you who read this post, take a moment and go above and beyond the good that they do every day. Please take a moment to open the door for someone, pray for someone, pay for their groceries, let them go in line before you at the mall, smile and say please and thank you one extra time, tell someone they did a good job, say I love you, or volunteer your time at your favorite organization. Just do something good.



12.21.2018

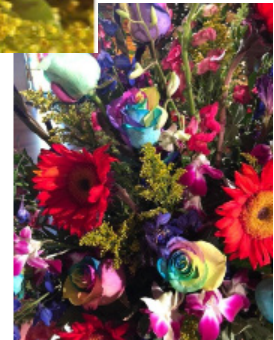
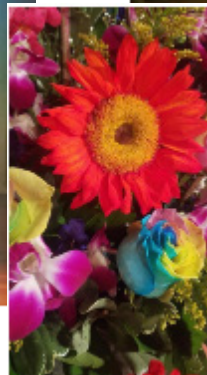
Connor and I shared a love of sunrises and sunsets. As I prepare for his Celebration of Life, I was blessed with this on my run.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtwIT8JddM> 10,000 Reasons, please listen to this.



12.21.2018

Tie-dyed roses.



12.24.2019

These boots weren't meant for hiking, but I did it anyway. Impromptu hike after breakfast. This was just the thing I needed. Nature is grounding for me. I connect with God and find peace.

12.24.2019

This has been an incredibly difficult past 10 days and it is just the beginning. I have been literally overwhelmed by friends and family, near and far, online and in person who have expressed your condolences. They are so appreciated. If I've not thanked you individually, please know that in my heart, I say thank you. Today is a new day and I chose to live for those left behind and live intentionally with love. Serve others. Be kind to others. Make someone's day. Blessings to everyone.



I Heard Your Voice In The Wind Today

I Heard Your Voice In The Wind Today - Unknown

I heard your voice in the wind today
and I turned to see your face;
The warmth of the wind caressed me
as I stood silently in place.

I felt your touch in the sun today
as its warmth filled the sky;
I closed my eyes for your embrace
and my spirit soared high.

I saw your eyes in the window pane
as I watched the falling rain;
It seemed as each raindrop fell
it quietly said your name.

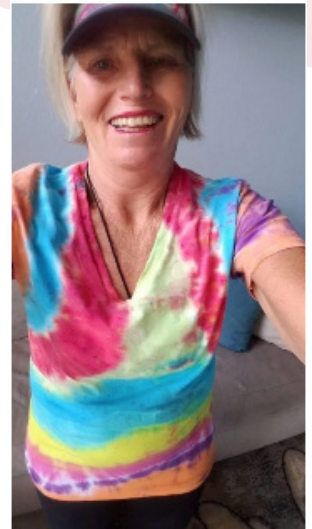
I held you close in my heart today
it made me feel complete;
You may have died...but you are not gone
you will always be a part of me.

As long as the sun shines...
the wind blows...
the rain falls...
You will live on inside of me forever
for that is all my heart knows.

12.27.2019

The finished product from Mother's Day tie dye project. Thank you Brittany Green, Michelle Mickey Smyth, Tracy R. Traylor, Thaide Henderson, Connor Green Brie, Hannah Green

I wear this and am so reminded of your love and how much I love you!



HOW TO PREVENT AN ANXIETY ATTACK

- Breathe deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Slowly look around you and find...
- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell (or 2 smells you like)
- 1 emotion you feel

This is called GROUNDING - it can help when you feel like you've gone too far in your head and lost all control of your surroundings.

Please share this, it could really help someone in need!

01.15.2019

Time warp. It has been 30 days since Connor Green (picture credit goes to him) left this earth. I don't know where the time has gone. It makes me anxious not being able to account for what I have done in the past 30 days. It just makes me realize that life flies by all too quickly. It is down to my core to live life intentionally. So that at the end of each day I can put my head down with satisfaction, knowing that I have done something good and accomplished something for the day

01.20.2019

This song rung true to my core...

Willie Nelson

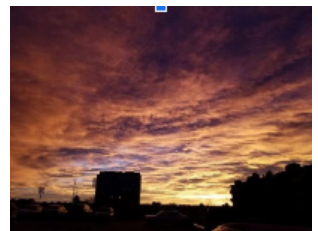
In case you missed it, check out Willie's new song "Something You Get Through."

01.21.2019

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Matthew 5:4

01.22.2019

I will open my heart and trust, in ways I do not know now understand, Connor Green will continue to be present in my life. That will come through rejoicing in the memories and the life that we had together. Please comment with your favorite memory. :)2019



01.22.2019

A friend shared this strategy with me about feeling stuck, depressed or discouraged: Go out and make someone's day. I did just that and totally forgot about my own personal struggles. Thanks, Sean Myers.

01.23.2019

I will not further burden myself by trying to fit some image of a "model griever". The strength I have is a strength to be myself.

01.24.2019

Hooray for laughter. Lend me to it!

“ the day is lost on which one has not laughed” French Proverb

01.25.2019

“Change is the order of life, yet we resist it. We live our lives in chapters. There is some consolation in knowing that change, even difficult change, brings surprising gifts. Though the thought may be appalling now, let us not shut the door too soon on something good that could be waiting for us in the next room.” Healing After Loss

01.26.2019

This is so helpful to grieving parents. Connor Green is not the only child I've lost. My oldest, Courtney passed away nearly 28 years ago. While the pain of Connor is still real, raw and horrible, I also know that I will be okay. #ivedoneitbefore #ivegotthis #iamasurvivor. #godhasgreatplansforme

7 Things I've Learned Since I Lost a Child. This is a great resource.

https://abedformyheart.com/7-things-since-loss-of-child/?fbclid=IwAR1QpQVW4Bgu-vRQEGZZOm7A4PERba6ZvXfoid_asS3czzrHV77huSSmGM-4

01.26.2019

I am grateful for those who reach out to me, and for the opportunities I have to reach out to others. Healing by serving others.

01.27.2019

Today's meditation of Healing After Loss focuses on being alone. I must say it has been difficult at times to go to bed so I was hanging out on the couch until I was tired enough to go to bed and not think about my loss. The meditation speaks to the fact that I didn't spend ALL my time with my son, just some of it. So why would I be grieving his absence when he wasn't with me at night? Logically, I can go to bed and not grieve that he isn't with me at that moment. I can avoid compounding the grief by wishing for something that I never was.

01.28.2019

This song fires me up in a good way!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEJd2RyGm8Q&fbclid=IwAR1zQDQkrqfO9Ma6JDU4G7risWWTbXrRYyS-UC-mlw1n7r9I7LOX-64TduQ>

The Greatest Showman! This Is Me!

01.28.2019

I look forward to the day that I celebrate Connor



the one day of his death. That day WILL come. #iamasurvivor

01.29.2019

Nothing is to be gained by turning away from the truth. When the circumstances of Life are grim, I will face the grimness, learn what it has to teach me and walk through it.

No denying what has happened, it's ugly and it's messy. I must acknowledge it.

This has been a harder meditation today.

#iamasurvivor

01.30.2019

I receive comfort from being around others. Connections to others is my lifeline.

01.31.2019

I know God is with me! He is by my side.

01.31.2019

Brittany Green created this fantastic tribute for Connor Green. If you didn't know him before, this will give great insight to how wonderful he was. Tough for me to post. It opened up my heart again but nearly as wide as before. I miss my son tremendously. Someday we will be together again. I love you Connor. to the stars and back.

Remembering Connor Bray Green

<https://vimeo.com/307325101?ref=em-share>

02.01.2019

Taking steps every day, Connor nodding in encouragement. Yes mom, you can. Yes mom, you must. Yes mom, I love you to

02.02.2019

In my ability to endure I see a strength I didn't know I had!

02.03.2019

Silence is the strength of our interior life...If we will fill our lives with silence, then we will live in hope.

02.04.2019

Knowing I have company in my struggle can help me see my way through. I've been thrust into a new "club" in which I also find support. Thank you to those in the "club" that have reached out to me.

02.04.2019

02.05.2019

I sat. I sat in silence last night. I waited to hear something from God, but nothing. It was the first time I've been able to sit in silence like that. My heart wants to create that connection. I felt as if I could create something in my mind's eye but I knew it was just me. I will try again to connect to feel His presence.

02.06.2019

TEARS.

I will not further burden myself with false expectations about tears
I own them. They are mine. They are healing.

02.06.2019

Peter healed Aeneas, a paralytic and brought Tabitha/Dorcas from the dead, (Acts 9:26-43) then I know God himself will heal my broken heart.

02.07.2019

Suffering through the loss of a loved one changes one's perspective. It is easier to see what's important.

Go do good today.

02.07.2019

My word for 2019:

COURAGE.

What is yours?

02.08.2019

Recovery is a process which happens on its own time. I will honor it.

02.09.2019

Sometimes I feel like talking about it. Sometimes I want to be normal and talk about running, dogs and health.

02.10.2019

In the midst of winter, I look forward to my favorite time of year! Spring! Days are getting longer and it's a time for renewal!

Be still and know that I am God.
The original Hebrew root of Be still doesn't mean "be quiet"; it means "let go." That's very different, don't you think? Let go and know that I am God! Let go of trying to control your spouse! Let go of your worry about your finances! Let go of your unforgiveness! Let go of your past! Let go of what you can't control—and rest in the knowledge that God is in control!

She-Rose

www.she-rose.net

02.12.2019

It is more than will power to stop thinking of someone who I've loved and is gone. I prefer not to say lost... they are not lost!

02.13.2019

Grief dares us to love once more. Terry Tempest Williams

02.14.2019

For everything there is a season...a time to break down, and a time to build up, a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance... Ecclesiastes 3:1-4.

Each moment in my day can have some of each season. This morning it is time to dance and be grateful for all that I have!

02.14.2019

I DESERVE MORE!

More to give away!

02.16.2019

It has been a roller coaster of emotions today! Started out with a feeling of happiness and spring is in the air. Cleaned up my deck and felt great. It changed when I was drawn to listen the recording of Connor Green service and watch the video tribute. Brought BIG time tears. Now I am grateful for all that I have. The lows are less deep and the highs last longer. Today, this is the way I dealt with my grief.

Top of Form

105 Brittany Green, Lisa Alonge Morga

Bottom of Form

02.17.2019

All the wonderful things in life are so simple that one is not aware of their wonder until they are beyond touch. Never have I felt the wonder and beauty and joy of life as keenly as now in my grief that I am not able to share with those who are gone. I have a new awareness and appreciation of the small things!

02.17.2019

Love running in the snow. The beauty just amazes me.

Running grounds me. I feel back to nature. I feel back to God.

I breath hard! I dump the thoughts that distract me.

I focus on my breathing. I focus on the moment. My fears, sadness, grief and disappointment melt away, just like the freshly fallen snow.

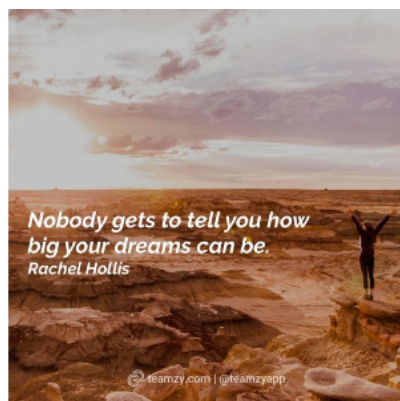
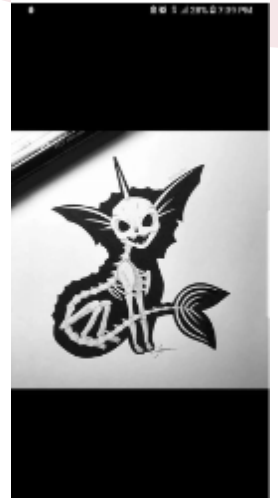


02.17.2019

Had a good laugh... I went to show someone a picture of my Tower Garden and realized that when I transferred to Connor's phone that pictures got a little messed up. No Tower Garden pics but found "Tattoo Ideas". My friend and I got a good laugh!

02.18.2019

I love my JP community. Gloria from our corporate office called to express their condolences. That is a company with a heart.



02.20.2019

The fashioning of the stories will help make of the chaos into which grief often plunges us and may even reward us with treasures. Write it down and get it out. It relieves me of having to "remember" it all.

02.20.2019

We are called to live with integrity, (which is one of the words on my vision board), to express the truth as we perceive it, and to trust God's ability to use what we offer. Elizabeth J. Canham

02.21.2019

I'm for whatever gets you through the night. Frank Sinatra

02.23.2019

My Vision Board. I'm excited for what 2019 has in store for me.

02.23.2019

What is the glimmer of hope that insists on being present to us in our darkness? Is it the lingering spirit of our loved one saying "I'm all right, don't worry"? Is it our own intuition that there is more to life - and death - than we can possibly understand, that death is not a stopping place but a gate to pass through? May I hear the sounds of something new that I have not heard before, brought to me by my son and his message that we will be reunited once more. I love you buddy!



02.24.2019

I watched a video: Rapping Granny on healing thru grief

02.24.2019

Titans of faith persevere!

02.24.2019

Today's meditation: People bring well-meant but miserable consolation when they tell us time will help our grief however, grief is tied to the intensity of our love to the person who is gone. Do I want to stop loving? NO! In the beginning, love = grief. Time eventually brings more love and memories. Without recognizing and passing through grief, I will not be able to love and need the departed's memory as much as I need air, food and water to nourish myself.

02.25.2019

One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is to remember, with delight and laughter, the funny times we shared with our loved one. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" Proverbs 17:22

02.26.2019

I know what I need to do to help myself to be ready for brighter times: rest, eat properly, read, pray, and surround myself with supportive people. The dark nights are simply to be endured and waited out. They will not last forever. One day, I know the cloud and darkness will be lifted. And I will be surprised that they no longer hover in the shadows.

02.27.2019

I will see reminders of my son everywhere. A similar jacket, tilt of his head, smell of cologne. I will recognize how it sparks a good memory, not wallow in grief but go on with my day.

02.27.2019

Keeping my spiritual zeal!

02.28.2019

You can choose to be happy or not. That choice is a tribute to your loved one!

02.28.2019

Mornin', from heaven!

03.01.2019

I will welcome and care for ways in which my loved one continues to live in me. Making me think about habits we shared.

03.02.2019

I can't hold onto guilt for not being closer, not calling, not seeing my son. Forgiveness of myself is a must hurdle. Love myself



03.03.2019

The line of demarcation of before and after is beginning to fade. My timeline is becoming one just like the magician who magically puts the rope back together after he cuts it.

03.04.2019

This grief thing.... learning everyone does it in their own way. #iamasurvivor #iamstrong

03.04.2019

03.05.2019

"Faith is the bird that feels the light
And sings when the dawn is still dark."
Rabindranath Tagore

03.06.2019

I will revel in the times I can be happy - which is what my son would want for me.

03.07.2019

What to say? I'm sad that we didn't get to celebrate your quarter life bday together. I do however believe that you are celebrating in a happier place in the universe now. I miss you so much little brother. I've been thinking a lot today of the good times and remembering you in a better light. It's hard Con, you leaving me on this planet to deal with this thing called life without you. Here's a picture of us on my last bday, I still have the vm you left me saved and listen to it a lot. I will go get Kaladi Brothers and smoke a fat one for you at Daniels Park. I love you forever broha, happy heavenly birthday

Brittany

03.07.2019

I love you Connor Green. I am glad that the demons no longer haunt you. Love Madre

From Mickey

HAPPY HEAVENLY
BIRTHDAY COUSIN!!!

I love and miss you!!!

There are many memories I have of Connor Green, but one that comes to mind is



going to lunch a couple times a month when he worked at BMW. So many great conversations and laughs. He is truly missed.

Belinda Evans

When I'd stay the night at your house and we would all lay on the living room floor and watch TV! So many good laughs with Connor. Happy heavenly bday Connor!

Inline hockey

Kristi Pomeroy

I've been thinking about Connor's birthday everyday this week. We love and miss you, Con Man!

Roxane Seney Apple

03.10.2019

Mac

Mac was Connor's dog. Connor had made preparation to have Mac taken care of. Sam is taking good care. I placed an envelope in the Christmas tree for Connor and it was \$100 to send for Sam to take care of Mac.

03.09.2019

May we find and uphold one another. Great strength comes from others. Thank you to all who encourage me and pray for my family.

03.08.2019

"Tis better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all." Alfred Tennyson

I am grateful for the time I had together with my son.

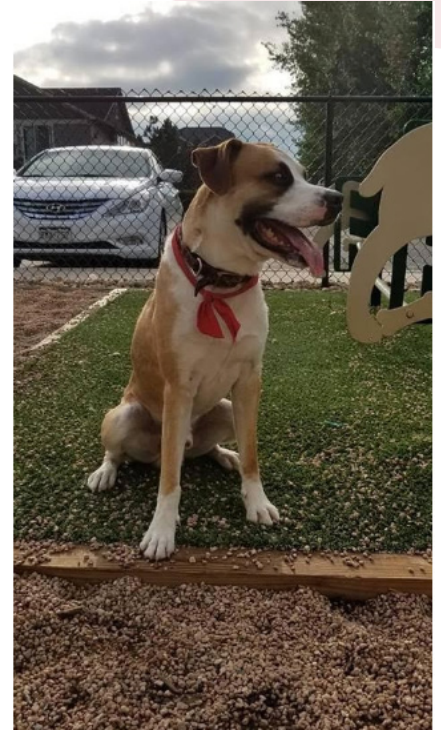
03.07.2019

Today, yes today is my son's, Connor Green, birthday. He would be 25. Instead of celebrating his birthday on earth, he is wrapped in God's arms. Those that greeted him in heaven include his sister Courtney, aunt Penny, cousin Kasey, Grandpa Green, Grandpa & Grandma Lawson and so many others. Connor no longer suffers from the demons that haunted him. It is with that in mind that my grief is lessened. I still miss him and he is on my mind. I love you to the stars and back Connor!

Christina Byers <https://youtu.be/V8rtJRILdI8>

03.12.2019

Road trip is coming together!



I got what I wanted, didn't get what I was looking for and got more than I expected.

03.15.2019

Have everything I need for 3 weeks (I think -lol)

03.16.2019

There is a fine balance between attending to my own needs and being mindful of the needs of the living, who may depend on me for comfort and reassurance.

03.16.2019

Impromptu stop to hike Hanging Lake. (part 1). I've done this hike multiple times. First time was when I was 8. I remember my friend not being able to make it. I went up the rest of the way with her mom. It was so well worth it. The view was spectacular. It was so pristine. Since then I've been up with my kids, Brittany Green, Connor GreenConnor and Hannah Green.

Yesterday's hike was a little different. It was a test of mental and physical strength. The trail was snow packed and icy. I started late in the day and was going to be fighting darkness. I was determined to do it though.

I set off at a fast pace, encountering others coming down. Some were literally sliding down the trail on their jackets! :). That created even more a race against time. I picked up the pace, my lungs burning and my heart pounding. I had a goal, a "B". Nothing was stopping me, neither time nor the snow.

I "boldered" over piles of snow and scrambled up rocks, maneuvering around the ice. I needed to make it. It was going to make it no matter what. The final ascent has "stairs" with a railing. The stairs were covered with snow so it was just an incline. The snow so high that the railing was only inches from the ground. To make it up those final 200 yards was the hardest. Here I saw terror in the eyes of those coming down. It was dangerous, icy and close to the edge of a 300 foot drop. I could have let fear creep in, causing me to turn around and not reach the top. I knew what I wanted and didn't let THEIR fear stop me. I would deal with coming down after reaching the top.

(To be continued)

03.17.2019

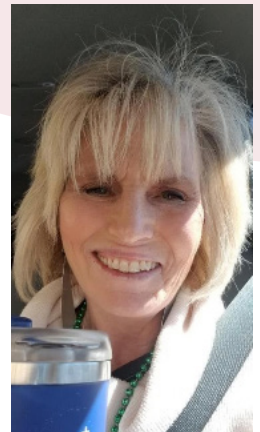
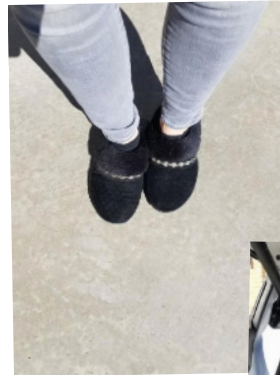
I will live through these days the best I can. Each day, a new day, to be spontaneous, full of energy and life.

03.17.2019

Hanging Lake (part 2)

I made it to the top.

I cried, sobbed and threw my hands up in victory. That is when I realized I was crying because I did this hike with my kids, memories came flooding back. I was grateful for the memories, especially with my son. Nobody could take them away. By this time, my phone was dead so asked another hiker to take a picture and send them to me. Small talk turned to family and when it came to number



of children, I paused and said 2, 2 girls. I chose to leave my son out because with strangers, they respond in a weird way, as if I have the plague. It is amazing how the mention of death confuses them, they don't know what to say or how to react. I prefer to let it rest for now. There will be a day that I can share.

I went up to Sprouting Rock, just above the lake. I was able to laugh remembering the time that all 4 of us were there together. We crossed the upper lake and got to the edge looking down on the lake below. We weren't supposed to be there - I knew it. It was the rule-breaker in me, which I now call my free spirit.

I soaked it all in - the memories, relished the moment, then my thoughts transitioned to making it back down. The goal had been reached. The journey up was a test of my physical and mental strength. I knew I couldn't sit in victory too long. I had another "B" which was to get down alive, no injuries and before darkness set in.

03.17.2019

Hanging Lake (part 3)

Wishing I had cleats, the trip down would be so much easier but they were at home. Life throws us things even when we aren't prepared so I could either wish for something that wasn't going to change or work with what I had. You guessed it, I worked with what I had.

I was the last one at the lake. I thought I better go - just in case I fell and needed help. That was not a good thought so I changed it. It was time to go and conquer the next mountain, albeit going down the mountain.

I took a deep breath, cinched up my back pack and headed towards the stairs, which looked entirely different from the top. I took my first step and the image of the woman with fear in her eyes flashed through my head. I knew I had to control my thoughts, focus on each step to get me down safely I had to do this. No one else could do it. I was responsible for me, and me alone.

I had to tell myself, "you got this girl". I heard my IMAGE family saying it to me. I had to focus. That was the way to get down without splitting my head on the rocks.

It was only a few steps before I realized that sliding down the stairs was a very viable option. I zipped my vest around my waist and sat down and slid down the trail. I found control was achieved by using my feet like brake pedals and a steering wheel at the same time. I thought - never in a million years would I would be sliding down the hill. I got to points where I could stand and walk, or so it seemed. I bit the dust (really the ice) maybe 3 or 4 times.

Each time, I stood up I repeated "You got this girl" and would take another step, focusing on my goal to make it down before dark and injury free.

FOCUS. SLOW, calculating each step. I came to where I boldered up and had to bolder down. I knew I was getting closer.

"YOU got this"!

Connor popped into my head and heard him say, "You got this mom! I'm proud of you". I felt proud I was doing this myself, yet I felt his encouragement.

However, getting down alive was for me and my girls, Brittany Green and Hannah Green .

When I reached the trail head, my boots were soaking wet, my socks dripping wet and my feet very cold. I had put that all out of my head to focus on my "B". I did it I really did it all by myself!

It is about the journey. I overcame fear, raced against time and I won! I Won! I won!

03.18.2019

Love... bears all things, believes all things, Hope's all things, endures all things. Love never ends. 1 Corinthians

13:7-8

The hope and joy we have known help us believe in the possibility of hope and joy again!

Good bye to Fruita, Colorado. Many deep ,heartfelt thanks to Jo Kissinger for opening your home to someone in need of friendship, love and understanding.

You met me where my needs were, in the moment, without judgement or trying to fix things. Our weekend was jam packed with bicycling, dance parties and Salad in A Jar parties. I even got a 6 mile run in. Thank you for introducing me to your community of friends! Lynne Peuse, Mary Sierra and so many others. If you will allow me, I'll invite myself back! Thank you for our brisk early morning walk of 32

degrees before leaving town.

03.18.2019

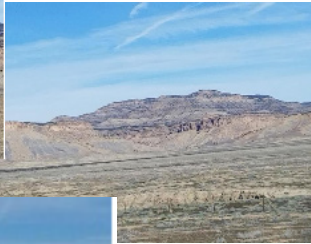
2nd leg of my Road Trip to Recovery, Journey of Personal Growth and Introspection.

Fruita, Colorado to Bryce Canyon, Utah. I'm curious to see what this leg brings me.

03.18.2019

"In death cometh new beginnings and life anew", Peggy Green, March 18, 2019

No rush to get to my VRBO in Duck Creek so



I took my time and hiked to Hickman Bridge in Capital Reef National Park. This trip is about being impromptu, physical and mental challenges. This hike was really, really easy. It was well worth it though. Even though physically easy, it was very thought provoking.

Something about dead trees that grab my attention with their knots, twisted branches and uprooted roots. There is an artistic beauty in them. God created them. In life they provided shade and shelter from storms and protected the landscape with their lives. It was when they lost their battle with Mother Nature that they now serve a different purpose. As a broken, fallen tree they supply shelter for the smallest animals. As they rot, they provide nutrients to fertilize the soil and provide new life and new beginnings.

As I pondered on this thought, it came to mind that Courtney's and Connor's life's were like the fallen trees. They had great lives, impacted and influenced others around them.

Courtney lived to be a rousing 9 months, was just beginning to crawl and smiled when I called her name. "Courtney, momma loves you". She grinned from ear to ear. She was the first of the 3 children I longed for. I went on to have Brittany Green and Connor. After Courtney's death, the question came up as to whether or not to have another child. I had 3 already. Never thought I would have to consider 3 children living or not. I decided to have another and was blessed with Hannah Green. She is a gift from God.

If Courtney had not passed - giving way to new life - I would not have Hannah. So you see, I got more than I ever imagined. Blessed to have 4 children enter my life.

Would I change anything? Having Courtney and not Hannah? Definitely not .

As for Connor - he has given me new beginnings; this 3-week road trip to find myself and my strength to become who I am meant to be. The me that comes out of this will be stronger, self-confident and courageous!

I will seek to find new beginning in life and death.

03.20.2019

I start my morning everyday like this. I get up an hour early to sit in silence, do affirmations, visualize my future, exercise, read and journal.

Of course have my cup of tea and take my fruits and veggies in a capsule. Start my day on the right foot mentally and physically.

03.19.2019

I just had a conversation with someone close to me. She let something she was doing no longer be a priority and she was feeling guilty. "It was a decision by default". It made me think that we have choices and we don't have to live by default. I gave myself permission to make decisions for myself, not for others and not feel guilty. It gave me power and control over my decision. No guilt, I made the decision based on what I knew in that moment.

03.20.2019

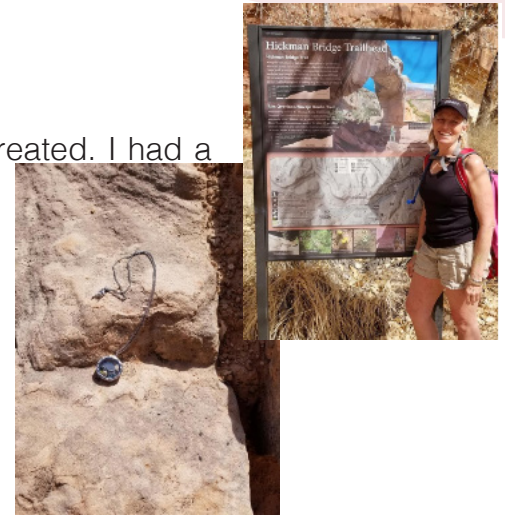
"In communion with the beauty of nature, I find an affirmation of all that is, including me." Healing



After Loss

03.20.2019

Beautiful hike at the Hickman Bridge. In all God's glory this was created. I had a few tears, happy and sad all mixed together. The necklace is a gift with memories of Connor and he has been with me every part of this journey.



03.22.2019

Tie-dye Friday

03.22.2019

Jamming to one of my favorite songs.
I was feeling inspired and ready.



03.23.2019

Healing moves at its own pace. What is a burden one day may be a gift another day.



03.25.2019

More of Devils Bridge.

03.25.2019

Where is Connor?

03.27.2019

On my heart.

03.29.2019

Have you shared with your family what you want to happen when you die? Have you told them what you want done with your organs? While it



is a difficult question to address now, it is even harder for living family members to make a decision when you are gone. Please, please have this conversation AND write it down.

More than 450 relatives of organ donors declined permission to donate as they were unsure of their relatives' wishes in 2018.

I AM a Registered donor. When I die, I am done. Give my organs to someone who needs them.

I am an organ donor

Here is the link to register. Register today.

https://www.organdonor.gov/register.html?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhPfkBRD0ARIsAAcYycG60VIHJm-ihddluRaZMpfuOlvEUXt4YyF4ast8QufHKMZSQ9VXkBYaAmXAEALw_wcB&fbclid=IwAR1DPFX7vMEEw1cq5wSPgOwXx7H9gviyi3WHCA0dvdFbW-qugsbGfc6uDZk

03.30.2019

Looking up during my morning silence and to see this opening to the heavens gives me hope to go there myself. It is an open invitation that will never be revoked and I am grateful for that.



3.30.2019

The things I see on my runs:

The guy doing the flips didn't see me until he did a whole bunch. Fascinating place for him to practice in some sand. He must want to really master that flip. Good for him.

An entire restaurant dedicated to Mac n Cheese. Hmmm I wonder who would have enjoyed this place??? I've felt Connor's presence ever since I got here.

03.30.2019

Reunited Because of Christ

Day 165

David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.' But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me." (2 Samuel 12:19-23)



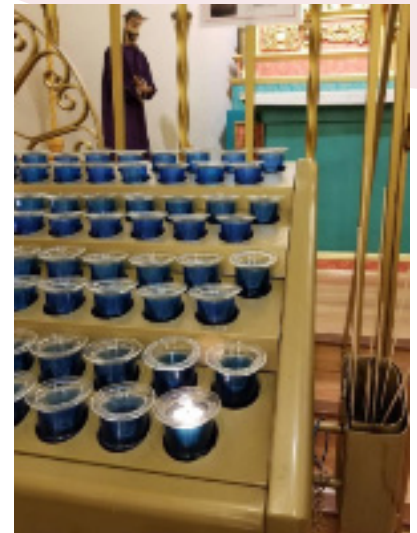
David said with assurance, "I will go to him." David's young child was gone, but he knew with certainty that he would see that child again. He made the important decision to go on living in the meantime. David knew that his son was already in the presence of the living God.

If David, who lived in Old Testament times, had this certainty, how much more certain can we be about our own children now that Jesus Christ has come and given us a greater hope?

Thank you, Jesus, that you care so much for me and for my child. I want to surrender my sinful life to You, so that I, too, will spend eternity in Your loving presence. Amen

03.31.2019

This little light of mine.



04.02.2019

Life is about what I have now, in the moment. Not what was in the past.



04.03.2019

My road trip is finished. Just like the flames in the fire, my road trip has come to an end.

It started with a large burning desire to get out of town, away from the pain and have an awesome adventure. I got what I wanted, didn't get what I was looking for and got more than I expected.

I will start with not getting what I wanted. I secretly wanted to return home, "healed" from my son's recent death. What I realized is that a few weeks off would not do that. I thought my thinking and processing would heal me. I am a "fixer" and this was supposed to fix me. There is no fixing. I must still grieve and walk through the pain and adjustment of Connor not being here on this earth. I found the grief overwhelming a few times. I felt his presence while starting this exact fire. It scared the heck out of me. I wanted to run and hide. I wanted him to go away. I screamed at him to leave. He did.

That made me sad. I screamed at him to come back. He did. This all seems crazy to me. I've been told that I need to be gentle with myself for these thoughts that normally would be irrational, except under these circumstances. So I am practicing being kind to myself. Being kind physically is easy for me. I've been trained to do that. Mentally, that is something totally different. A recent song I heard is "it's okay to not be okay". I guess that goes for my occasional bouts of irrational thinking. I will adjust to the new normal.

I want to thank everyone for your support, encouragement and following me on the Road Trip to Recovery, Journey of Personal Growth and Introspection. While the road trip is over, the journey has just begun.

04.06.2019

Love without fear! Those we love will forgive us as we forgive them.

04.09.2019

Letting go of one thing leaves your hand available to receive. I will open my hand and heart to relinquish and to receive.

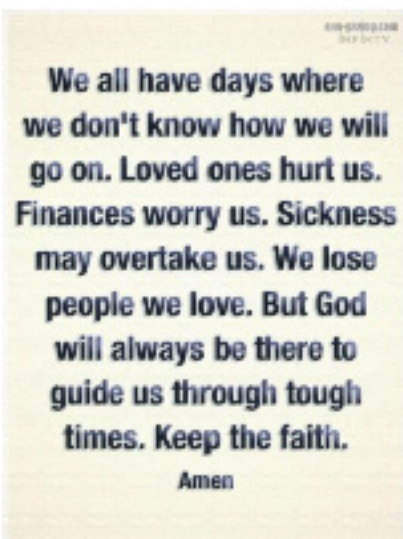
04.10.2019

What to do with "things" from a loved one who had passed? Some hold memories, some were just theirs. Sometimes it is overwhelming as what to do with them. I still have photos from my mom from 3 years ago. I have my own and find it difficult to just trash them. In the meantime, my garage has more stuff in it than I want. I'm thinking springtime is a good time to release and clean.



04.15.2019

Suffering breaks our world, like a tree struck by lightning - splintered, denuded and shaken. We will never be the same again. However, we are the clay from the Master Potter to be formed and molded into something new. I don't know what that is yet - it is part of the journey of healing. Yesterday was 4 months since Connor Green passed. Quite unbelievable I must say. It was a good day though. I was surrounded by old friends who have wrapped me in their arms and new that have no knowledge of my history. It was a day to change someone else's life! I am privileged to be able to move from my grief and misery into a ministry of helping others.



04.22.2019

We carry sadness and grief with us for a long, long time. However, we don't have to let it call the shots! Revel in the simple joys, much like a child! The rain, the puddles to jump in, the birds singing, the trees blossoming, the fragrance of flowers and the warmth of the sun on our souls. Grief lessens as we focus on the positive and show our gratitude. I am so very, very grateful for my life!

04.22.2019

Shared by Christian Byers

04.28.2019

"It is not the critic who counts. It is not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done it different. The CREDIT belongs to the person actually in the arena, who's face is a marred with dust, sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs, who comes up short time again, again and again and in the end while he may know the triumph of high advancement at least when he fails, he does so daring greatly" Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

Those who try and fail - it takes courage to do so. Courage means you WILL fall, you WILL stumble, you WILL fail because there is no guaranteed or certain outcome, there is risk and being emotionally battered is pretty certain. Courage is to rise above the critics, rise above the uncertainty and rise above the potential emotional pain.

Why do I bring this up? Friends keep telling me I am an inspiration and they admire my courage to be vulnerable and expose my pain. I appreciate everyone's support. Believe me though, I dig DEEP

to be courageous. I know that what I say does not always sit well with others when I speak of my grief journey. They question, "How can she be doing so well? It has only been 4 months since her son passed away! How can she be happy and have joy in her life? She should still be grieving!"

Joy can be scary to feel amidst grief. It can be scary to think my joy will never return. It can be scary to think my joy will be stolen again. Yet I make a choice and rise to have joy. How do I regain my joy? I lean into gratitude. I am grateful for the day! I am grateful for the sun! I am grateful for my family! I am grateful that I know a kind and loving God! My list can go on forever... on the tough days, it is just to be grateful that I simply have a bed to sleep in, water to drink and clothes to wear. You see, it is impossible to have 2 opposing emotions at the same time. I replace sadness with gratitude which gives way to JOY!

May you find joy in your life by starting with gratitude.

I would love to hear what you are grateful for. Please, comment below. I will respond.

04.28.2019

"There is an endearing tenderness in the love of a mother to a son that transcends all other affections of the heart. It is neither to be chilled by selfishness, nor daunted by danger, nor weakened by worthlessness, nor by ingratitude. She will sacrifice every comfort to his convenience: she will surrender every pleasure to his enjoyment, she will glory in his fame and exalt in his prosperity and if adversity overtake him, he will be the dearer to her by misfortune and if disgrace settle upon his name, she will love and cherish him; and if all the world beside cast him off, she will be all the world to him."

Washington Irving

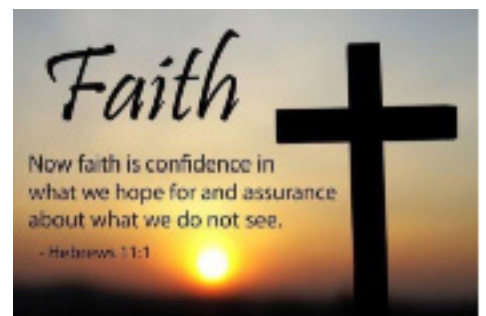
Thinking of you ladies,

Bevin Murchison Mugford, Joanne Macfarlan Mulhern, Jessica Greise, Hope Strassheim

Please feel free to share and tag other mothers.

05.05.2019

Sunday thoughts: After my son passed away suddenly and recently, I was so deep in my grief that all I wanted to do was to memorialize him. I kept coming up with ways to "do things in his honor". What were these things? We used to say "I love you to the stars and back". I was going to have it etched in metal and hung over my bedroom door. We both loved sunrises/sunsets and I was going to have one from the day of his funeral framed with a silhouette of his head disguised in the clouds. I donate blood on a regular basis and credit it to my church. I was going to change all that, create a group in his name and donate to it even if I was the only one to ever donate in his name! He loved tie-dye t-shirts. I never really owned one but bought one on vacation. In fact, I am wearing it in my Facebook profile



picture. I was coming up with multiple ways to memorialize him. Then one day I had an aha moment. Aha that he is gone and I need to live for the living! How bad was I making those who also mourned and loved him feel? They chose to remain here and I was not giving them what they deserved; me and my love in the present. I had to flip the switch and enjoy the people that I love here on earth. Yes, I believe there is a day I will be reunited with Connor yet I must focus on my family here. Yes, I still grieve. Yes, I still think about him. That isn't taken away. I made a choice to love and honor those whom I see and love. Besides, the bible says not to worship other idols and I feel I could have been walking down that path, making my son an idol. A friend



recently shared that the parted ones were not saints. They had bad habits, weren't perfect and made mistakes. While in life, I did not put them on a saintly pedestal, I will not do so in death.

#livelifeinthepresent #lovenow

05.12.2019

One moment and my life DID change. Grateful for this day, this moment.

05.12.2019

Mornin'

05.14.2019

Create memories! Enough said.

Botanic Garden 2017

05.14.2019

This is not what I planned to post but it is one of those that I just need to share. Mother's Day ~ didn't know what to expect. Was it going to be tearful? Happy? Normal? It was all of the above. Morning started out great with early church and dog park with Luna (5 month old puppy) and Kahlua (5 year old dog). I decided to go into Home Depot to pick up 2 boards for a small project, leaving the two dogs in the car, windows down and temps still in the 50's. By the time I came back, Luna was no where to be found! My heart racing and my thoughts full of fear, I started looking for her! I was calling for her in the parking lot and enlisted the help of the employees and customers. Everyone on the look out and she was no where to be found. I called family and friends to have them call animal control, vets and animal shelters. I posted on Facebook that Luna was missing. I was at my wits end. My daughter got Luna after her brother, my son, passed away in December. What was I going to say? How was I going to tell her that her comfort pet was gone? It was horrible. 2 hours

looking for her. Then my daughter called. Some one had contacted her and had Luna! Needless to say she was surprised that her dog was missing in the first place. (I was gonna call her soon). Luna was about 1/2 mile away from the car and navigated several extremely busy intersections near Park Meadows Mall. The people that picked Luna up came back to the area they found her and went to work. The beautiful, kind and lovely people that saved Luna work at Game Stop. At first glance, this would be no big deal. To me it was a sign from heaven. You see, my son, was quite the gamer and could have lived at Game Stop. I believe it was Connor, who was looking over Luna and wanted to let me know it was him by taking me to Game Stop. There was NO coincidence in this. I felt Connor's presence and was at peace knowing he was thinking of me on Mother's Day. That was part I of my day!

Thanks for reading.

05.16.2019

My story continues with blessings! After lunch on Mother's Day with my family, I dropped by the cemetery where my first daughter, Courtney, was buried nearly 28 years ago. I don't visit often. I don't feel the need to visit a "place" to think of her. However, something inspired me to go. Convenience? I was so close, so why not? Not just convenience though, something tugged at my heart. When I got there, her headstone was in good shape. I removed a few edging stones that were used in the beginning when we planted flowers and pulled up a few stray tall blades of grass. It finally hit me and I sat down and cried. The tears came softly as I sat there in "Baby Land" with the graves of other children. I cried for my daughter, I cried for the other parents who lost children, I cried for my son and I cried just to cry. While I was sitting there in my moment, another family came to visit their child. The woman held a bouquet of dark blue irises. As she walked by me, she gently pulled one out and handed it to me. She said nothing, just handed it to me. I could barely see her with tears in my eyes and I eked out a thank you. The blessing and NOT coincidence came in the flower. Irises are my favorite flower and this woman was the messenger that Courtney was with me in this moment. I laid the flower down and was able to leave feeling blessed that Connor was with me earlier in the day and now Courtney! God knew my heart was aching and knew how to heal it.



05.18.2019

This was for my mom's birthday. Looking back, I realize how important it is to have my kids together. 4 of the 6 of us are here today. I love you, Brittany Green, Michelle Mickey Smyth, and Hannah. Miss Mom and Connor.

06.07.2019

Never know when grief is going to come. I promised myself that whenever it does, I will sit in it. I will acknowledge it. I will process it. This is a LONG post. As I do so, I know that many of my friends appreciate how I am moving through this season in my life. I made a commitment to share for 1 year to help my friends as I help myself. Sometimes at a business meeting, breakthroughs are not about business but personal. I know that my virtual franchise is cleverly disguised as personal growth.

Tonight, at a Juice Juice Plus conference, the question was posed, "Of those no longer living, who would I talk to?" My heart sank. My stomach twisted. Tears came to my eyes as I was supposed to share with a total stranger who that person is. It was not my mother. It was not my father. It was

not my sister. It was not my first child. It was my son Connor who died less than 5 months ago. The pain is still real. It is still raw. My partner shared it was her mother who passed away 11 years ago. I shared what happened with my son, that he took his own life. My new friend, Yvonne asked if I have forgiven my son? Huh? I hadn't thought about. I didn't feel angry. He was one to take responsibility for his actions. I know he is taking ownership of this one too. She suggested I forgive Connor.

These are my thoughts. Connor- I forgive you for leaving me. What ever you thought your future was had to be so bad that there was no hope of it getting better. That your life wanted to be better, not on this earth though. Whatever demons were plaguing you are gone.

I am mad though you didn't share with me. I am mad I didn't know what was going on. I am so sorry Connor I wasn't there. I feel like I let you down. I ask that you forgive me. I know you forgive me and I thank you.

I can't hold onto those thoughts they do me no good. I forgive you for wanting something better. That something better we get to share together someday.

I forgive you for tearing your mother's heart apart. I forgive you for leaving me to pick up the pieces. I forgive you. I forgive you. I forgive you. I love you to the stars and back! Mom

The healing continues.

06.03.2019

The stars and night time give me the quietness and stillness that I need to understand the vastness of what God has created. There is order and understanding to what can be chaos, confusion and grief. Life is so much bigger than me in my tiny moment. I am grateful to be in the land of the living and have hope for a great life. I love that this gives me the chance to help others work through challenges; mental, spiritual, physical. I am working through them every day myself. Some bigger than others. Working through them none the less.

06.10.2019

#takehealthyback #beinchargeofmyownhealth #responsible

I have been having pain in my left shoulder for a few months now. I think I have a torn rotator cuff and have been seeing a physical therapist. We are making some progress yet I feel I was stuck. Once I really started to think about it, I decided that my progress was stopped due to stress. Metaphorically, I have been carrying the weight of the world, grief and sadness on my shoulders. I pin point this to the death of my son in December. Since this realization hit me, I have been searching for ways to reduce the stress. Massage? Talk therapy? Prayers? Healing touch? I just didn't know what method to pursue. I even talked to Connor and asked him to take away the pain. I have been praying. Nothing though made it better. Well just this last weekend, it came to me to forgive Connor for leaving me. It was a huge shift in my thinking to lift the burden off my shoulders. The day after I tearfully forgave Connor and asked for his forgiveness, the tightness in my shoulder lessened. It still needs work and I will continue to work on this aspect of healing. What I really want to point out is that I am making choices to take care of my health. I am in charge. I am taking my health back and not letting his actions impact how I move through this season. I chose to either be the "Victim" or "Responsible" for my health. I CHOSE to be responsible. Ask your self, are you experiencing new pains, new circumstances that could be impacting your health? I encourage you to look inward, what is going on in your life? Can that explain what you are feeling? If you aren't sure, seek out a trusted person, a functional medicine doctor who looks at the root cause of what is going on. A pastor can also help guide you. A trusted friend who will tell you the truth. I don't have all the answers and I seek help from my community and tap into my numerous resources #takechargeofyourhealth #takechargeofyourbrain #therighttodecide

#itisajourney

The healing continues.

06.14.2019

Good morning. Today is 6 months. Six months since my son, Connor Green, chose to take his life. It is the same day of the week and I keep running through my head what I was doing and where I was when I received the news. It is part of the grieving process to relive these moments. A struggle that I never anticipated is the "Time Warp" I am feeling. Suddenly, life is flying by so much quicker. I have a new measurement of time, the anniversary of his death. I ask myself what I have accomplished in the past 6 months. I have tendency to say "nothing". Who have I impacted? Whose life have I changed? Whose life have I made better? I am the type of person that wants to measure my accomplishments in numbers and that is why I struggle. I "delete" the good things. When I really look at what has happened in the last 6 months, many positive things HAVE happened. Personally, I ran my best time ever in the Bolder Boulder, cutting 3 1/2 minutes off last year's personal time. Not a small accomplishment and I am recognizing it. Speaking of running, one of my friends who I admire that ran marathons was afflicted by several autoimmune disorders. She no longer ran marathons, in fact, she was struggling with getting out of bed every day, not knowing what her body would allow her to do. Some days, it was only to move from bed to the couch! Oh, how my heart ached for her. :(She started taking our fruits, veggies and berries in a capsule and in less than 3 weeks after starting, she ran a 5K! She got that runners high she had been missing for years. She got her life back! I am so happy for her. Another client who has been following the Shred10, has lost 6 pounds and is establishing new habits that are sustainable. This was a goal she struggled with. I have walked beside her every step of the way. We have been doing this together. So happy that she can move forward with her goals. Those are the things that I can measure.

The non-measurable comes from the countless messages that I have received. My posts about my experience, sharing my story, allowing others to see my journey have helped others in their grief journey and encouraged them to move through tough times. Difficult times that include divorce, loss of job, financial difficulties, work-life balance, and questions of faith. I am grateful for the opportunity to help people I don't know, yet. I hope to be there in their times of need. I may never know all those I've encouraged and inspired. This is the comfort in the thought that I HAVE accomplished something in the last 6 months. No more deleting the good. Recognize the accomplishments, measurable and non-measurable.



The quote comes from Eric Johnson with TEAMZY. Thank you, Eric, for your inspiration.

The healing continues

06.14.2019

Tie-dye Friday. I love you Connor Green, to the stars and back. My love is ever present not in the past. Love you the same as yesterday and the day before and the day before that. 6 months since I last saw your face. I am grateful that you have been with me in spirit, giving me signs that you are with me. I look forward to the day we will be reunited as mother and son.

The healing continues.

06.14.2019

Family has always been important to me. They have gotten me through good times and bad. Some family I was born with, others have adopted me into theirs or I brought them into mine. However they became family is not important. What is so important is their unconditional love. Without family, I would be a train wreck! Only you really understand my trials, tribulations and joy's! Some have gone before me, others I am blessed to be with on this earth. My children Brittany Green, Hannah Green, I love you so much. Michelle Mickey Smyth, Thaide Henderson, I am honored to be your Aunt and I love you.

My extended family, know I love you too. We are a bad ass family with big goals. Let's go get them together!

06.22.2019

The kids favorite movie was The Lion King. We watched it hundreds of times!

Brittany Green, Connor Green and Hannah Green are all about Hakuna Matata- there are no worries. Brittany Green has it tattooed on her arm and Connor Green had the song for his morning alarm. I inherited his phone and wake up thinking about him every day! Hakuna Matata!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbY_aP-alkw&fbclid=IwAR155QvFJi3wh5yL-Jh-N2kX4g9Ijh3pIJZ1yhAoFlqKzc5AcVCE6i63xWE

DESERVE MORE!

More to give away!



06.28.2019

I am emotional today. Not sure what is going on. Feels like I can cry at anything. Taking a moment to sit and figure it out. I went back to the book, Healing After Loss. Today's thought is on anger. I don't feel anger towards God nor towards my son, just that my life has been disrupted. I have been deprived of his presence. I yell at the sky and shake my hands sometimes, then collapse into a chair from the emotional impact and fatigue of letting go. Recognizing that my anger is fully legitimate, and I don't need to justify it to anyone, I know it will burn away quicker by doing so. I recognize it and express it.

The healing continues.

06.28.2019

Conversation with Mark Parker....

As I process the death of my son, it has not been easy. What I am finding is that the other challenges in my life seem to be so much larger and forbearing as I walk through this season. Overwhelm is what I felt this morning.

What do I do when I am feeling this way? I tap into the multiple resources that I have available. Mark Parker, a Chaplain with Compassus Hospice is who I reached out today. Compassus was the hospice that we hired for my mom and since then, I have access to their resources. I am privileged to have Mark as my "PRN" Chaplain; can call him when needed and can trust in his god-filled guidance, caring and love. Today, it was a tear-filled conversation in which he continued to peel the layers of what was eating at me. There are many today: Connor, my shoulder, health insurance,

friends, lack of sleep, deadlines. I came up with everything! The things that normally would not bother me, were tearing me down. UGH. We worked through so much of it and I feel better.

My biggest takeaway, however, was about Connor. Mark asked me to ask this question of myself? It is one that I have to put some thought and effort into.

EVEN IF....

EVEN IF.... I had spoken to Connor, he would have taken his life.

EVEN IF....I knew what was going on, Connor would have died

EVEN IF....I had told Connor I loved him more often, he would have died.

EVEN IF....

EVEN IF....

EVEN IF....

Thank you, Mark.

The healing continues.

The demons no longer haunt him.

06.28.2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0dIWJ4t4Jg> It is well with my soul

I spent the day in "the Jungle" as one of my coaches says. It means I am not thinking clearly and my behavior is unpredictable and erratic. It took a while to set my thing straight, almost all day but here I am.

Put in a tie- dyed t-shirt and headed off to pickleball.

07.01.2019

"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace" Isaiah 55:12

That is a wonderful promise.

07.05.2019

I share in hope of helping others! Maybe, just maybe, someone else struggles with these thoughts. I want to let them know they are not alone.

After a tough day, I am blessed to read this:

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order has passed away."

Revelation 21:4.

The hope of better days that I seek.

The healing continues

07.05.2019

Shared on my timeline

"A grieving person is going to laugh again and smile again. Yes, they're going to move forward. But that doesn't mean that they've moved on."

Ted Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/nora_mcinerny_we_don_t_move_on_from_grief_we_move_forward_with_it?language=en

07.04.2019

Today is July 4th, Independence Day, Mickey's birthday.

It started off as a great day! A couple hours of pickleball then breakfast to celebrate Mickey's birthday. I brought up the story about Connor and fireworks and it was posted on FB. We all got a good laugh because Connor loved fireworks, illegal fireworks. He often drove to Wyoming to buy illegal ones.

Checked in on Facebook

Sunglasses and skateboards. All that is missing is the tie-dye shirts. Thank you Brianna Bamberg for the teddy bears! Thinking of Connor and how much he loved the 4th and fireworks. Jodi Friedman Morris, remember when Connor and Brendan started a fire in the field with pop-bottle rockets? Fire trucks and all! So grateful it didn't get your house. Those boys!

The healing continues

07.14.2019

Today mark's 7 months. So fast. Time flies. 12 months can't come fast enough. I so want them to be over. That way I can get through all the "firsts".

1st Christmas - done

1st Birthday - done

1st New Year - done

1st birthday of younger sister - done

1st birthday -his - done

1st Mother's Day - done

1st Memorial Day - done

1st Father's Day - done

So many "firsts" of friends and family still hearing the news.

I want to treat these days as "normal" yet sometimes find it difficult. I am grateful that I can check them off. I've survived each passing day and I know I will get through the rest with God at my side and friends. Today, a friend heard my sadness and came to spend time with me.

It was just what was needed.

If you have a friend who has lost a friend or family member, I encourage you to call them! Call them to see how they are doing. Call them to talk about their loved one. Call them to say, "I love you". Call them if it's been days, months or years since their loved one passed. Just call them. We love to share memories. You can be part of the healing.



Please do me a favor. Call one person, just one person.

Please comment with "DONE" once you've made the call.

I have my one person.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 NIV

<https://bible.com/bible/111/rom.15.13.NIV>

The healing continues

xx.xx.xx

and saw Brie's post from 2017. It was our camping trip and it several pictures with Connor and the good times we had. It was really good times. We were together. It made sad. But I brushed it off. I didn't want to go there.

Hannah and I are home and this is the second time the light in the buffet came on by itself. I told her it was Connor letting us know he is with us. I acknowledged it and went on with what I was doing. While I was working with my Tower, Connor spoke to me. We had this conversation that I didn't want to have. Not today. Today was not the day. I didn't want to face the pain and sadness today. He didn't let it rest. "Mom, don't forget me. I turned on the light so you would know I am here". He asked me "Why won't you look at me? Why won't you look at my picture?" I answered, "I miss you. This is too hard.". "Mom, I miss you too". By this time, I am thinking I am crazy, making up this conversation. It felt real, very real, even though it wasn't spoken. "I am sorry". Then the tears came. It hurts.

Now I am downright frustrated and mad. I have things to do today, things I want to accomplish and when I am in this time, I can't focus. I want to live. I am sure to many this is harsh. It is the rotten truth. Today, I don't want to face it and spend time in it. I know, I have promised when it hits that I would acknowledge it and allow myself to process it. I also am giving myself permission to NOT go there today. Not wallow in it. I am celebrating life today.

The healing continues.

07.26.2019

We learn to process this journey of a loved one choosing to take their life.

Suicide. The white elephant in the room. No one wants to talk about it. In my quest to heal, I want to know all I can. What made him make that choice??? Was it relationships? Was it money? Was it job? What was so bad that it had to end???

Recently, I received some answers and understanding. While they may be answers, it is difficult for me to swallow. Difficult for ME to understand because I, I want it to be easily explained, not ambiguous, to be black and white and clear cut.

My answers came from a "conversation" with my son from his new vantage point. He described the need to move out of the darkness, darkness like a brown bag over his head with no way out. No light. No hope. Pain. Confusion. No words. Just DARK! End it all. Take it away.

He also described the darkness as being in jail without bail. No reason. Just in jail. To SUFFER in silence.

I can only compare this darkness to being thrown overboard into a swirling rapid. In that fast moving

cold rapid with only seconds to think. Ya know in the movies in the water scenes that it is dark, leaves swirling around, bubbles everywhere, gasping for air, not knowing which way is up. Was I swimming up or taking myself down? That is the closest darkness I can compare. I knew my darkness was temporary, short lived and I would come out of it. I think my experience of going overboard was Connor's way of showing me the darkness, He had no words to describe what he was experiencing except that it was DARK.

For Connor Green to make the decision to take away the darkness, it had to be a deep decision. He was only thinking of his pain and suffering. I can't blame him. When I was underwater, the only thing I was thinking about was coming to the surface. I wasn't thinking about my family, my girls. It was all about me.

Connor revealed to us that in thinking of himself, he had no idea how it would hurt his family, how much we miss him and wish that he was still here. He didn't know. He didn't know what he didn't know. He had to get out of the darkness.

He has light now. He can see. No pain. No suffering.

He wants to help me. He wants to help the girls, Brittany Green, Hannah Green.

What is the difference between his darkness and mine? I have hope. He did not. I have clarity. He did not. I believe in myself. He did not. I see a future. He did not. I still struggle with the answers I received yet I need to accept them. I understand a little more.

I love you Connor to the stars and back.

I'm wearing tie-dye today for you.

The healing continues.

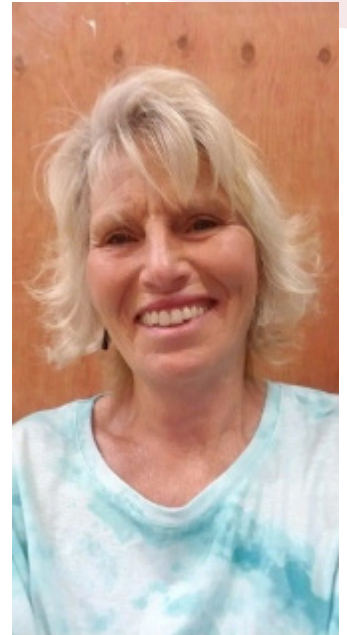
Dear Lord, I am grateful that I can share my journey and help others heal.

08.05.2019

As I sat down on the step this morning to give my dog a belly rub, the voice in my head said "Peggy, your son is gone, gone forever". This just came out of the clear blue, nothing triggered it. I sat there for a moment and said to myself, "Yes, he is gone. I miss him". I then got up and moved on with my day.

Later in the day I thought about what triggered thinking of Connor as being gone. One day last week, I drove by the last house we lived in together. Not sure what to expect but I felt the draw to do it. The draw to check one more thing off my list. I am a "list checker-offer". Memories came flooding back to me. The tears came, some sadness and grief and others of joy. Tears of happiness and sadness co-mingled while they cascaded down my cheeks.

What did I remember? Oh! how about Connor and his friends building a ¼ pipe skate ramp that took up half our garage? He researched it and planned it. We went to Home Depot together to get the materials. There were at least 10 sheets of 4X8 plywood on the roof of my car. 2X4's were hanging out the back of my open tailgate with a red flag and we hoped we had the right nails and screws. I helped him measure the first few boards, showed him how to use a circular saw and the next thing I knew, it was completed! It took 4 kids to move it to the driveway so they could use it. That ramp became the draw for all his friends. Our house was the place to come hang out, skate and have fun. This brings a smile to my face.



I remember on his wall in his bedroom that he made a mini shrine to his cousin Kacey who took her own life 2007. He had her memorial pinned to his wall and the bracelet that her family handed out at her service. Her death rocked his world.

I have a picture taken in the family room with his 2 sisters, my mom and myself. He stood on his tip toes to make sure he towered over the rest of us. This picture is on my desk. Today it brings back good memories. I must admit there have been other days that I turned it down on the shelf. I couldn't bear to look at it. Amazing how the EXACT same event can be either bring a positive memory or a negative one.

I was in the grocery store later in the day and it hit me again. "I miss Connor". I wandered through the store with tears of sadness. It didn't matter to me what others thought of me. My emotions were very straight forward, I openly shared my tears. I started thinking of others that do not share their emotions. How many people do we encounter in 1 day? How many of them could be hurting? How many are hiding? How many are experiencing the same darkness Connor felt? I felt a sense of compassion and empathy for others. Sure, I may be having a tough day yet someone else could be worse. I decided to greet the people around me with a hearty, happy hello and a smile.

I made it back home and felt the need to sit outside. It was only 5 o'clock and there were shadows on my deck. I wanted to feel the warmth of the sun on my face, so I went to the community pool with lots of sunshine! The sun and being outside grounds me. I sat there in silence, allowing my thoughts to wander, not focus on any one thought. They came and went. I heard a meadow lark singing in the trees. The melody made me think of my mom. It is a beautiful song. Another smile.

A wasp came and stole a piece of chicken from my plate. I've never seen this before! I've seen ants carry off 100 times their weight, but a wasp??? Stole my chicken?!?!?! Not a big piece just the size of a small garbanzo bean. I focused on his effort. He attempted to fly away with his jaws clamped on the piece of chicken. His efforts were in vain. He could not take flight. Instead he landed on the table, the wrought iron table with the holes in it. His head slipped through a hole and his feet wrapped around the small iron with his wings beating as fast and hard as he could to prevent him from either losing his meal or falling to the ground. To his favor, a nibble of the chicken fell to the ground. It was just enough weight gone that he could safely fly away.

What would happen to us as humans if we let go of just enough weight of something that brings us down, prevents us from taking flight? When we spend time with our negative emotions, we are burdened like the wasp. Those negative emotions are sadness, grief, anger, anxiety, fear and disappointment. We have the choice to change the way we think. We think like others tell us to. We think based on other people expectations. Getting rid of a small part of negative is the start to experiencing joy, love, gratitude, hope, peace and serenity.

What is one simple step that you can do today to move towards the positive?

Today, I felt gratitude for the birds. Today, I felt gratitude for the sun. Today I felt gratitude for the wasp. Today, the wasp taught me a lesson.

The healing continues.

08.08.2019

August 9, 1990 - May 22, 1991.

Courtney Rochelle Green my first daughter. I remember her birth like it was yesterday. It was a tough delivery. Before she came into this world, I was in the hospital for days with kidney stones and pain! It was all so well worth the pain when she was handed to me. A mother's heart knows no better joy. She brought such great joy to our lives!

She laughed, giggled and was beginning to crawl. She was only 9 months old when she passed

away. It was no fault of hers. It was a horrible accident. No evil intent, just a horrible accident. Her birth, brief life and death however gave me tools to manage and live through my current situation and circumstances.

The biggest and most important is that I am still here. :) I didn't die along with her. My death could have been mental, shutting down, going into depression, isolation, addiction to food drugs or alcohol. It could have been physical too.

However, 28 years ago I made the same decision as I did almost 8 months ago to continue, to carry on and live. I am not done on earth! I have purpose! I have big things to accomplish, lives to change!

I also learned to forgive the person responsible for her death. I knew from the bottom of my heart it was the right thing to do. I wasn't a very spiritual person at the time, but I knew it was necessary for my health.

Fast forward 27 years and I am so much more of a believer in God. Guess what??? According to the bible, forgiveness is what is expected. It brings healing.

Colossians 3:13 – Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

I have had to focus really, really hard on forgiving Connor. Not easy and not once and done. Sometimes I take back the gift of forgiveness (I am such an Indian giver) and have anger towards him. It is a game of tug-of-war and forgiveness needs to win. Each time I pull back, the rope burns are less severe.

Sometime, who knows when, it will be fully given and I will not want to take it back. I am tired of bandaging my hands and heart.

In the meantime, I do my best to be grateful and enjoy the moments of happiness stirred on by memories.

The healing continues.

08.13.2019

Yesterday was rough, not going to lie. My mom and I went and saw The Lion King finally, and that hit me hard. The part where Simba finds Mufasa hit me like a bag of rocks, and hakuna matata made me cry. Only because of missing Connor so much, and it made me think of him because I have my Hakuna Matata keychain he gave me on my keys still.

I received a really wonderful early birthday present that means the world to me. It's kind of ironic to be gifted something to memorialize my brothers death for my birth date. Life has been a little grey lately I will admit. Losing Connor has turned my life upside down and the choices I've made have been consequent of my way of grieving. I've been a little down, pushing people away from me that care a lot, especially my family.

After seeing the movie, I didn't really want to talk to my mom and tell her how much I've been hurting. How unwilling I am to take control and the next step to lead a life worth while. However, she had brought me some of Connor's ashes for me to put in my new locket. I held the bag of ashes in my hand not really sure how to feel. This is all that is physically left of Connors physical being, I thought. I had just gotten the necklace in the mail the day before, and there was no knot in the chain. Of course when mom and I go to fill up the necklace, there is a massive knot in the chain link. Who put that there?! I wonder... only the most mischievous person I know. It forced my mom and I to sit together and talk while she patiently worked at fixing my chain. I told her about my struggles and the hole I still feel every single day. She gets it. We finally got it Untangled and was able to fill up my locket. I know now it was Connor all along, just feeding me an opportunity to be real with my

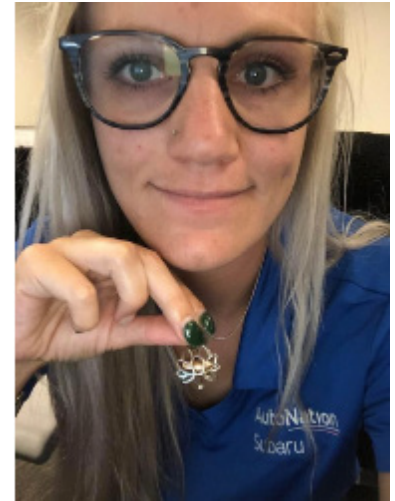
momma. I am grateful to literally have Connor with me every day now.

This morning I am at home getting ready, and I hear Connor's Xbox turn on. This is something he has done regularly over the past 8 months since I've had it. Usually to let me know he is there. It's funny because I asked him where he was yesterday, and he here is with me today.

I miss you so much Connor. I still can't believe I am here on this journey without you, but I do believe we will meet again. I do believe that you're with me now, and have been this whole time. Probably yelling at me to be happy and get my head out of my ass. Well, today's the day. Today I wear this beautiful necklace that was gifted to me by someone extremely thoughtful and kind. Today I put on my smile and have peace and comfort knowing Connor is always with me. He can hear me, so I will be talking to him more when I need to. He's telling me to put one foot in front of the other, and just take a step. It's going to be okay siiistaaaa as he would say. He's right and I'm ready.

— with Connor Green and Peggy Green.

By BRITTANY GREEN



08.15.2019

My house is quiet, silent. The silence is weird. I don't feel sadness. I would say it feels peaceful. I keep thinking about the song, "Sounds of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel.

As I look out onto my deck, I ask myself, what am I supposed to be getting out of this silence? In today's world, it is so easy to get caught up in the noise of life: TV's, phones, computers, music, cars, machines, other people's voices. I don't have cable and frequently drive without music which drives my daughter C-R-A-Z-Y. She can't stand the silence. Today the silence it is different.

Once again, I am drawn to scripture for my answers.

Psalm 62:5 "For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him."

In the silence my mind is empty and open to receive. I feel the still air and see the bright sunshine. In the silence, I can hear the children laughing and playing in the schoolyard. In the silence, my mind is at rest. In the silence, I feel peace and understanding of my surroundings. In the silence I am blessed to be alive. In the silence I feel God's love. In the silence I rejoice in the day. In the silence, my heart is healing.

The healing continues

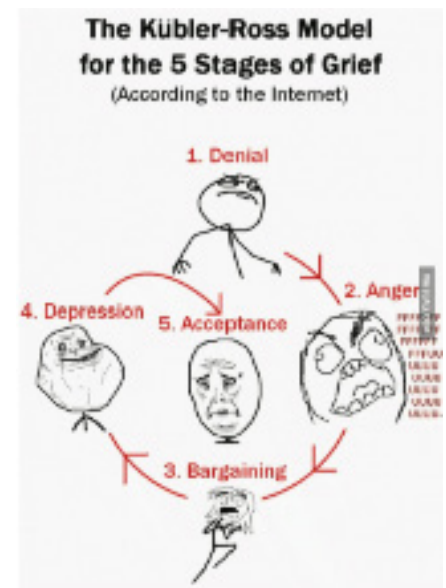
08.22.2019

The medical definition of grief:

Grief: The normal process of reacting to a loss. The loss may be physical (such as a death), social (such as divorce), or occupational (such as a job). (medicinenet.com)

According to the Kubler-Ross Model, there are 5 stages of grief.

Denial/isolation



Bargaining

Anger

Depression

Acceptance

There is no particular order in which we process grief. It is like a roller coaster with ups and downs, ins and outs and good days and bad days. I have been in acceptance more than denial lately. However, today is a day that I am in denial. I still have a difficult time processing that Connor is gone. Today it seems unreal. Today it seems like a bad dream. Today I make it real by seeing his lifeless body. The image is not as crisp as it once was. Think of it as an aged photo with the background yellowing and the edges torn and frayed. It sucks and it is gruesome but some days that is the ONLY way I make it real. I don't have to do this often, but it is how I, how I get through the denial to acceptance. No real tears today. Only silence and solitude. Using the quiet to process, listen for God's voice and know that there will be a day in which I can fully accept what has changed, what has happened and accept HOPE!

The healing continues

09.06.2019

Why You Should Stop Saying 'Committed Suicide'

"When attaching the word 'committed,' it further discriminates against those who lost their battle against a disease." ~Reidenberg

Your words matter, especially when it comes to mental health. One phrase that you may not be aware is particularly egregious? "Committed suicide."

It's an expression that many people still lean on, both in the news (take one look at headlines after the recent deaths by suicide of Parkland, Florida, students and the father of a Sandy Hook shooting victim) and in outside conversations.

While the term may seem innocuous, it's actually laden with blame and stigma. So much so that reporting guidelines outlined by mental health and media organizations strictly advise against using it.

"The term 'committed suicide' is damaging because for many, if not most, people it evokes associations with 'committed a crime' or 'committed a sin' and makes us think about something morally reprehensible or illegal," said Jacek Debiec, an assistant professor in the University of Michigan's department of psychiatry who specializes in post-traumatic stress and anxiety disorders.

When attaching the word 'committed,' it further discriminates against those who lost their battle against a disease. Dan Reidenberg, executive director, Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

The phrase "committed suicide" also ignores the fact that suicide is often the consequence of an unaddressed illness (like depression, trauma or another mental health issue). It should be regarded in the same way as any physical health condition, said Dan Reidenberg, the executive director of Suicide Awareness Voices of Education.

"You don't 'commit a heart attack.' Instead, you might hear someone say they 'died from a heart attack.' Dying by suicide is the same. ... (another way to say it is, "took their own life." Added by Peggy Green) When attaching the word 'committed,' it further discriminates against those who lost their battle against a disease," he explained.

Reidenberg added that the best phrase to use is "died by suicide," since it sends the message that the death was caused by the mental health condition. It's the preferred language in media stories,

and it's worth using in everyday discussions as well.

Why This Matters In The Long Term

It might sound like nitpicking to focus on just two words. However, word choices — whether intentional or unintentional — have much broader implications.

Using sensitive mental health vernacular is crucial to eliminating negative stereotypes attached to mental illness (and the consequences of those stereotypes) now and in the future. Research shows that when stigma is present, people avoid seeking help — help that could be life-saving.

"The fact that we are having problems with choosing words when speaking about suicide reflects our deeper problems with understanding mental health in general," Debiec said.

"The language [we use] reflects our system of values, both conscious and unconscious," he continued. "Using a judgmental or degrading language prevents us from recognizing mental health problems, seeking help and providing help."

Using a judgmental or degrading language prevents us from recognizing mental health problems, seeking help and providing help. Jacek Debiec, assistant professor, University of Michigan psychiatry department

Simply put, "committed suicide" conveys shame and wrongdoing; it doesn't capture the pathology of the condition that ultimately led to a death. It implies that the person who died was a perpetrator rather than a victim. And you don't have to live with a mental health condition to understand how that could be damaging.

"Words have consequences," Debiec said. "I would encourage people who think that language around mental health is not important to think about their own experiences when they felt that somebody's judgment or words unfairly and deeply hurt them."

It's time that we start looking at suicide as a dangerous byproduct of a health condition that can — and should — be prevented. That, of course, requires treatment. But it also includes paying attention to our words so that those living with a mental health issue feel they won't be alienated for speaking up and seeking support, Reidenberg said.

He noted that suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States.

Reidenberg said he hopes that more people will be more compassionate about suicide, and not just after a high-profile suicide but every single day.

"Let's keep working to prevent tragedies from happening, celebrate those who are still alive ... and do all that we can to break down the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide," he said. "It is only by talking about these that we will get people to open up before a tragedy happens."

Dropping the phrase "committed suicide" as part of this effort may be a tiny step — but at least it's one that's forward.

~Lindsay Holmes

09.14.2019

It is an afternoon of unrest. I feel uneasy. Want to be moving. Want to be outside. It is the time of year that the days are getting shorter and I miss the hot summer nights. I feel this way every fall however this year is different. I miss my son. My heart is missing his presence, laughter and yes, his problems too. I would give anything to have any piece of him.

I want to cry... but I can't. I just don't feel the emotion. I can't conjure up grief or sadness. I am having difficulty figuring out my emotions. Is it the time of year? Is it because today is 9 months

since Connor passed away? Regardless, I feel like I can't sit still. The best solution for me when I am feeling this way is to get grounded by putting one foot in front of another. I leashed up the dogs and headed to one of my favorite places. The walk is through groomed parks and sidewalks that give way to weeds, gravel paths and a small stream. There is history here too. I feel connected to God when I get outdoors. It is my place to think. It is my place of solitude. It is my place of comfort. It is my place of joy. It was time for me to go there.

Normally I don't walk with music because I like to hear the birds sing love songs, hear the crickets chirp to one another and hear the water splashing over rocks into small ponds. For some reason tonight though, I took my phone and my headset. I was inspired to listen to music on Spotify. I pulled up my playlist then decided to pull up Connors. When going through his phone looking for clues of what happened (that is another story all its own) I transferred parts of his playlists and hadn't listened to them yet. I was drawn to listen tonight. At first, I was really afraid to listen. Afraid that his music would really bring on the tears and make me miss him even more. His playlist however gave me more insight as to who he is. He had quite the variety of genres: rap, techno, 50's, heavy metal, 80's and even Christian. You don't know how thrilled I was to discover he had some Christian songs! I never really knew if he believed in God or not, but this encourages me knowing he had these songs. It gives me great hope that we will be reunited in heaven.

The first song that hit home was "Do it Till Your Face Hurts".

Do it till your face hurts

Smile again

Everybody right now

Smile again

Do it till your face hurts

Smile again

Everybody right now

Smile again

Do it till your face hurts

Smile again

Everybody right now

Smile again

Do it till your face hurts

Face hurts

Face hurts

Face hurts

Face hurts

Smile again

Songs about smiling can't but help me smile so I did!!!

Other songs that came up were "Buffalo Soldier", "I wish it would Rain", "Hakuna Matada" (this one did bring on big-time tears), "And we Danced". " We shared these few songs in common. I felt connected to my son.

When I got home, the light in my buffet was on. We don't turn it on. I believe it was Connor, telling me he is with me today as I get through another month of missing him. As I sat down to write my experiences, music was still playing. The song that came on was Trigger by Fox Stevenson.

It is not about how he ended his life. It was Connor telling me he had voices in his head, helping me to understand what he was going through.

This is brutal, STOP READING NOW if you don't want to know anymore. (He did not use the method below.)

Forget about choices just get to it

Blame it on the voices that told you to do it

You got a revolver and some bullets

Reach for the trigger and pull it

Reach for the trigger and pull it

Reach for the trigger and pull it

As tough as it is for me to say,

The healing continues

10.05.2019

I've really been thinking about this subject, not even sure if I could write about it. After much thought, I felt it could help others.

I call this "The Veil of Grief and Mourning."

Fall is a tough season no matter the circumstances. To me, it is the end of the summer, long days being outside and catching healing rays of sunshine on my face. Don't get me wrong, fall is beautiful, but I love summer more.

For a few weeks now, I've been more emotional than usual. I've cried at least once a day and nobody, nobody knows. I feel as if I would be burdening someone to reach out for support. I really, really needed someone when I stood in the garage, door was open, hugging the clothes Connor Green was wearing when he died. I was sobbing -no WAILING. I was frozen and couldn't even drop to my knees. I hoped that maybe a neighbor would hear and ask "Are you okay?" But no, it didn't happen.

I've been in the car with tears streaming down my face. Once I got to my destination, I simply wiped away my tears and put on my happy face. No one knew. It is my deep secret that I am sad.

I thought I was doing "okay" and now feel as if I've gone backwards in my grief. I'm coming to realize my grief is NOT linear. It is okay to be sad again, take 2 no 10 steps "back".

I know I will make it through this season.

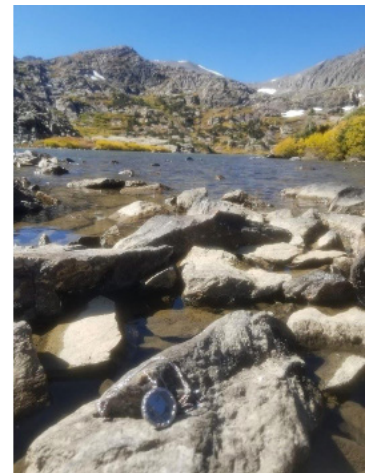
The healing continues.

Picture of Connor necklace and pendant in Breckenridge at McClough Trail.

*** timing is perfect. Just read this today****

John 16:20... "You will grieve but grief will turn to joy" (heaven is for me to be reunited)

16:33... "I have told you this so you may have peace"



If you look at the pendant, just to the right of it , Jesus is in the rocks holding on to your pendant.

10.10.2019

Do you know what is scary and therapeutic at the same time?

S-I-L-E-N-C-E

Let me say that again

S-I-L-E-N-C-E

This has happened more than once recently. I have been in the kitchen doing some meal pre; , no T.V. blaring, no music, no webinar, just me and the utensils in the kitchen. I am so tempted to put on some music, watch an NMD speech or listen to a recorded call. I feel the need to fill the void. Sound, noise is a distraction to what is really going on, keeping me from being in the moment. Noise prevents me from hearing my own heartbeat, loving myself and honoring my emotions.

While I am in the kitchen cooking, silence is like meditation. Not a sitting still meditation but an active one. I compare the experience to walking though fresh fallen snow. The world is fresh, no imperfections, clean and no expectations.

S-I-L-E-N-C-E is scary, and sound is a distraction. This time, I am avoiding thinking about my son. You see, he turned on the lights in the buffet again. (It is my understanding manipulating objects is the easiest form of communication from the spirits of those who have left us.)

I know he wants to talk to me. Today is the first snow of the season. We chatted about the snow and the family tradition of having homemade chili in the first snowy day of the year. Yes – I am making chili. He has been with me all day. I know because the light is still on. This is scary because even though I miss him horribly, it is really difficult to have him so close but not really be here.

Although sitting in silence was hard, it was also good, healing and beneficial.

If I didn't sit in the silence, I would not have been able to hear from Connor. I would have seen the light, but not had a conversation. While painful to miss him, it was therapeutic to have him with me.

I faced my fear of being in a quiet place and received a gift.

I highly recommend you try silence sometime.



The healing continues

I can't believe it has been a little over 11 months since my son passed from this life to the next. The 11 month "anniversary" was calm and mild. It could have been a flood of grief just in acknowledging the date. It surprises me how it went. Don't get me wrong, I still miss Connor Green H-O-R-R-I-B-L-Y. I even texted him, sharing that I miss him, and my heart yearns for him. (I prayed that nobody has his phone number. I don't want to creep anyone out. I can happily say nobody has it or at least didn't respond to my message). In at all, does anyone else text, write or do the same things with your loved one that is no longer with us as if they are still alive? I question my sanity, yet I know that for me it is part of healing. Connor is no

longer on this earth, yet his spirit is strong. I feel a connection and that I can still communicate with him. Maybe that is what brought me peace in that moment. I do know that grief is not linear, and I am grateful for this time of serenity and peace. It can change on a dime, yet I know the next round of sadness will be less deep than the time before and the highs of life bigger than ever.

I love what I do for a living because I met friends, peers and colleagues for special time together over a cup of coffee, tea or a hike. I really want to give them a shout out because they had the courage to ask me "How are you doing?" Each time it brought tears to my eyes and a lump in my throat. Sometimes I think that happens because somebody cares enough about me to ask, just ask about me. I am so grateful that they care and are willing to inquire. There act was an act of bravery not knowing what my reaction would be, yet they asked. I am so thankful for their courage and bravery in talking to me because they were walking into the unknown, not sure what my response would be. That my dear friends takes GUTS!

As the year mark approaches, I've decided to call that day in time, December 14, 2018 as my son's Heavenly Anniversary. Even thinking about it that way brings me joy to know he is much happier, no longer in pain and more importantly, looking out for us from a bird's eye view.

I just felt it appropriate to use the 11 month AA Medallion. Connor at my side as I write this
The healing continues

Life Continues

You may not see your loved ones, but they are able to see you.

You may not hear their precious voices, but they are speaking to you in your thoughts all the time.

You may long to know if they are okay, but there's no need to worry, because they are in a state of total bliss.

You may believe you didn't have enough time to spend with them, but they can now be with you whenever they so desire.

You may not realize when they are around you, but they are sending you "without a doubt" signs all the time.

You may be worried that they are still in pain, but they are in a place of total peace, where suffering doesn't exist.

You may not comprehend why everything happened the way it did, but they are able to see the broader perspective and understand it all perfectly.

You may think that they left this earth way too soon, but they know it was their time to make the transition.

You may feel guilty about certain things you did or didn't do to them, but they are able to see through your eyes and understand your actions completely, with no judgment.

You may be preoccupied with how they died, but they want you to remember how they lived.

You may be hesitant about moving on with your life, but they want you to step forward and be happy again.

You may believe that you will never see them again, but you will join them again, many years from now when you leave your physical body.

You may feel that a part of you died after they made their transition, but in reality life continues for the both of you. -

from "Your Life After Their Death" A Medium's Guide to Healing After a Loss," by Karen Noé
www.karennoe.com

XX.XX.XX



THE LITTLE WHITE ENVELOPE: "It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past ten years.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas. Oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it – overspending and the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma – the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't

think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was on the wrestling team at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids – all kids. He so enjoyed coaching little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes, and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed a small, white envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done, and that this was his gift from me.

Mike's smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year. And that same bright smile lit up succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition – one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.



The white envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children – ignoring their new toys – would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the small, white envelope never lost its allure.

The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree. And the next morning, I found it was magically joined by three more. Unbeknownst to the others, each of our three children had for the first time placed a white envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing to take down that special envelope.

Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit will always be with us."

The beautiful irony is that our loss is another's reunion. ❤️



For the Man Who Hated Christmas

(A true Christmas Story by Nancy W. Gavin, December 2015)



Nancy W. Gavin,

11.21.2019

Dared to adventure to the mall. Dared to walk into Zumiez, where I bought a lot of things for Connor. Came across this Spitfire beanie. Lots of memories and tears.

Made me think about all his friends and time he spent skateboarding. Connor was very skilled in his ability to ride his board. I loved watching him. He scared the crap out of me once though. He told me he cleared a "12 stair". For those of you who don't know what that means, he gained a lot of speed at the top of a set of stairs equivalent to a full flight of stairs, jumped with his board to the bottom and landed on his board, clearing all 12

stairs! Makes me smile now.

Focusing on the good memories.

Made it through one more "first hurdle"

The healing continues.

12.05.2019

12.06.2019

This is the face of grief.

This is an "ugly moment" I am not just talking about the physical. However, I feel that in the last year I aged exponentially. Grief has taken its toll and added lines to my face, dark circles under my eyes and gray in my hair (even though artificially covered up). Grief has taken its toll on me. It is not just about the beauty but the hole in my heart, the emptiness and the longing that will never be fulfilled.

Tonight, I was doing everything I could to focus on driving to get home. I felt like a zombie just staring into the distance with a blank glazed look. I felt the same way inside as I looked on the outside.

I remember having that same look and feeling after my first child passed away 28 years ago. It was numbing, surreal and inexpressible back then and today the identical feelings surfaced.

I am sure that this is surfacing as I approach the one-year mark for Connor's passing. In addition, I

had a highly effective Reiki energy healing session a few days ago. While it may be healing, many emotions from the past and present were bound to surface. I needed to let them out and face them AGAIN: healing is not a one and done experience. Each time I face the wounds from the past, I heal. Life is not linear; my recent loss has compounded life experiences which has helped me to realize that now is the perfect time to dig deep and really heal.

I cannot carry anger. I cannot bear the weight of others.

I DO have hope. I DO have family. I AM loved. I AM allowed to grieve. I GOT this.

The healing continues

12.22.2019

A friend shared with me that to serve others takes away from my pain. I've been sharing my loss journey here on Facebook for those who will listen. I never know who I am touching. My journey is real and raw. From the beginning I've been very vulnerable. I started documenting my journey shortly after Connor passed away. Many people have messaged that my posts have helped them, or they forwarded them on to someone who would benefit from my openness.

I received this message on Thanksgiving and it rocked my world. It validated I am helping others. Connor's death will never ever make sense. It still hurts. However, I now have purpose to help others in times of their grief and loss.

I am grateful for the woman who shared this with me. The hairs on my neck stood up. I cried for her. I cried for me. I was overwhelmed that she took time on her holiday to share her experience.

.....

"Greetings & Happy Thanksgiving! I'm writing because I am pretty sure your son wanted me to. This morning as I was texting a message to my cousin, I started typing the word coming(I think) & Connor came up in the predictive words. I don't have anyone in my life named Connor & until now I don't think I've ever typed it! So his name showing up is out of the ordinary. So I'm taking this opportunity to thank you for sharing your grief the way you do. I've been hospitalized multiple times after suicide attempts & seeing your raw pain helps remind me how I'd be hurting my loved ones if I ever succumbed. I am in awe of your strength & grace & truly hope sharing your grief is healing to heal you.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!!!!....." Lynn Duray

The healing continues

12.26.2019

We made it. We made it through our second Christmas without Connor. However, it feels like the first. I was in a trance last year. I was numb. I couldn't believe how quickly time flew by. The one-week mark came with his memorial service. Christmas Eve was just 10 days after Connor passed away and just 3 days after his life celebration. I don't know how I made it through. I honestly don't remember much about last year. This year I am struggling to remember what I did. It is so weird, because I felt "normal" in the moment and now I can't recall a darn thing. This thing called grief is deceiving on time and what is normal. Life without Connor is the new norm. I am striving to do everything I can to move forward, remember my son and be in the present for my two daughters, Brittany Green and Hannah Green.

I do know that many things have helped me make it through this tough season. By far, the biggest

has been God. He is the almighty healer. Psalm 147:3 "He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."

My family is another reason I am making it through this season. I am blessed to have my daughters, Brittany Green and Hannah Green along with my niece, Michelle Mickey Smyth. They are the reason to move forward, to live and be present for. I make that choice every day to be there for them! I love them all so very deeply.

During some of my toughest moments, my Facebook friends and community have been very supportive as well. Thank you to all who have lifted me and my family up in prayers and encouraged me. You have made a difference in my life. Words cannot express my appreciation for all you have done. Thank you!

If one post or several posts have helped you in some way, or you shared my post with someone in need, would you please message me how you have been helped? As I go through this loss journey, I feel led to help others even more. Just like the woman who messaged me on Thanksgiving. My posts hit home with her, and she understands the pain a suicide survivor experiences. She is much more mindful of her actions and I pray for her sake, she will continue to get the help she wants. In all this, there is purpose. Who else can I help?

Please message me how you have been helped.

Thank you and God bless you.

The healing continues.

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01.05.2020

Grief is like a snowflake. It is unique and very individualized.

It can be

01.11.2020

I hope that I responded to everyone that wished me Happy Birthday. It took a while, but I made it! Thank you for your support, love and joy.

I asked what your 'ONE WORD' for 2020 is. The responses were overwhelming, and I am loving getting a peak into what drives my friends every day.

This is a collection of the ONE WORD's I received. Only a few duplicates - which are noted by an asterisk *

Faith* (my word and the symbol below)

Authenticity

Patience

Recover

Back in Shape

Love.

Humility

Smile

Persevere

Rejuvenation

Gumption

Journey

Finish book

Blog

Positivity (new word)

Italy

It's Time for Me

Mine is Faith. Faith in God. Faith in me.

After 2019 which was the year of grief and recovery, it is time to focus on a new decade, 2020.

2020 is "The Year of My House". It is the "umbrella" for 2020.

Literally I will finish cleaning, organizing and repairing my home.

My house is my body. Focus on getting my shoulder back to 100%.

Be financially fit so I have money to do more of what I want. Focus on prosperity and abundance

Write a book on 2019 the year of grief and recovery.

Find someone to share my life with! :)

Be ready to be a first time grandmother and spoil that baby
BOY!

Plant a tree at Redstone Park in Connor's memory - where
Connor Green loved to skate and spent so much of his youth.
This will happen in the spring-early summer and will keep
everyone posted.

Continue to take care of my mental health and help others.

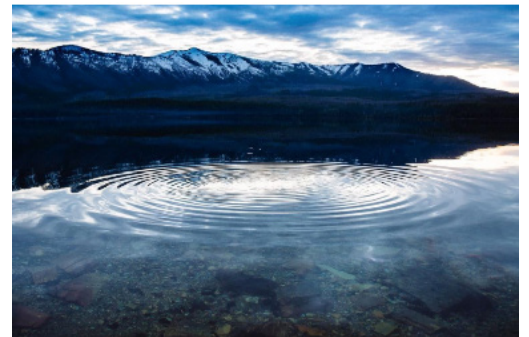
Be a better friend.

Welcome others to my home.

Others will surface but I have clarity now. Something I had been wishing for, praying for. I have
direction. A path to follow. A ship to lead.

It is my hope that for 2020, you too will have focus and dreams to aspire for. Take action to reach
those dreams and now they become goals.

If I did not get your ONE WORD, please share here!



01.18.2020

I had a wonderful conversation with an acquaintance yesterday. We've known each other for at least 12 years and never really connected. However, he made it a point to meet me in person and tell me thank you. I was quite surprised and not quite sure what I had done. He continued to share that he appreciates my posts about my loss journey, being raw, real and my healing. He shared with me he

reads my post. I don't think he has ever commented and can't remember him clicking a like, smile face or heart. That is not what is important. What is important is he is reading my story. Some posts resonate more than others, some not as much.

We talked about the "Ripple Effect" of my musings on Facebook and how many people have been impacted, including him.

"The ripple effect is a situation in which, like ripples expanding across the water when an object is dropped into it, an effect from an initial state can be followed outwards incrementally".

Just like the pebble dropped into the water, my posts are the object dropped into people's journeys. Our lakes all look so different. Some are already tumultuous where the pebble's ripple is barely noticed – for those that may already be amid difficulty adding just one more thing, finally breaking them. Others may have a lake that is unaltered, just as smooth as glass and suddenly the glass is shattered with a boulder. In both situations, their life is changed from this point forward. We tend to ask ourselves if we were the cause, the cause of a loved one dying by suicide, a loved one no longer loving us, thus leaving us wondering what we could have done differently.

There are many things that I have learned in surviving many pebbles and boulders in my life. One that I have leaned on many, many, many times is about choices. Choices we make everyday have a ripple effect on what happens tomorrow and the day after into eternity.

Connor made a choice to end his life. I firmly believe that he is taking full responsibility for his actions. How can I say that? Connor spent several years in 12-step program for drugs and alcohol. Within the framework of those programs, participants are taught to take responsibility for their actions. I know Connor embraced those programs, followed them and even was a leader. When we talked about what was going on in his life, good or bad, he often reminded me that his success or failure was the result of the choices he made. He owned those choices and the results. Does him owning the decision to take his own life make this any easier? Yes, it does. Would I prefer that he made a different choice on that day in December 2018? Yes, I do.

Does my heart still ache, and tears fall from my cheeks? Yes, it hurts, and I wipe away the salty tears.

However, I also can make choices. I am very mindful about the choices I make every moment, every minute, every day. Healing from trauma, grief and loss is a conscious decision. It doesn't "just happen". I chose to be alive for my girls and our future. I chose to believe, believe in a God that heals and loves me. I chose to exercise and keep my body healthy. After all, it is the only one I have. I chose to have joy. I chose to help and serve others. Is it always easy to make these choices? Nope. It isn't. Somedays I do a better job of it than others though.

These choices have a ripple effect in a positive way. In my own small way, I am changing the effect of Connors boulder in my pond. Connor lives on through me as I chose to share my journey and help others. He isn't done on this thing we call earth.

The healing continues

PS – That "acquaintance" now has a special place in my heart, and I consider him to be a friend. Thank you.

01.22.2020

Shortly after Connor's death, knew I had to take care of myself because I am the cornerstone of my family. I needed to reassure them that I am going to be around. I was determined that as a family we were going to not only make it through this season, but also thrive. I knew however that when that



foundation breaks and crumbles, not only does it impact myself but those around me. I now had a purpose bigger than myself; it was to support and love those left in the wake of this tragedy.

I've been asked how I am doing so "well" and how do I have the strength to do what I do. The best analogy I have come up with is about a life preserver.

A life preserver is tossed to a person to keep afloat in water. They are also referred to as life jackets or lifebelts which are shaped in a circle, like a shirt without sleeves or belt at the waist. They are made of buoyant or inflatable material that keeps one from sinking or going under water. When utilized correctly, disaster is averted, and the person comes back to safety.

Many friends tossed a life preserver to me. I was in the depths of grief and it would have been very easy to find myself drowning in my own sorrows. I accepted those gestures openly and willingly. What were those gestures? They weren't made of some material of plastic, they were made of hearts, tears and friendships. Friends and family pitched in to make calls, bring us dinners, plan, serve and pay for the reception, clean my house, take care of my dogs, do energy work on the family, raise funds to cover expenses and the list goes on. That was all in the first week. Through out the year, it has been a friend to listen to me cry. Time and space had its limits sometimes so one life preserver was being on the phone and just listening to me cry. We had this understanding that was all I needed. Once I had a good cry, I was able to talk.

Others life jackets included books, being introduced to others on their loss journey, talking about Connor, suggesting recovery groups, hiking with me and calling me. Now I must say, I didn't accept all of these. I wasn't ready. The timing wasn't right. I felt I had other resources. Some of them I did eventually grab on to. Others I let float on by.

I saw a post from a young woman the other day who expressed extreme sadness, grief and frustration that she had a 3rd miscarriage in 5 months. Oh, the passing of a child in this way is so unique by its own right. The sadness of never seeing that child grow, seeing their smile is heart breaking. I can bear witness to her loss but not the how. I reached out to her to offer my condolences. I also sent her some information for parents of miscarriages, still births and infant death, all with the intention to give her resources to help her process. She was a little skeptical as to why I even cared. I was giving her the life preserver that she didn't know existed.

How does one go about knowing they need a life preserver, or they even exist in grief? The life preserver goes two ways, it can either be sought after or tossed at you. One can make a choice whether or not to cling to help offered or toss it aside. I am grateful I accepted most of them which in turn have been a huge help on my journey of healing.

The loss journey can be very lonely. It is easy to slip into depression, isolation and withdraw from life. I've seen it happen that loved ones are shoved away and the griever is now a shell of who they once were. The griever sees and observes the rest of the world and doesn't realize their very own circumstances. Think of it this way. They are on a stage, a place where every day they to face it, deal with the world and just survive. Unless someone hands them a mirror to help them look at themselves, it is very likely they will continue down that path. I am in several grief groups and it is a 50-50 chance on what I see. Is it going to be about someone who's grief has stopped them in their tracks or someone who has been able to focus on the future with hope? It is those that their loss has stolen their joy and happiness. It is those that need a life preserver. They need someone to put on that life jacket for them and help them in their journey.

Who will put their life jacket on for them? It is that friend, family member or loved one that holds up a mirror to them and helps them realize they could benefit from some help? Who do they trust? It is those who have told them truth from the beginning of time, not just in loss. It is their inner circle, others who have a different perspective who will offer help and point them in the right direction.

Throwing a life preserver can be tricky to those who don't see they are drowning in grief. As the friend, do you notice them slowly sinking away? Ask these questions/say this to them

Do you want to talk about it? I am ready when you are.

What can I help you with today?

How are you managing?

Tell them "I love you. You are smart. You are beautiful" (My favorite).

I am sorry you are going through this.

Conversations open doors and when they do, be ready to help push them open even further from the heart with kindness, love and compassion.

01.29.2020

What I wish more people understood about losing a child.

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-17928/what-i-wish-more-people-understood-about-losing-a-child.html>

02.11.2020

I had a dream last night. My dream was very real, incredibly vivid and extremely emotional. Last night I was reunited with Connor. It was all a trick, a bad dream, that he is dead.

The reunion was a surprise. It was all planned. Brittany knew about it. She helped plan it out.

We were out walking along the 16th Street Mall. It was crowded, a lot of people walking around. The sun was shining, folks were dressed in summer clothes. People were happy and enjoying the day. As we approached a corner, Brittany ran a few steps ahead of my and turned around to look at me. At the same moment, Connor rode up to me on a red BMX bike, almost running me over. I stopped, realized it was him and hugged him, not giving him a chance to get off the bike. We hugged over the handlebars for what seemed like days. I saw his face, felt his body, smelled his hair. All his movements came flashing back, they were so familiar. The way he moved his head, his hands and arms. He looked healthy, like he was taking care of himself.

I suddenly pushed away in anger. Yelling at him – asking "how could this be?" He has been gone for over a year now. I saw his body in the casket! How? How? How? I repeated. Connor told he was sorry. He had to go underground to protect himself. "I love you Mom".

I just stood there in disbelief. It couldn't be. Then I woke up. I was right, it couldn't be. He is dead.

I cry as write this. The wound has been reopened. It has been a while since I cried like this. Need to appreciate the process. It's okay.

I believe my dream is an answer. I've been asking for a sign from Connor to let me know he is with me in spirit. This is an undeniable sign. I know he is watching over me. I know he loves me. Today Connor is with me. I continue to ask for more signs. More importantly, it is time to open my eyes and heart to those signs. I know they are here – just not sure what I am looking for. Be more specific in my asks to Connor. It is like when I pray. I ask God to make the answers obvious – like being hit over the head with a 2 X 4. Recently my cousin described this as a "whoosh-bang". A whoosh and a bang in the obvious!

My dream was a whoosh-bang from Connor.

The healing continues.

tough time. I wound up on the Upper Bear Creek Road in Evergreen and found a place to pull over. Here I sat and was gifted with a "conversation" with Connor. He loves to talk to me through his techno music with beautiful light shows. One part was the white light. The hole was definitely white, the edges like torn construction paper. He was telling me about the white light and that there will be a time for me to walk through it. I felt drawn to it. I wanted to see it closer. But no, he wouldn't let me. Told me it is not my time just yet.

As I was listening to his music, I decided to look through my phone which has his pictures on it too. He loved to take selfies; goofy selfies and ones with he and Mac, his dog. There is also a series of him alone. I treasure these pictures. I see the life in him and can remember him.

(As a side note, if you don't like your picture being taken, I recommend you reconsider. Looking through Connor's pictures has been extremely helpful in my journey. We want to see you as you are; messed up hair, goofy smile and spinach stuck in between your teeth. That is who you are!)

It is no coincidence that I was wearing his necklace. He wanted me to remember him and take him to the mountains. He loved the mountains and so do I. We shared our morning together.

It has been a BIG tear day. These days are often referred as STUG Grief. Sudden Temporary Upsurge of Grief. They don't come as often, don't last as long and I find healing in them.