

# Haven Herald



## A Father's Grief

By Eileen Knight Hagemeister

It must be very difficult  
To be a man in grief.  
Since "men don't cry" and "men are strong"  
No tears can bring relief.

It must be very difficult  
To stand up to the test.  
And field calls and visitors  
So that she can get some rest.

They always ask if she's alright  
And what she's going through.  
But seldom take his hand and ask,  
"My friend, how are you?"

He hears her cry in the night  
And thinks his heart will break.  
And dries her tears and comforts her  
But "stays strong" for her sake.

It must be very difficult  
To start each day anew.  
And try to be so very brave-  
He lost his baby too.

## Letter From the Executive Director

One thing I have especially enjoyed about living in Northern Virginia is the distinct change of seasons. It's something we can count on, and the spring is especially beautiful. Those who are grieving may find comfort in the colors of spring, but the beauty of spring may intensify a loss. The joy that the season brings may counter the feelings of grief that you are experiencing.

Spring brings change to Haven as well. We do a little bit of cleaning, plant a few flowers and prepare for our spring six-week groups and other programs. We welcome new volunteers and take some time to get together to thank all our volunteers for their hard work at our annual volunteer luncheon in April.

In this newsletter, we will address the differences in grieving styles. Several of us recently attended a workshop, given by Tom Golden, during which he talked in depth about this topic. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and healing comes in many forms. In the confusion and difficulty of grief, finding a way that works for you is what truly matters.

Jill Bellaccico

## What Worked for Me

by Don Shaw



Shortly after my wife and life's partner of forty-four years died, I saw a movie, "The Way," about a father whose only son died in a freak accident while on a pilgrimage. In an attempt to deal with his grief, the father decided to complete the pilgrimage his son had begun just before he died. I decided then and there in the theater that I would take this long walk to help me deal with my overwhelming grief.

I would take myself totally out of my life, to be alone, to walk, to think and to pray, and ultimately to try to figure out what I was going to do now that the love of my life was gone. I was desperately seeking to find some peace in my soul.

This pilgrimage, called the Camino, is a 500-mile walk across Spain that takes about seven weeks to complete. So, carrying everything I would need for the journey in a 22-pound backpack, I walked alone across Spain and had the most incredible life experience.

Life on the Camino is simple: walk all day through beautiful countryside, eat, sleep and then get up and do it all over again. I did this for 39 days. I grew to love this uncomplicated life, and I learned that solitude is a wonderful experience for deep thinking. But, every day I met new friends and made friendships that lasted the whole journey and continue today. These new friends are from cultures all over the world. I had the opportunity to talk openly about my grief with other

pilgrims and to hear their stories about what brought them to the Camino. Some were as painful as mine. I learned that kindness is universal on the Camino. Other pilgrims and the Spanish people were always there to help with whatever I needed, physically or emotionally. I never felt alone in this faraway country, even in remote areas. I became part of this beautiful country through the slow, deliberate and reflective process of walking through spectacular mountains, villages, plains, and ancient cities, and in the magnificent cathedrals that I visited.

Stretching my physical and emotional strength for this extended period of time gave me the opportunity to ponder deep questions about life. I was so moved by my experience that I undertook a second pilgrimage a year later on a different 500-mile route through Spain. And this year, I plan to walk a third pilgrimage through southern France. While pushing myself into undertaking these new and challenging experiences, I found a new joy in life. I have become passionate about the Camino. It continues to open me up to new friends, activities and future journeys.

It was about halfway through my second pilgrimage that I began to feel the peace that I had been searching for on my first journey. It is said that a pilgrimage is a parable for life, and you continue your pilgrimage until you meet yourself coming the other way. My pilgrimage and my life continue.

## *Thank you!*

**Haven wishes to thank the many people who donated to us in 2013.**

**Your generosity has enabled us to continue helping our clients through the grief process and toward healing and recovery.**

## Grieving Styles

by Jill Bellacicco



Grief challenges us in ways we never imagined. Whether it is your first experience with loss or one of many, each loss is unique and each individual must find a way to grieve and heal. It is important to come to terms with your loss and find a way to do this that seems right for you. How you grieve is important and should be valued and appreciated regardless of your individual approach to coping with your loss.

Gender can certainly be a consideration in grieving style, but it is not always a determining factor. In general, women tend to be more emotive (intuitive) grievers and men tend to grieve through their actions (instrumental). There are physical differences as well as social expectations that can affect behavior. As with any generalization, there are always exceptions and most people are not exclusively one type of griever or another. Many people can “blend” both styles to help them through their grief.

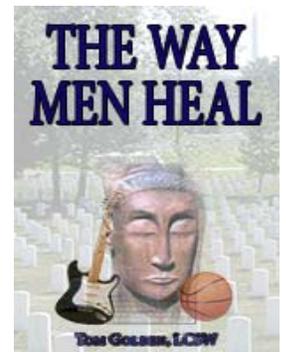
The intuitive griever will more readily seek out support from others and will need to talk about feelings while reflecting on the past. The instrumental griever will think through the situation and take action, which could be either creative or practical, and will focus more on the future. In other words, the instrumental griever will talk about the action not the feeling. Both styles of grieving are valid and normal.

Grief is the hardest thing we have to go through in life. Embracing and accepting your own grieving style and being accepting of how others grieve is important as you work your way through the process. Families and friends grieve differently for the same individual. The important thing is coping with your loss in a way that helps and ultimately leads to healing and hope.

## “The Way Men Heal”

Tom Golden’s book, *The Way Men Heal*, is as an update of his earlier books, including *Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing*. *The Way Men Heal* reflects his professional work as a psychotherapist, lecturer and author who has focused for a number of years on gender differences affecting grief and the implications for the healing process.

Golden points to research that suggests about 80% of men and 20% of women have a male-style pattern of dealing with the death of a loved one. Much of this pattern, he writes, has a biological basis. He briefly summarizes anthropological comparisons from other cultures, cites biological research and illustrates his overall point that men manage grief through action, using celebrity examples of Eric Clapton and Michael Jordan. Action-oriented grief is the essence of Golden’s model of successful grieving for a man.



Arguments can be made about the adequacy of the scientific evidence for the author’s conclusions about biological and cultural factors in gender variation and the percentages of males and females who behave true to type. However, it’s hard not to be persuaded that a primary goal of grief support – providing a “safe” setting for personal expression – may need to be very different for men than for women.

Golden’s belief is that many (maybe most) men do not feel safe in the typical support group setting where open expression of emotions is encouraged and even rewarded. He concludes by suggesting ways men can honor the person who has died – ways that involve actions more in keeping with the comfort level of male-style grief.

Reviewed by Jack Sanders



### HOW HAVEN IS FUNDED

Haven is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It is funded mainly by donations from individuals in the community who wish to support our work and by those who donate in memory of a loved one. Donations are tax deductible. If you are interested in making a donation, please contact Haven at (703) 941-7000 or at [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net)



Haven of Northern Virginia, Inc.

4606 Ravensworth Road

Annandale, Virginia 22003

NONPROFIT ORG  
U S POSTAGE  
PAID  
MERRIFIELD VA  
PERMIT 2697

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list send an email to [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net)  
Please include the name and address to be removed.

Printed by MAX PRINT GRAPHIC SYSTEMS (703) 968-6764

## **Spring Schedule**

Six-week General Bereavement Support Group  
Tuesday, April 22 – May 27, 2014  
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Six-week Suicide Loss Support Group  
Wednesday, April 16 – May 21, 2014  
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Six-week Widow/Widower Support Group  
Saturday, April 12 – May 17, 2014  
2:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Call or email Haven to register for the groups.

Drop-in Suicide Loss Support Group  
1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month  
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

*Haven also offers individual support by phone and in person; please call to schedule an appointment. For immediate support without an appointment, a volunteer is available on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday between 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.*

### **Contact Information**

Haven of Northern Virginia  
4606 Ravensworth Road  
Annandale, Virginia 22003  
Phone: (703) 941-7000  
Fax: (703) 941-7003  
E-mail: [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net)

### **Hours of Operation**

Monday through Friday  
9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
[www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org)

Messages may be left on our  
voicemail after hours