



# Haven Herald



## Thoughts on Losing Your Mom

by Donna Huber

You've known your mother all your life! This is a fact no matter what age you are the moment your mom dies. You may have been a young child, a teenager, a young adult, middle-aged or an elder. No matter the time line or stage of life that mother-child bond is like no other. It's physical, emotional, mental and yes, spiritual. The relationship between mother and child is complex, complicated, loving and/or it can be strained, difficult or even estranged. You may be an only child, or have siblings. No matter the situation, losing your mom impacts you in ways you cannot image until the day she dies. She may have died suddenly, traumatically, or suffered a disease and declining health. Nevertheless, when she's gone, her physical being is no longer there and the child in us is left with an emptiness and a void in our life. How we navigate the loss is vital to our well-being and desire to keep her memory alive.

Every relationship is unique to the individuals involved, and the mother/child relationship is no different. You may have had a relationship like no other or one lacking what you hoped for or dreamed of. If she died when you were young, there are many life events you will not have with her, and the longing for what could have been intensifies. The void of her absence is palpable. A mother dies and what could have been is lost forever.

As a child, we depend on our mother to be nurturing, caring and loving us unconditionally. She dies and we are left to survive without her. We may be too young to process her death fully until later on in our life. We will not know our mother for the person she was.

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## Letter from the Executive Director

Spring surrounds us with beauty and warmer, brighter days. It is a time of new beginnings. At Haven we are busy with spring cleaning and taking care of our grounds as well as preparing for our spring and summer programs. Spring is also the time of year we honor our mothers with a special day in May.

Mother's Day can be a day of remembrance for those of us who have lost our mother. It can be a time to reflect on both the person we lost and how we feel about the impact this loss has had on our lives. The difficulty of this loss can be complicated by when it occurred and by the type of relationship we had with our mother.

This edition of the newsletter will focus on the loss of a mother. Our mother is the person who knew us first and the impact of this loss can be deeply felt. Though my mother died almost eleven years ago, I still think of her all the time and I am constantly reminded of how much she taught me and influenced my life. We may accept the loss but we never really lose sight of the person who knew us from our beginning. It is a story that runs forever in our hearts.

Jill Bellacicco





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As a teen, we are navigating our way to independence. She dies and we are left motherless without a maternal compass to navigate the path to adulthood. The other adults in our life may not be able to help in our grief, or we may shut them out. Again, we are too young to process her death fully until later on in our life.

As a young adult, you and your mother may be developing a relationship beyond the mother/child ties, and are learning to be friends. You may live nearby or hundreds of miles away, but you keep in touch. She dies, and you lose a confidante and role model.

At middle age, you have established a relationship beyond the younger years, and you relate in different ways as adults. You are raising her grandchildren, building and sharing traditions. She dies and you are left to cherish her memory and carrying on family traditions with your children and siblings, if you have them.

Love endures. Regardless of our age when we lose our mother, we can find solace in the memories we have or from stories shared by family or friends. We can keep her memory alive by telling stories, learning from her wisdom, taking on her strengths and talents. Maybe we share some of her personality traits and her caring, nurturing spirit lives on.

## What Worked For Me

by Joni Greene



*Losing your mother at an early age you don't have a timeline to follow and every milestone is a new adventure.*

When my mother, Pearl, was thirteen years old her mother, my grandmother, died in child birth. My mother never talked about her mother. When I asked, she would only say she hated wearing black for a year. Matter of fact, she never talked about herself as a young child either.

When I turned thirteen, I couldn't help thinking about what would happen if my mother died. Her health wasn't good so I worried. Since I was an only child, I had no one to talk to about my fears and my 'what ifs.' Little did I know that ten years later my mother would die at age fifty-four. She was diagnosed with stomach cancer and my dad decided that she was not to know and that we were not going to tell anyone except immediate family. Once again I was trapped in my own thoughts with no one to talk to. We went on with our lives as if nothing was wrong and for a while she was good. In June my dad and I went on a planned trip to Italy. And while there we got the word that her health was failing. For a month I watched my mother die and still I could not tell her anything, even if she asked. I became very good at averting people's questions about how my mother was doing.

How was I going to deal with my mother's death? My boss told me to get busy with my in-box, another person told me that I was strong and I would get over it. My dad poured himself into work, so he was no help. I wanted to talk about my mom but no one wanted to listen so I started writing letters to her, telling about my day, about my feelings, etc.

But what bothered me was; who was this woman named Pearl? My first task was finding old pictures and putting them in an album. And yes I did find a school picture of my mother dressed in black. Then I asked her sister and her old friends what they remembered about her when she was growing up. What surprised me about her was that she was devilish, spoiled and enjoyed having fun. Is that what she was hiding? I never saw that side of her. Now I know where I get a couple of those traits.



**“Who ran to help me when I fell,  
And would some pretty story tell,  
Or kiss the place to make it well? My mother.”  
Ann Taylor, English poet**

## My Mom

by Cheryl Keamy

Five o'clock in the early evening has never been the same for me since my mother passed away eleven years ago. Five o'clock was special. It was the time each day that I spoke with my mom who lived 500 miles away. She was the one person who listened to all my stories, complaints and joys. She was the person who encouraged me and made me look at things in the big picture. Her voice made me happy and her advice made me sane. Five o'clock phone calls and talking to my mom was just part of my routine. Suddenly, that comforting routine activity was abruptly and permanently changed when my mom passed away.

Eleven years later, I have learned to fill my time with some different activities. A walk with my dog, a yoga class, a new recipe but still every day at 5 o'clock I think of my mom and what she would say to me. Mom is always here with me. You only get one mom and that relationship never ends. That amazing relationship that can only come from what we share with our mom.

So now, many people tell me I have turned into my mom and all I can say to them is “she taught me well.” And in that I find tremendous comfort and gratitude for 5 o'clock.



## My Mother

by Cindy Rowe

There is no one right way to grieve, and the circumstances around the death have a great impact as well. I lost my mother abruptly from V-fib just two days after she passed a stress test. It was hard to lose her so suddenly. It's still hard four years later knowing that I can't pick up the phone and talk to her. Things happen that I just wish I could share with her. I wish she could see all her great grandchildren. That would make her so happy.

What has helped me is the strong Christian faith that my entire family shares. We know our dear mother is with the angels in heaven and that she is at peace.



## Mother Loss

by Gonzalo Romero

I am the oldest of six children and the only male. Being the only male gave me a unique and special relationship with my parents, particularly with my dear mother. As an adult, I lived far away from my family due to school and work. I missed my mother and father very much during our time apart. I always felt they were close to me in thoughts and feelings, but I could not hug them. I looked forward to seeing them during my vacations. When my mother died, I knew I would no longer see her physical being when I came home, but I drew comfort that I still lived with the knowledge she was always there in my heart.



### 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)



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## **Spring Schedule**

Six-week General Bereavement Support Group

Saturday, March 16 – April 20, 2019

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Six-week Suicide Loss Support Group

Tuesday, April 9 – May 14, 2019

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Six-week Widow/Widower/Partner Support Group

Saturday, March 30 – May 4, 2019

3:00 – 4:30 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; 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**

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### **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