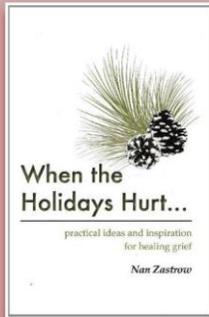


When the Holidays Hurt

By Nan Zastrow

Book Review by Jean Johnson



Let's face it; grief has a way of stifling the joy of the Holiday season. We are reminded of the empty chair, and all of the activities, and holiday pictures, where our beloved child is not in. It's painful for sure.

Nan and Gary Zastrow are certified grief educators through the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Colorado. They provide fellow grievers with fresh ways of navigating this unfamiliar world of loss during the holidays.

We, who grieve, all need extra assistance in this place that we were thrust into. My daughter died in October, and I remember feeling so lost and broken, I avoided participating in the normal holiday activities I once did, before her loss. I struggled to get out the holiday decorations or plan any get-togethers, so I made a decision to lay it aside until I was ready, even if that meant several years of not hosting Thanksgiving or Christmas. I asked people in our families to step up to the plate and plan. I simply didn't have the energy. When we are in the midst of brain fog from grief, any new idea seems to fly away. I could have used the empowering suggestions to implement, once I was ready to plan again.

In this book, you will learn how to create new heartwarming and honoring rituals into your holidays that include the remembrance of your precious son or daughter who died.

The author adds several stories of families that will bring hope and encouragement of how to plan your first holiday after your loss, if you're ready to. She gives you suggestions to design your holiday without regrets by combining some old traditions with new ones. You will learn how to balance you family's needs, holiday plans, and anxiety that can follow.

Here are a few thoughts:

Taming the "blues": Cancel your expectations; traditions change. Create new traditions.

Taming the "blues": Communicate, but stand your ground with family and friends.

I would encourage you to look at this excellent book for considerations on how to build a new tradition in memory of your child, during one of the hardest times of the year.

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Jean Johnson – Jean's grief journey began in October 2006 when her daughter was murdered. Jean knows the value of self-help through reading and wants to encourage others to read as well. When she finds a book that she believes will help others, she writes a review to encourage them to seek it out and invest their time in reading as a means of healing after loss.