

Loss and Found

Surviving the loss of a young partner

by Kathy and Gary Young

Guidance by two support leaders who experienced this loss at a young age. The true picture from both the male and female point of view.



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Los Angeles, CA June 15, 2006

Grief is the most common debilitating condition

Seminar and book supports grieving people

Embarrassing? Painful? Perhaps? Unusual? No. Grief affects everyone. Everyone has suffered the loss of a relative, a partner, even a pet. Survival from grief is important and often more difficult than expected. There is help. Many people do not know how to acknowledge their grief, and if they do, it is often difficult to find a “fit” to support the recovery.

As sophisticated as our society is, myths still exist about grief and loss, which is very different than portrayed in many TV shows.

Nationally prominent author and Grief and Loss Support leader, Gary Young has notes in his book, “*Loss and Found*,” that “Grief is different than depression, but it presents itself similarly. The recovery from grief is a distinct process and it can take much longer than our society finds comfortable. True recovery from deep grief includes an acceptance of a certain level of sadness.”

Through his weekend seminars, Young has seen a change in the acknowledgment of the pain and our ability to provide support and give tools. Speaking to men and women in plain language, he has seen true recovery from grief, utilizing real-world solutions. Psychological help may also be useful for many.

“The tragic events of recent years, such as 911, hurricane Katrina, and the war in Iraq, have brought this need out into the open. The sadness has actually opened the lines of communication and help,” says Young. “Some of the most common manifestations of grief are the feeling that you are alone, and the only one suffering in this way, as well as a general loss of confidence.

His seminars put these modes into operation. The workshops are accredited for psychologists and LCSW. His **expert status is not cloaked in psychological jargon; he speaks from experience, study, and from the heart.** The approach is very individualized and warm. No issues are strange or unusual. “It is important to create an inviting environment, conducive to confidentiality and growth.”

His book, “Loss and Found: Surviving the Loss of a Young Partner,” co-authored with his wife, Kathy, written plainly and clearly, is recommended reading at colleges through the doctoral level. Psychologists have endorsed the book, as has the NYPD, LAPD, Parents without Partners, 911 Survivors, and many others.
...more

“Gary and Kathy’s wit, wisdom, and insight guide us through a warm, lighthearted journey into love, loss, then to new love, even finding humor.” Barry Kibrick, *Between the Lines*, PBS.

Filling a void of information specific to people under fifty, *Loss and Found* gives young widows and widowers the information and support they need to cope with their own grief. The book also gives family, friends, counselors and others who have contact with a young widow or widower valuable insight into the challenges their loved one or client is experiencing. The surprise for the Youngs, is that many people with different losses and ages have embraced the book and its issues.

About the authors:

Gary Young is a writer, producer, publisher, and actor. He is the president of the Publishers Association of Los Angeles, and very active on the Boards for the Independent Writers of Southern California, the Alliance of Los Angeles Playwrights, and the Executive Director of the Lifetime Achievement Foundation. He is the father of two daughters.

Kathy Young is an author and teacher. She works with the SAT and ACT programs and the Nation’s Report Card. She is the mother of three sons.

For a free newsletter, additional information, or to arrange a seminar, lecture, or interview, contact Starlight Public Relations at (818) 222-5554 or email info@lossandfound.com.

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Loss and Found: Surviving the Loss of a Young Spouse by Gary and Kathy Young
ISBN: 0-9715092-0-4 272 pages, paperback, \$14.95 Calabash Press (818) 222-5554
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~DISCUSSION TOPICS~

- Coping with your own emotions while helping your kids through the loss of a parent
- Dealing with the guilt of surviving
- How to avoid the ten worst things that people say to widowed people
- Men and the issue of crying; men and the issue of dealing with emotions
- “Nomal” defined
- Identity as linked to a deceased spouse and rebuilding an identity as a young widow/widower
- Finding peer support
- How to get through the day
- How and when to let go of sadness
- The myth of a timetable for grief
- Pro-active choices for survival, both emotional and financial.
- Avoiding mistakes when explaining death to your children
- Tips for friends, family, counselors on what’s helpful and what’s not
- Surviving the transition from parental team member to grieving single parent
- Navigating the real world while dealing with grief
- Finding new role models for your children after the death of a parent
- Dating as a widow/widower: how to know when you’re ready and dealing with guilt, uncertainty, self-doubt, and your children’s reactions
- Learning to once again enjoy romance and sex after the death of a spouse
- Other peoples’ expectations
- Finding your sense of humor again
- Knowing when you’re *ready* to start rebuilding your life
- And much more

Information catered specifically to young widows and widowers and their family, friends, and counselors has been desperately deficient, until now. With the release of *Loss and Found*, Gary and Kathy Young have filled this void and given hope to millions that they, too, can survive a devastating loss.

Gary and Kathy Young are a dynamic and engaging couple with a captivating media presence. Interviews and appearance are currently being scheduled nationwide.

For additional information or to arrange an interview, contact Starlight Public Relations at (818) 222-5554 or info@lossandfound.com

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LOSS AND FOUND has been recognized by
and received endorsements from the following:

SURVIVORS OF 911

NYPD

FDNY

Fire Fighters of Los Angeles

LAPD

Los Angeles Mayor's Office

Parents without Partners

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (**TAPS, Inc. - Support for the armed forces**)

AARP Grief and Loss Program

Skirball Museum of Los Angeles

Jewish Federation

Big Brothers of Los Angeles

Kaiser Permanente TAG Program

Stephen S. Weiss Synagogue

Valley Beth Sholom

Glendale Baptist

Many other churches and synagogues

Savon Drug Stores

Hospice Foundation of America

WidowNet

National Self-Help Clearinghouse

Tom Golden

Good Grief

Motherless Daughters

Our House

GriefTalk

Compassionate Friends

RENEW Center for Personal Recovery

Connie Sellecca

“A must-read for anyone experiencing loss. I’ve interviewed over 150 authors on my PBS series. I was astonished by the distinctive voice of experience in this breakthrough book. Gary and Kathy’s wit, wisdom, passion, and insight guide us through a warm and lighthearted journey into love, loss, remorse, then to new love, in a self-help guide to millions of young people facing loss. The light of hope illuminates the tragedy of loss, even finding humor in the recesses of depression.”

Barry Kibrick, *BETWEEN THE LINES*, PBS

“*Loss and Found* fills a void in the bereavement literature for young widows and widowers. The authors candidly, tastefully, describe their lives and losses from the moment they learned their spouses were terminal until they joined as a blended family of seven”

Judy Davidson, PhD., director, RENEW Center for Personal Recovery

~REVIEWS~

Life Goes On REVIEWER: Jane Alvarez, author, *Blinders*. *Loss and Found* offers a powerful, hard-hitting message that offers a rare glimpse behind the doors of morning - a subject that we often shy away from. It's a relief to find a book on death that opens the windows and lets in the light. Their honest and emotional feelings gave me the courage to face my own family deaths from years back...life does, in fact, go on regardless of the pain involved. I enjoyed their humor, raw observations of their innermost fears, hopelessness and the joys of rediscovering the love within themselves to carry on during the gloomiest of times. I highly recommend this book...a must read for anyone who cares about enriching their souls to the fullest...for once we deal with the loss of a loved one, we can live our lives to the fullest.

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Hope, direction, help, this is IT for young widows/widowers REVIEWER: **Harold McFarland (Reader's Preference, Amazon Top 50)**. *Loss and Found* is the heart-wrenching story of two people who had children and families but lost their spouse. Each tells the story of their early life, marriage, family, and the story of discovering the illness and working through that, eventually losing the battle. They detail their struggles with the children, finances, friends, feelings of loss, and the other emotional roller coaster feelings. They tell their experiences with young widowhood and their introduction back into dating. This is Gary and Kathy survived the loss of their spouses at a young age and eventually found each other. Told from both the male and female perspectives and full of insight, it is sure to be helpful to anyone experiencing loss and looking for hope. Of particular value are the items in Appendix A. It includes the changes and fears that a young widow/widower faces and the thoughts/problems that they have to deal with. It provides a great point of reference for those who would like to help someone experiencing the situation. A highly recommended read for anyone experiencing such a loss, who knows someone going through it, or who might be in a position to counsel someone with such a loss. There is very little literature available specifically for young widows/widowers and this is among the best.

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The readers say:

- "Thank you for this book. I knew I had to buy the book when I saw it. It has inspired me to write about my own experiences. Reading this book makes me feel like I have someone I can relate to. It's like I'm reading my own thoughts and emotions. Gary and Kathy, thank you." Patrick Muckian
- "Moving and insightful aid! Truthful portrayal of both the male and female perspective."
- "This book spoke to me in so many ways. I keep it on the night stand by my bed. It helps me answer many of my questions and comforts me. I highly recommend it for any loss." A 911 survivor
- "Your sensitivity, humor and clarity answered many of my questions, some of which I did not even know I had."
- "I laughed and cried and realized that I am normal, and I am not alone! I could relate to both of you."
- "I laughed a lot at the dating experiences. The book has been my therapy and inspiration." A 911 Survivor
- "It's been eight months, but I have seen changes in myself and my life, and I owe thanks to you for part of it."
- "It's a great book, and once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down."
- "It was particularly interesting to me to see an honest picture of a man crying. Your book will help many men who might feel that it is wrong to cry." A psychologist

~REVIEWS (p. 2)~

“Gary and Kathy Young have written a book which talks to readers who have lost a spouse, just like a friend who’s been in their shoes. When someone has gone through that kind of trauma, they need to know that others have been there and have survived it, and that they’ll survive, too. I especially appreciate that *Loss and Found* shows how helpful a support group can be. Going to a bereavement group may seem intimidating, or simply depressing, to a new widow or widower. Yet, right after a loss or trauma is when they need support and a safe environment to talk about their situation the most. Thanks for sharing so much of yourselves in this very helpful and accessible book.” Leslie Godwin, Psychotherapist and Career & Life-Transition Coach, Author of *From Burned Out to Fired Up: A Woman’s Guide to Rekindling the Passion and Meaning in Work and Life* (HCI Books, June, 2004)

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I have read *LOSS AND FOUND*, and liked it well enough to add it to the **recommended reading list** for a class I will be teaching on bereavement **for doctoral students** at Ryokan, starting in april for 6 weeks and I will be happy to write a forward to your next book if you so desire. Ann Spadone Jacobson

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THE THANATOLOGY NEWSLETTER Vol.9, No.2 21st Year 2004

David K. Meagher, Ed., D.C.T., Editor; Roberta Halporn, M.A., Assoc Ed; Karen Gleeson M.A., C.T., Assoc Ed Dept Health and Nutrition Sci, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn NY thanatologynewsletter.com
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BOOK REVIEW-Loss and Found: Surviving the Loss of a Partner by Gary & Kathy Young

This book would be useful as a resource in a bereavement class. While I normally hesitate to recommend a book to someone who is close to a significant loss, this work is not so much a “hot to” book as it is a work of hope. It says, even with what might appear to be an insurmountable obstacle, you have the ability to heal yourself. The healing process may be easier and quicker if you utilize resources available to you.

We have two people, the authors, who have both experienced the death of their first spouses, met each other in a bereavement group and eventually married. These two collaborate on a book in which they tell their stories of loss and recovery. The book is divided into two parallel sections in which the authors, Gary and Kathy Young, tell the stories of their earlier lives with their first spouses: The experiences of the illness diagnoses, the dying process each spouse went through, their experiences after the deaths (grieving, dating, meeting each other, and marriage).

Gary tells his story in the opening section of the book. He describes a very loving relationship of twenty-two years with Kathie, his first wife. Kathie was diagnosed with breast cancer. The process she and Gary went through might be described as a clear illustration of the phases of living with a life-threatening illness (Doka, 1993). The first phase, the pre-diagnostic phase, is one in which there is an initial indicator of a problem. In Gary's story, he noticed a lump above Kathie's breast while she was breastfeeding their second child. After the diagnosis of a serious but treatable cancer, Gary and Kathie entered in the next phase, that of learning to live with a life-threatening illness (the chronic phase). The rounds of chemotherapy, Kathie's regaining enough strength as to be able to engage in such activities as horseback riding, a relapse, and another round of chemotherapy fill the time in this second phase. "*Kathie* and I passed the time trying hard to be positive and trying to concentrate our focus on healing" (p. 21). Throughout the book, Gary distinguishes his first wife from his current spouse by placing her name in italics.

Kathie's condition worsens. She enters an active dying stage (the terminal phase). This phase brings with it new challenges for both Gary and Kathie. As she began to come to grips with the dying process, her philosophy about life did not waver, regardless of the fear. "Dying was part of life, regardless of when it might happen. Her personal picture of an afterlife was still in the formation stages, but she definitely believed that there was something afterward, whether it was reincarnation or another form" (p.22).

After Kathie's death, Gary is faced with a number of tasks from how to tell the kids to how to identify his marital status on forms he needed to complete. Does he check single, or married? Is there a box for widowed? There are the dreams of Kathie, the decisions about disposing of her things, the need to deal with the medical insurance bureaucracy, the questions about Gary's normalcy, and the task of learning how to accommodate the pain.

Kathy's first husband's name was Sandy. Although their relationship was more conflicted than Gary and Kathie's, especially when it came to issues concerning money, Kathy describes discovering who the real person Sandy was only after they married. She writes: "When we were married, we really didn't know each other very well" (p. 129). Her description of her early years is a description of her learning experience.

While there is a similarity in experiences, the process for Gary and Kathy are unique and significantly different. Both spouses were diagnosed with cancer. Kathie's diagnosis of breast cancer while breastfeeding requires her to immediately stop the practice (another significant loss experience). Sandy was diagnosed with lung cancer. Kathie undergoes a mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. Sandy's condition was inoperable. Kathie's movement through the phases of living with a life-threatening illness takes four years. The time from diagnosis to death for Sandy is eight months.

After Sandy's death, Kathy, like Gary, confronts the ordeal of telling her children about the death of their father. Unlike Gary, Kathy has to deal with the financial problems she faced immediately after Sandy's death. Like Gary, Kathy realizes she needs support and joins a bereavement group. When she begins to look forward to a normal life, Kathy writes about the men she dates and how she almost married one of them, not Gary. For a period of time after Sandy's funeral, Kathy and her sons believed that Sandy occasionally visited them. Although they never actually see him or his image, they sense his presence by the odor of the cologne that he wore or a warm spot on a bed where no one had been sitting. These perceived visits did not cause fear or anxiety in either Kathy or her children.

Gary discovers that recovering from grief is hard work. He found that a support group was more beneficial than receiving psychiatric therapy. He does remind the reader that a support group is just that - support, not therapy. Stroebe and Stroebe (1994) do offer a caution to this concept of support in young widow's adjustment to bereavement. They write that: "...there is no evidence of a buffering effect for either [perceived social support or received social support] measure, even though there was a significant positive relationship between the availability of social support and health. Individuals who had a great number of supportive relationships suffered from fewer depressive symptoms and somatic complaints than those with less social support, but the availability of social support had similarly positive effects on married and widowed individuals" (p. 222).

At least three processes appear to be involved in a person's movement to grief recovery, according to Weiss (1993). These processes may be characterized as cognitive acceptance, emotional acceptance, and identity change. The reader will see manifestations of these three in Gary's and Kathy's descriptions of their coping with their losses.

The book is an interesting narrative of two people dealing with the deaths of their spouses. The division of the book into parallel chapters makes for a very interesting read. I believe this book would be useful as a resource in a bereavement class. The experiences of Gary and Kathy would serve as excellent cases to assess and evaluate. There are significant similarities and yet marked differences in each of their experiences and the coping behaviors. The authors include an appendix in which they briefly describe other issues faced by widowed individuals. These issues include, but are not limited to dealing with in-laws, coping with fear and rejection, tendencies to idealize the memory of a deceased spouse, and the mistakes we make.

Reference: Doka, K.J. Living with life-threatening illness: Guide for patients, their families and caregivers. NY: Lexington Books. Weiss, R.W. (1993) Loss and Recovery. In M.S. Stroebe, Stroebe, W. & Hansson, R.O., (Eds) Handbook of bereavement Theory, research and intervention (pp.271-284). NY. Cambridge U Press. Stroebe, W. & Stroebe, M.S. (1994) Determinants of adjustments to bereavement in younger widows and widowers. In M. S. Stroebe, Stroebe, W. & Hansson, R. O. (Eds) Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research, and intervention (pp. 208-266). NY. Cambridge U Press

Review: Dennis Kelley, Dir.-Bereavement Resource Center of NY, thanatologynews@aol.com

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~ABOUT THE AUTHORS~

Gary Young is the Executive Director of the Lifetime Achievement Foundation. He is a member of the Board of Directors and the Director of Professional Development for the Independent Writers of Southern California, the President of the Publishers Association of Los Angeles, and co-chair of the Alliance of Los Angeles Playwrights. His plays, mostly dealing with social issues, have been produced and performed at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, the White House, the Smithsonian, and venues throughout the US and Europe. He has worked with Jean Kennedy Smith as a coordinator for the National Very Special Arts Festival, and has produced festivals for, by, and with disabled populations and the underprivileged. Funding agencies include the former HEW, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Mobil Oil, US Airlines, and several private foundations. His play, *Interruptions - A life, a death, pizza, dancing and Murphy's Law*, premiered at the Kennedy Center, and enjoyed a very successful West Coast premier in Los Angeles, June through September, 2000, at the Stella Adler Theatre in Hollywood. His play, *On Hold*, will premier Winter 2005 in Hollywood.

Kathy Young has taught in the Colorado, Detroit, and the LA public schools, and has taught guitar and vocal music, and has written several children's books. She has worked with children in Afghanistan and Indonesia and she has traveled extensively around the world. After having children, she became a property supervisor, running four apartment buildings in addition to her own, a commercial complex, and an industrial complex. She was team mom for her children's sports teams, and continues to play an active role in her children's lives. She works for the US Department of Education as an assessment coordinator.

Kathy Young and **Gary Young** are support group leaders and national spokespersons, conducting seminars and classes throughout the country. Gary has had almost twenty years of experience with illness issues and death issues. Kathy has had fifteen years of experience with illness and death issues.

They have recently discussed grief and recovery issues on *Leeza*, *The Home Show* (ABC), the *Dale Atkins Show* on Family TV, the *Marilyn Kagan Show* (Disney), and can currently be seen nationally in a thirty-minute interview for PBS on *Between the Lines*, Barry Kibrick's acclaimed, in-depth, nationally syndicated review of major writers and their books. Because of their connection with the community of widows and widowers, they co-produced three segments of James Van Praagh's *Beyond* in 2003 and were featured in an article in the national magazine, *First for Women*. The TV movie, well, more about that later!

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~NEWSPAPER ARTICLE~

EVERYBODY'S WORST NIGHTMARE HAS A HAPPY ENDING

Review by B. K. Eakman ©2002 B. K. Eakman

Increasingly, Baby Boomers find they “don’t get no respect.” Often referred to as “the Me Generation,” Boomers are typically characterized as the folks who launched the sexual revolution, trashed the culture and the family. But authors Gary and Kathy Young — straight out of Hollywood, no less — have inadvertently put the lie to this popular portrayal.

Anyone still wistful for things like picket fences and romantic love will find much with which to identify in the couple’s fascinating new book, *Loss and Found*. This true story revolves around, first, the agonizing death of two young people’s former spouses from aggressive cancers, followed by the unexpected, exquisite excitement of finding each other in, of all places, a widow/widower support group. Drawn into this tantalizing cross between one’s worst nightmare and a romantic comedy, the reader learns a lot about realities surrounding today’s health care as well as picking up the pieces of one’s life and moving on — realities not typically found among the self-help shelves of your bookstore.

Loss and Found is no 1950s-era soppy tale of “love lost and love found”; nor is it the smiley-faced, Pollyanna stereotype of Doris Day-Rock Hudson vintage. Mental health practitioners will be astonished to find a “survival guide,” as the book is advertised, that manages to be funny, sexy, heart-wrenching and provocative — all at the same time. What readers will find is a fast-moving and, most of all, upbeat account about falling head-over-heels in love just when you thought they were, uh, beaten.

There’s much to debate in *Loss and Found* for various and sundry experts out there who might be so inclined — the dubious ethics of advanced medicine; the insensitivity of law enforcement, social services workers, and credit agencies; the pressures of modern society to become sexually promiscuous; the dearth of help available to young widows and widowers; nit to mention the success of an insurance racket in disassociating “health” from “care.”

But authors Gary and Kathy Young don’t fixate on such questions. The surprise for most readers is that the two owe their self-renewal to their implicit determination to locate new spouses, not merely new “relationships.” The intricacies involved in establishing such a bond after a 20-something hiatus from the dating scene — and in a culture that seems to have turned its back on commitment — fortunately turns out more humorous than aggravating for the reader. One would have imagined that proximity to the nesting place of fare like “*Ally McBeal*” and “*Sex and the City*” would at the very least have prepared the authors for altered views about “singlehood.” But *Loss and Found* is a hit precisely because it provides character insights that readers won’t find in *People Magazine* or TV’s *Entertainment Tonight*. Merely rubbing elbows with Hollywood’s elite doesn’t make the world depicted there real. Musical mates are not for everybody.

Perhaps what’s so endearing about the book is that, in following their story, we discover as much about us as we do about the authors, Gary and Kathy Young.

B. K. Eakman, former teacher-turned-speechwriter; present Executive Director of the National Education Consortium; the author of a new book *Cloning of the American Mind: Eradicating Morality Through Education* (Huntington House); now a lecturer on education and privacy issues, the author of numerous articles, op-eds as well as three books.

~Short excerpts~

From *Loss and Found: Surviving the Loss of a Partner*,
by Gary and Kathy Young

The heart monitor slowed and stopped. There was a moment of unreality, of vacantness, of not being anywhere. And then just as suddenly, the realization hit, and both my world and my body came crashing to the floor. I was helped to my feet and back to reality. Through my tears I could see my wife, or the person who used to be my wife, lying motionless. She looked uncomfortable, not peaceful. Aren't people supposed to look peaceful once they have been released from their battle with the illness? Who am I going to take advice from now? Who is going to teach me? Who can I hug? What was it like for her? The answers are not obvious.

She was thirty-nine and I was forty-two. This was not supposed to happen. It was a bad day. Funeral arrangements were followed by a drive home to tell my children that their mother had died. The tears made the drive dangerous, raising other concerns. Let's not cause the children to lose both parents today.

Kathy and Gary met on December 18, 1992. Fluorescents illuminated the room, encouraging blinding reality. He couldn't cry because it had been over two years since his wife died, and he had to present a picture of having "weathered the storm." Kathy couldn't cry because she was ill at ease among the widow veterans. But when they met, they did not need to cry or even speak. The hurt was communicated clearly, the need was mutually felt, the loneliness, emptiness, need and anger was all there in a glance. Introductions seemed redundant, but having done so, the basis for a life-long friendship, and more, had been established. Friends, relatives and support people all figure into the recovery from loss and grief, but this was something else.

We were young widows and widowers, a strange breed combining the end of a life with the strong life force of a living young person with so much potential. The task would be to harness that energy and pull it from the grip of the tragedy. This cannot be done alone. With our companions dead, could we allow ourselves to be open to this?

It took time figuring out the mechanics of this new family, and the process is reformulated daily. And the grocery bills! But we have what we wanted, a life with love and tenderness, not alone, not dwelling on the past or trying to reinvent it, nor erase it. We still cry occasionally when something hits a chord, and usually both at the same time. But we also laugh together. We are growing more alike daily, and even though in many ways we are still acting like newlyweds, people tell us that we are like a couple who have been together for a long time. Well, it has been a long time, if you include the three years of friendship, having met in 1992.

We are told that the years with the children will go quickly. Our lesson has re-taught us what we already knew, that included in the madness of parenting are beautiful moments that also should not be squandered. And after the children have left the nest, we hope to be there for each other.

Our lesson was learned the hard way, and it hurt. We are limping a bit from that, and we see frequent reminders that the rug can still be pulled out from under us, but we have what we have, and it is now, and we have chosen to be survivors.