



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Dear Survivor:

The road of the suicide bereaved is often an unknown rocky journey. I know because on March 18, 1993, my sister Denise ended her life just two weeks before her eighteenth birthday. I was twenty-one at the time, a college student on the verge of entering a writing career I had dreamed of since first grade. Her death completely altered my life and forced me to rethink not only my relationship with her, but also how to integrate the loss into my life, knowing that I would have to travel the bulk of my life without the sister I have come to realize was my biggest cheerleader.

The lessons I have learned in the past nearly eighteen years have been immeasurable. While coping with Denise's suicide, I learned that the road of suicide grief is often unknown because of the stigma, the fear of talking about it. But it also taught me that it doesn't have to be that way. And I learned that because somewhere along my road I sought to let go of how Denise died to remember her for who she was in life. I also realized that the bond isn't broken, she still is with me in some way. Instead, the bond has changed.

This road led me to the American Association of Suicidology, of which I am President-Elect. I encourage you to contact us if you need anything, to use the resources available here on the web site, and continue along your road because it does get less rocky. There is hope along the way. You will find it again even though in the present moment you might not realize it's there.

Know that there are many of us not just in the United States but around the world who are working to help you, to ease the pain of that road. And we are walking with you.

Michelle Linn-Gust, Ph.D.

AAS President-Elect

American Association of Suicidology

AAS is a membership organization for all those involved in suicide prevention and intervention, or touched by suicide. AAS is a leader in the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services. For membership information, please contact:

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**If you or someone you know is suicidal,
please contact a mental health professional
or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).**