

# SUICIDE: HELPING SURVIVORS SURVIVE



A death by suicide triggers great amounts of anger and guilt.

However some of those feelings can be balanced by struggling to see that the suicide was not so much a deliberate, hostile act but a gesture of hopelessness and despair.

Reminders that the person was driven by emotional whirlwinds, that it was impossible to sense any ray of hope can temper considerably the emotional impact of a death by suicide.

One of the best responses to a suicide that I have heard came through a sermon delivered by the pastor of a young man who shot himself. With great eloquence, his pastor was able to convey tremendous hope through these words:

"Our friend died on his own battlefield. He was killed in an action fighting a civil war. He fought against adversaries that were as real to him as his casket is real to us, they were powerful adversaries.

They took toll of his energies and endurance, they exhausted the last vestiges of his courage, and only God knows how this child of his suffered in the silent skirmishes that took place in his soul".

Victor Parachin Bereavement Magazine  
from TCF OTAGO May/June 2004

## Grieving A Suicide

The suicide of a loved one raises painful questions, doubts and fears. Some cultures see it as shameful or an affront to God. Survivors ask themselves: *Why wasn't my love enough to save this person? What could I have done? How did I fail? What will people think?* Feelings of failure, shame and blame exacerbate the sorrow of loss.

It's important that, in addition to the healing strategies described above, you do the following if you lose someone you love to suicide:

- If you have religious concerns, try to find a gentle, non-judgmental member of your faith, and be open when talking with that person about what happened, and about your feelings.
- Rather than being concerned about the stigma surrounding suicide, concentrate on your own healing and survival.
- Confront the word *suicide*, difficult as it may be. If you keep the cause of death a secret, you won't be able to speak freely about the person you lost, and you'll block a pathway to recovery.
- Talk openly with your family and friends so that everyone's grief can be expressed.
- Do something that will benefit others in your loved one's name.

Extract from Internet;  
**Coping with Grief and Loss: Guide to Grieving and Bereavement,**  
[www.helpguide.org/mental/grief\\_loss.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/grief_loss.htm)

# Benjamin William John Spurrell

Poems that helped a little with grief at the death of Ben.

For our Dear Ben.  
We send you our blessings  
We miss you here today  
And we are sad you are no longer

On this earth with us  
You might have continued to be  
Our son, Fiona's brother  
Anna's partner, Charlotte's dad

But this was not to be  
We all know too well  
Something of your pain  
The agony of striving  
Doubt, despair, drowning in drugs

We send our blessings  
Wherever you are  
Go well dear Ben  
In God's peace we leave you  
For that ultimate peace  
We'll be with you  
One day

We mourn your loss  
Both ours and yours  
We are sad for the striving  
We all suffered  
Because of you

We tried, God damn us, we tried  
To guide, lead, suggest  
To help you govern the impulses  
That led you down a path unknown to us  
Such cruel contortions your mind played  
Sad scars on your body

Your family hurts  
Their scars more hidden  
Deeply painful  
In your absence  
we miss you  
Dear Ben  
Such a loving boy  
And handsome young man  
How did this happen

To us?



Born: 10-03-1973 Died: 06-02-1994

Such an impressive name we gave you  
Benjamin William John Spurrell.  
A name for prosperity, longevity;  
Not for your short 25 year and 11 months

Such a grand name we gave you  
Dear Ben, our son.  
You came after Simon  
To give warmth to our lives.  
We had such great hopes,  
Were they fair? Were they right?  
Oh how much we wish it were different  
Right now.

Fiona is our first born daughter, Simon was born 15 months later and died after 10 weeks of cot death. Ben was born 3 years, 3 months later and died of a heroin overdose.

To lose one son is sad; two sons unthinkable.

Each year Fiona and I recognise Ben's death day – we do something we both enjoy; and remember Ben