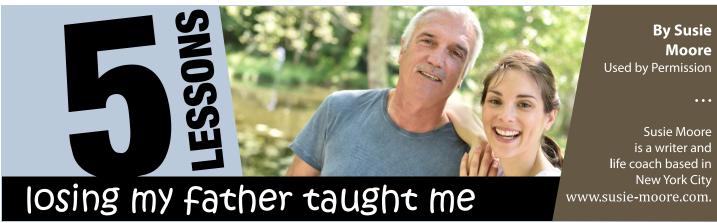


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"Providing Comfort To Families"

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y father was just 59 when he passed. I was 19. We knew for a few years that it was coming he had a bad heart and an addictive lifestyle. But the finality of it was still shocking and heartbreaking. That was almost 11 years ago. I think of my father every day and the funny, assuring thing about time is that it allows grief to change shape. Certainly if I remember certain tender moments my dad and I shared, on a particularly sensitive day, I can weep as if losing him were yesterday. Over the years however I have consciously sought some positivity in the loss and have tried to live a life he would be proud of.

When I reflect upon my life without him I realize that

there are five key things that the past 11 years have taught me.

1. Love is stronger than death.

My relationship with my dad continues. He lives on through my sister and I. When I make a delicious roast lamb, win at scrabble, watch

old English television, read the classics and even write an article (my father was an author), I feel as if we are together. Physical planes cannot separate love. My sister feels this way, too. And I know we are right.

2. People who are going through the most can often hide it the best.

I hid my loss from people to avoid sympathy. I still do. Anyone who had lost a parent, or anyone for that matter, knows the awkward moment when family arises in conversation. Like when people ask about our parents and we talk about only one. It's not that it upsets us to talk about it (although sometimes it might), we don't want to explain, make you feel comfortable with having

> asked etc. When I was struggling the most I had the shiniest veneer to deflect any further discomfort. Never guess what someone's story is or what they are going through. It's impossible to know.

3. Mortality is motivating.

If I live to my dad's age, and I hope I am fortunate to live much longer, my life Is already half way through now

continued...







Spend time with your parents, your siblings, your old friends.
Ask them questions.

at age 30. This sounds morbid but to me it is encouraging. I think when we come to terms with our death, both metaphorically and literally, we are at our most courageous and powerful. I also simply don't sweat the small stuff like I used to.

4. To write memories down.

I share this advice with friends when people they lose a loved one and they often thank me later. It is

such an intense time — the months we grieve — there is so much we can forget. Write down the last moments you shared and the most precious moments you can remember with that person. Be vivid in your writing. You will reread this many times over the course of your life.

5. Get to know the people you love.

As the old Baz Luhrmann song, "Wear Sunscreen," said, "Get to know your parents, you never know when they will be gone for good." Spend time with your parents, your siblings, your old friends. Ask them questions about their lives. What did they think about the world when they were your age? What are their passions? When were they the happiest in their lives? I did this recently with my mum and the answers surprised me. Nothing is more important and worthy of your time than the people you love. Nothing.

What has loss taught you?

What Grief Has Taught Me...

It isn't my job to be strong.

I was not prepared for the "secondary losses" of living friends and family members who distanced themselves.

I remember that the loss equals the love, that helps me when I feel low.

whatsyourgrief.com

* * *

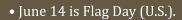


Sometimes the best advice is a break from advice. Enjoy your favorite beverage and these tidbits of this & that.

- June's birth stone is Pearl.
- June Birth Flower: Rose and Honeysuckle.
- June 1 is Say Something Nice Day.
- June 3 is this month's Full Moon called the Strawberry Moon. According to The Old Farmer's Almanac, which first began publishing

Almanac, which first began publishing names for full moons in the 1930s, the full moon in June was dubbed the Strawberry Moon by several Native American tribes to match the short harvest season for strawberries

• June 5 is World Environment Day—a day meant to raise environmental awareness across the globe.



• June 18 is Father's Day this year.



• June 21 is the summer solstice, which heralds the start of summer in the Northern Hemisphere. It's the day with the most hours of daylight. In the Southern Hemisphere, winter begins at this time.

FAST FOOD

It can be difficult to think about cooking, or even eating sometimes, when we are grieving. Good nutrition is especially important now, and these quick and easy ideas may help.

SAY CHEESE!

Any kind of cheese you enjoy is a satisfying snack or meal when teamed up with crackers or fruit.

These days there are also a variety of cheese curds, plain or flavored that are even more



convenient when hunger strikes but the will to cook (or slice!) does not.

The purpose of this newsletter is to share honest insights with a fresh approach, on how to navigate through all of life's chapters.

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