

Memorial Day arrives each year carrying both national remembrance and the start of summer. For people who have lost someone to suicide, that combination can make this one of the hardest weekends of the year. This handout draws on the words of Pastor Warren Stevens, as retold by Norman Vincent Peale, alongside grief research and peer experience, to offer grounding for survivors facing the holiday, the season, and what comes next.

Your Person Died on Their Own Battlefield

- Pastor Warren Stevens, in a eulogy found in Norman Vincent Peale's 1966 book and shared on the [Alliance of Hope](#), described a person who died by suicide as having been killed in action fighting a civil war against adversaries that were as real as any soldier faces.
- Stevens asked mourners to remember not the death, but the daily victories of kindness, love, humor, and the intensity with which the person lived. Those victories belong to the survivors who carry them forward.
- Norman Vincent Peale wrote directly to families left behind: lift up your heads and hearts. Surely you did your best. And surely the person who is gone did their best, for as long as they could.

For Families Who Lost a Service Member to Suicide

- Some families carry two forms of grief on Memorial Day: the loss of a person who served their country, and the particular grief of a suicide loss. Both are real and both deserve to be honored.
- According to the VA, nearly eighteen veterans died by suicide every day in 2022. The [VA survivor resources page](#) offers no-cost bereavement counseling and chaplain services specifically for these families.
- Your person served. Their battles, visible and invisible, were real. Their name belongs among those honored today.

Summer Traditions and the Dual Process of Grief

- Traditions built around the person who died often intensify the absence when repeated exactly. You may find that new places and new activities this summer offer more room to breathe without erasing what came before.
- The dual process model of grief describes two healthy kinds of days: loss-oriented days when you are fully in the grief, and restoration-oriented days when you step into life. Both are necessary and neither cancels out the other.
- The [Alliance of Hope](#) has written specifically about summer grief, which often arrives unannounced because it falls between the formally acknowledged grief holidays.

Carrying Them Into the Summer With You

- Continuing bonds theory, supported by grief researcher [John R. Jordan](#), affirms that healing does not require letting go of the person who died. The relationship changes form but does not end.
- You can carry the person you lost into new experiences, honor them quietly with their favorite food, speak their name before a meal, or visit a new place while holding them in your heart. These are not performances. They are real acts of love.
- The post [Physics = Love: Continuing Bonds After Suicide Loss](#) explores this idea more fully for survivors who want to go deeper.

Simple Healing This Weekend

- Talk with your family before the weekend begins, not during it. Ask what people need. Say what you need. An honest plan is better than a perfect one.
- Go outside. Research consistently shows that time in nature reduces grief-related rumination and stress. A walk, a garden, time near water: start with five minutes and let the air do what it can.
- If you need to talk to someone right now, please call or text 988 to reach the [Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#). And if you are looking for a support group, the [AFSP support group finder](#) can help you find one near you.

Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/memorial-day-after-suicide-loss-remembering-and-beginning-again/>