



P.E.A.C.

A parent-led support group for parents of estranged children

BY JULIA JAEGERBERG
PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY P.E.A.C.

AFTER I WROTE ABOUT MY DAUGHTER’S UPCOMING WEDDING, Aimee Palmer of Merton wrote to me expressing that not everyone can look forward to a day like that with their adult children – that some people are estranged from their adult children.

Of course, I felt terrible, but also intrigued about the organization she formed called P.E.A.C. (Parents of Estranged Adult Children) to help parents who are suffering to meet others who are experiencing the same feelings of helplessness and grief. Its mission: To provide a community for estranged parents that offers support, information, resources, and hope.

Aimee’s story

Aimee and I met at a coffee shop and talked for hours about her experience and the organization she formed. As you can guess, Aimee and her husband experienced this grief firsthand, and they suffered alone.

“It’s a silent epidemic,” says Aimee. “It’s estimated that estrangement affects one in four families, and that’s a conservative estimate.”

For her, the date was January 6, 2017, when her 18-year-old daughter met a new boyfriend and cut off all contact with everyone in her life. Her friends and family had no idea where she was living for a long time. Thankfully, today her daughter is back in her life, but she was gone for many years.

Creating an organization to help

During that harrowing time, Aimee was looking for help and a way to connect with others face-to-face who were suffering the same

experience. But she didn’t find the help she sought – Aimee felt she was the only one experiencing the pain. So, she formed a non-profit organization in 2017 to help people cope with a strained or nonexistent relationship with their adult children.

“People face a lot of shame when this happens, and others wonder what you did to make your child leave your family,” admits Aimee. “In reality, there’s often a third party influencing the estranged adult, a significant other or other members of the family like an aunt or grandparent – and it becomes a drama triangle that’s hard to escape.”

Parents often feel anger, shame, guilt, failure, despair, and isolation when their adult child rejects or abandons them. The P.E.A.C. community offers them courage, strength, and hope.

“No one else understands that you’re grieving for a person who’s still alive, but it feels like a death,” explains Aimee. “Often fathers suffer in silence, put it on a shelf, but for mothers, we have to talk – it affects mothers very deeply. Our community provides a safe place, where others understand.”

Through its parent-led online support groups, in-person support groups, and a private Facebook group, P.E.A.C. helps parents navigate this painful and often lonely journey.

Locally, the P.E.A.C. group meets from October through May at 6:30pm on the second Tuesday of every month at the Hartland Library, 110 East Park Avenue. Learn more by visiting PEACInternational.org, emailing aimee@peacinternational.org, or calling 262-424-7427. The website offers links to helpful articles, books, and podcasts.”

“Thank you for P.E.A.C. and your faith, wisdom, and support. I don’t feel quite so alone anymore.”

Amy

“The support groups provided a sense of community and a place to learn from others. P.E.A.C. has given me hope for healing and reconciliation. It’s a lifeline!”

C – Wisconsin

“It was eye-opening to see the common threads of estrangement.”

Gail – New York

“P.E.A.C. is a safe place to grieve, hope, and stand in strength.”

Cheryl – Texas



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