

How Soap Vet (And Digest Columnist) Linda Dano

Battled Depression After Two Tragic Losses

FACING LIFE

■ In September, 2004, Linda Dano lost her beloved husband of nearly 23 years, Frank Attardi, to cancer. Less than two weeks later, Dano suffered another devastating blow when her mother, Evelyn, passed away. Here, the actress candidly discusses how she pulled herself together with help from Support Partners, a program that helps people living with depression.

"It has single-handedly saved my life," declares Dano of her involvement with Support Partners. "I am suffering from depression and it's not fun. I believe that if I can help me by talking about it, maybe I can help you, too.

"I have always shared almost everything; nothing is a secret for me. I went on THE TONY DANZA SHOW after Frank's death and Tony asked me about him. From that one interview, I received an overwhelming amount of letters and e-mails from people all over the country who not only wanted to send their condolences to me, but also wanted to share their stories. I suddenly realized how many people live with not only sadness, but depression and disappointments.

"When Frank was sick, my friends, the Support Partners, stepped up to the plate and committed their time. Not only were they emotionally there for me, but they were also there physically. They would walk the dogs, bring me food, make me go out, call me and get me to talk. That's



Dano and beloved husband, Frank

ROBIN PLATZER/TVWIS IMAGES

what a Support Partner is.

"A Support Partner can be anyone you choose. It can be your clergy, a co-worker, a friend, a relative — anybody who you can feel safe with. A lot of peo-

"There are a million reasons that you can be depressed, not just because you've lost someone."

ple who believe they're depressed don't know what to do, where to turn. They just accept that this is the way life is. I've been diagnosed as clinically depressed now. We all know why I'm depressed, but it's not always that clear-cut for other people. There are a million reasons that you can be depressed, not just because you've lost someone.

"If we're feeling depressed or if we know someone we love is depressed, how do we help? What can we do? You can become a Support Partner. The reason that I got involved with Eli Lilly and the Women's Health Resource Center is because I was doing this on my own, just being with friends who were there for me, who would let me talk. I could say whatever I felt and I could cry and I knew that they were right there, whenever I needed them. I knew that if I could somehow speak out about this and let people know that I'm certainly grieving, that I could help others, but it's more than that.

"It makes Frank's death and

this pain count for something.

"P.S. I want to thank all of the people who have sent me letters about Frank and my mother. It is so dear. I've kept all of them. I appreciate your love and support. It's meant a great deal to me and I know my little Frank is up there, smiling his little ass off that he's so popular."

For more information about Support Partners, call 1-888-818-7988 or go to www.DepressionHurts.com. Additional information is available at www.lilly.com and www.healthywomen.org.



Dano and her mother, Evelyn

HITCHINS PHOTO AGENCY