



Healing Hearts

THIS SUMMER

Choose a clear night to light and release an environmentally-friendly floating lantern in honor of your baby.

Watching the glowing lantern as it floats upward into the sky can help you release some of your grief and offer comfort to you.

Invite friends and family to join you in lighting and releasing lanterns for lost loved ones this summer.

Remembering those who have passed away can be a wonderful way to work through grief together and remind you that you are not alone.



OH PRECIOUS, TINY, SWEET LITTLE ONE

By author unknown

Oh precious, tiny, sweet little one
You will always be to me
So perfect, pure, and innocent
Just as you were meant to be.

We waited and longed for you to come
And join our family.
We never had the chance to play,
To laugh, to rock, to wiggle.
We long to hold you, touch you now,
And listen to you giggle.

I'll always be your mother,
He'll always be your dad.
You will always be our child,
The child that we had.

But now you're gone...but you're still here.
We sense you everywhere.
You are our sorrow and our joy,
There's love in every tear.

Just know our love goes deep and strong
We'll forget you never -
The child we had, but never had;
And yet, we'll have forever.

A friend whose husband died not long ago recently asked me when things will start getting *better*. At the time I didn't have an answer for her, but it prompted me to think. I came up with an answer that I think applies to me.

Three years.

It has taken three years for me to feel 'better'. I don't mean 'cured', 'over it' or even 'good'. I mean 'better'. Better than when he died, and better than the first and second years after his death. I know everyone has a different journey and that some people will think that they will never feel better. Grief cannot be put on a time line. It's grueling and unpredictable, but I think three years have certainly changed my pain.

I barely remember some of those early days and weeks after his death. My feelings were so raw and painful. I blamed any and all of my behavior, participation or lack thereof, on the death of my baby. I could downplay everyone else's problems because none could possibly be as bad as mine. I would compare everyone else's losses to mine to see who had it worse. Was a dead grown-up child worse than a dead baby? What about a dead parent or spouse? My grief was always at the forefront of my thoughts. I would seek out sad movies, sad songs and anything else that would make me feel pain. I wanted to feel it. I *needed* to. By feeling the pain I felt closer to him and by not feeling it I felt like I was betraying him. How could I be happy when my baby was dead?!

By putting up a façade I was able to endure the early days and months. Sitting in a café with a friend was surely better than sitting at home, alone. It was during this time that I learned that others often do not

know how to deal with grief. It was not uncommon for friends to make my situation about themselves, and I regularly had to comfort them because they didn't know how to comfort me.

During the first year we gave away his cot to someone else who would soon have a baby. I made sure I was not home when this pregnant woman came to my door. Instead, I visited a friend who held me as my house was emptied. With the removal of his things, my grief remained unchanged and I realized that those possessions were just objects. By taking them away, she didn't take away the feelings and memories I had of the child I missed so much.

When we went on our first trip away after his death I allowed myself some glimpses of happiness. It was such a welcome feeling and one that I initially didn't think I could allow myself to have. I felt that leaving home, albeit temporarily, was like running away from my dead child. The guilt associated with that almost prevented me from going. I soon learned that my grief was quite a loyal travel companion. It actually felt better knowing I could go anywhere and take my sadness with me. It meant that he was still with me.

Gradually time moved forward and I began to participate in my life again. Slowly, I began to feel. When I previously felt hollow and numb, I now began to function on more than just auto-pilot. I tried to be more empathetic to other people's situations and I tried to be kinder and less judgmental. Although I still sought out sadness, I tended to do it at more manageable times, perhaps more secretly and alone. Instead of crying in public, I would save my tears for when I was in bed at night while

the rest of my household slept.

We are now into the fourth year since he died and my feelings this year are not significantly different to those of last year. A level of ordinariness has been restored and I now feel quite distanced from those early lonely days and months. I hold him closer to me now and keep his life and death more private. When I meet someone new, I do not feel compelled to tell them about my child that died. I reserve that for people who have earned that privilege.

I still think of him often, but my thoughts aren't the overwhelming and debilitating thoughts they once were. Even though I miss him, I would not choose to go back to those very stressful months when he was alive. I can now think about him with less emotion, and I rarely cry at night. There are however, instances where time comes undone. Stories of death, especially those relating children, will instantly unravel the years. It still really hurts. My tears will flow, partly for them but also for me. I now understand why some people made my baby's death about themselves.

The death of my baby gave me a sadness that I never thought I could survive. But it also gave me the gift of growth and empathy that I would otherwise not have had. His life and death have made me better and for that I thank him. ♥

This feature was originally published on Glow in the Woods, the world's first literary community of bereaved parents who have suffered infant loss. Formed over a decade ago, the site offers personal stories and discussion boards, connections to other parents, and a multitude of book recommendations, practical information, and reflection on life after loss.
www.glowinthewoods.com

my story

DONOR RECOGNITION AND HEALING CORNER

DONORS

The Infant Death Center thanks the following individuals for their generous donations in honor of someone or in memory of a special child. These donations were received between Jan. 1 and March 31, 2021.

Ms. Amy DeLong

Ms. Linda Haney

Mr. and Mrs. Steven C. Stampa

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SIDS Fund

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Research and Support**

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Fund**

HEALING CORNER

MISSING THEM DOESN'T MEAN LIVING MISERABLY.
MAYBE, IT MEANS LIVING RICHLY. MAYBE, IT MEANS
VALUING EACH DAY. MAYBE IT MEANS NOT TAKING
YOURSELF VERY SERIOUSLY. MAYBE IT MEANS
FINDING JOY, EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD.

AND ONE DAY, YOU MAY REALIZE THAT LIVING IN
THE CONSTANT DEPTHS MAY LAST FOR A WHILE,
AND THE HOLE THAT YOU ARE DEEPLY IN, WHILE
IT FEELS DARK, HAS LITTLE PATCHES OF LIGHT
SHINING IN.

Scribbles & Crumbs

TO MAKE A GIFT

Donations to the Infant Death Center are appreciated in any amount and used to provide support to grieving families statewide. Your gift can be sent directly to Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin: 6737 W. Washington St. Suite 1111, West Allis, WI 53214.

You also may donate online through our website: chawisconsin.org where you

will find our affiliation with the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Foundation.

The Infant Death Center is an option on the United Way designation form through your employer. Many companies will provide a match to your donation.

The Infant Death Center is grateful for any contribution your heart feels moved to give.

*** PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO CONFIRM EVENT IS STILL BEING HELD ***

FEATURED EVENTS, SUPPORT GROUPS AND RESOURCES

CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL WALK

August 21

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Walk begins at Horicon Marsh Education Center and ends at Theiler Park in Mayville with a kids carnival. Event is designed to raise awareness of child loss, promote healing, and honor the children who have gone before us.

<https://stayhappening.com/e/children%E2%80%99s-memorial-walk-E2ISTN97E1M>

BO'S CHILD LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

2nd & 4th Monday
each month

5:30-7:00 p.m.

Higher Grounds Coffee
Shop

Beaver Dam, WI

For parents who lost a baby
or child. Contact Amanda at
(262) 388-4290

Bosheavenlyclubhouse@gmail.com

SHARE PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUPS (VIRTUAL)

Days and times vary

<http://www.nationalshare.org/online-support/>

BEREAVED PARENTS OF MADISON SUPPORT GROUP (VIRTUAL)

3rd Thursday each month
7:30-9:00 p.m.

<http://www.bereavedparentsofmadison.com/zoom-support-group>

To learn more and find additional resources in your community for support groups and/or memorial services, view our Infant Loss Support Directory at: www.chawisconsin.org/initiatives/grief-and-bereavement/infant-death-center/.

To learn more, share an event or article, request additional copies or removal from our list, please contact:

Infant Death Center
(414) 337-4571

www.chawisconsin.org