



# Healing Hearts

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## THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

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Create a new tradition so you find a meaningful and lasting way to remember your baby during the holidays. New traditions can be simple things you decide to do on your own or bigger rituals you create with your family. As you think about this, remember traditions are meant to be repeated year after year, so choose something that your family can realistically keep going.

- Make a memory box and add something each year
- Light a special candle
- Make or buy an ornament
- Share a moment of silence

Whatever you choose to do, it will help you cherish and keep the memories of your baby alive during the holidays.



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## POEM

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### Empty Spaces

*By Ginny Limer*

Empty space at the table  
Empty space by the tree  
Empty space in the photo  
Empty space inside me  
Empty space on the mantle  
Empty space on the hearth  
Empty space in my stomach  
In my soul, in my heart  
Empty space in the spaces  
From my head, to my toe  
I am so sorry you know  
The empty spaces I know.  
But within this dark space  
There is room for light  
There is space for grace  
There is space for might  
There is space to grieve  
There is space to love  
There is space for hope  
From below to above  
There is room for your heart  
To continue to grow  
From out of dark spaces  
This is healing, you know.

# THE WORD DEATH (OR ANY VARIATION)

By Marisa Michaud

Death is a word that grips your very soul with its long thin fingers. A word that literally squeezes every breath out of you, till you feel as if you are going to faint.

Death is a word that we have all thought about, all dealt with in some aspect.

Death is the word we hate to use when it comes to the realization that our child is gone.

Over the years I've used the word dead/died/death as I've lost family members (aunts, uncles, grandparents). I had no idea how hard it was going to be to say that word when it came to my son. My baby.

I have experienced death, but nothing compares to that one. The one that nearly shattered me to my very core. The one that stole my every breath. The one that broke my heart. The one that physically pained me. The one that changed me.

I will continue to experience loss/death in my life, but most of them will never compare to this.

I am 7 years into my grief, my loss and it is still hard to say. I cringe internally when it slips out. I am still to this day trying to figure out the right way for me to say my son is gone. I may never find the right way because there is nothing right about this situation.

My son is dead. My son died.

I usually just say passed away. It feels softer, less harsh. Maybe I am just fooling myself.

I have come to hate that word for what it means. I have come to hate that word for its truth, its permanence.

My son is dead and I will never get to see him or touch him again.

My son died and I can never tell him that I love him.

Death took my son and I will never get to see him grow.

No kisses.

No handholding.

No cuddles.

No reading together.

No helping with homework.

No watching him grow into a young man with a future in front of him.

Grief allows for irrational thoughts and mine is that I HATE THE WORD DEAD.

DIED.

DEATH.

I hated it then and I hate it now.

Yes, I've been told it is just a word and I should take command of it - don't let it beat me. I can't, there is too much power in that one simple word. That word has beaten me like no other, it has stolen my soul, my breath, a part of my heart - most importantly it has stolen my son.

How can I move past the fact that it is just a word when it is the cause of my grief, my sorrow, my loss?

How can I not allow it to have some control over me?

Over time it may be easier to say that word, to gain some control back for

myself, but I will never be comfortable saying it because just thinking it hurts my heart.

So if you dislike that word, hate it in fact - do not fear; you are not alone. We all dislike or hate it in our own way.

The meaning.

The tragedy.

The truth.

The permanence.

The loss.

The grief.

The sorrow.

The pain.

The tears.

All this caused by one little word. A word that grabs ahold and never surrenders. A word we never thought we would ever have to say in regard to our child, our babies. A word that will affect us the rest of our lives. A word that will connect us all on this path of grief and loss.

Death is not my friend, will never be my friend. But death is my companion, a part of me - always and forever. ♥

*This feature was originally published on Still Standing Magazine, a web-based community of bereaved parents surviving the aftermath of child loss and infertility. [www.stillstandingmag.com](http://www.stillstandingmag.com)*



*my story*

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DONORS

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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 May 1 and Aug. 31, 2019.

- Ms. Ramona Bosch
- Mr. and Mrs. Daniel N. Burnside
- Miss Tiffany C. Fabian
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard P. Larsen
- Ms. Debra Ray
- Mr. and Mrs. Steven C. Stampa
- Mr. and Mrs. Mark G. Steimle

*thank you*



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FOUNDATION SUPPORT

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- Jay Hashek Memorial Fund for SIDS
- Madeline McKeown Hoy SIDS Fund
- SIDS Fund
- Dakota Dale Sorenson SIDS Research and Support
- Alexis Rose Mathison-Szozda SIDS Fund

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HEALING CORNER

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"GRIEVING THE LOSS OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE FEELS LIKE CARRYING THEM AROUND, HIDDEN AND INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE, BUT YOUR SPIRIT HEAVY WITH THEIR MEMORY AND PRESENCE. I CARRY HIM WITH ME EVERY DAY, AND THESE DAYS, IT DOESN'T WEIGH ME DOWN AS MUCH WITH SADNESS. THESE DAYS HIS MEMORY STAMPED ON MY HEART IS AS NORMAL TO ME AS THE COLOR OF MY EYES, THE SOUND OF MY OWN VOICE.

WHEN YOU MENTION HIM, YOU AREN'T REMINDING ME OF HIM. HE'S ALREADY INTERTWINED WITH MY EVERY THOUGHT. WHEN YOU MENTION HIM, YOU ARE REMINDING ME THAT I'M NOT ALONE IN REMEMBERING THAT HE DID EXIST, THAT HE WAS HERE, AND THAT HE'S STILL MINE."

*By Lexi Behrndt*

*Scribbles and Crumbs*

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TO MAKE A GIFT

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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](http://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.

Return service requested

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## FEATURED EVENTS, SUPPORT GROUPS AND RESOURCES

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### ANNUAL INFANT LOSS MEMORIAL PROGRAM

Nov. 3  
2:15 p.m.

Mt. Mary University - Helfaer Hall  
2900 N. Menomonee River Pkwy  
Milwaukee, WI  
*Children's Hospital of Wisconsin  
and the Infant Death Center invite  
you and your family to share in  
a program of remembrance for  
children who have died. Please  
RSVP to Nichole at (414) 266-  
2995 or [nstapel@chw.org](mailto:nstapel@chw.org).*

### ANNUAL INFANT LOSS MEMORIAL PROGRAM

Nov. 10  
2:15 p.m.

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin  
Corporate Center  
333 N. Commercial St., Suite 400  
Neenah, WI  
*Children's Hospital of Wisconsin  
and the Infant Death Center invite  
you and your family to share in  
a program of remembrance for  
children who have died. Please  
RSVP to Nichole at (414) 266-  
2995 or [nstapel@chw.org](mailto:nstapel@chw.org).*

### NATIONAL CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY Nov. 21

*Children's Grief Awareness  
Day is an opportunity  
to ensure that grieving  
children receive the  
support they need.*

[www.  
childrensgriefawarenessday.  
org/cgad2/index.shtml](http://www.childrensgriefawarenessday.org/cgad2/index.shtml)

### HELPING CHILDREN WITH GRIEF AND TRAUMA IN TODAY'S WORLD Nov. 22

Oconomowoc Memorial  
Hospital Conference center  
791 Summit Ave.  
Oconomowoc, WI  
*Register for this free event  
hosted by Healing Hearts of  
Waukesha County by calling  
(262) 751-0874 or visit  
[www.healingheartsofwaukeshaco.  
org/](http://www.healingheartsofwaukeshaco.org/)*

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/](http://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](http://www.chawisconsin.org)