

DECEMBER EDITORIAL TCF 2015

My Dear Friends

I wonder how you might be feeling with the 'festive' period looming, and what it's like for you being bereaved and having to face annual holidays such as Christmas, Chanukah, Ramadan or New Year's Eve? Watching others celebrating when we are bereft, heartbroken and overwhelmed can be intensely painful and isolating. Memories of togetherness and pleasurable times remind us of and reinforce our monstrous loss. The death of our child, sibling, and grandchild has created havoc, is omnipresent, and the sense of loss and yearning is multifaceted and frequently intolerable.

Holidays force us to realise our lives have been irrevocably changed in the most brutal way, and in this we are left with having to develop new customs and rituals to help us cope. I had one precious xmas with our son, for which I am immensely grateful, as some are robbed even of this. However, I consequently had to rewrite a lifelong household script as it was untenable to follow the usual traditions with one less seat at the table. I don't think I was immensely popular for this as of course it affected all the extended family, but I am grateful that I was empathically indulged, and in this way somehow stumbled through the day, preoccupied and depleted, but still standing. It was a matter of self-preservation, of implementing a grief subjugating strategy.

And that's ok. It takes courage to grieve as it means a creative and innovative mastery over ourselves and our lives. We need to create a new meaning to make sense of our changed reality, as child loss is not an event, rather it is an indescribable journey of survival. Life must and does go on, but with altered contents.

In the midst of the darkness I hope you find peace and light in the celebrations and energies of those surrounding you, and most especially in your cherished memories:

"He took his big candle and walked into a room I cannot find, but I know he was here because of the light he left behind." Lady Mountbatten

With love,

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