

NOVEMBER EDITORIAL TCF 2016

My Dear Friends

There is no hierarchy of suffering. We all have our own traumatic and often lonely path to traverse when tragedy strikes. Of course grief and death comes to us all but the loss of our child has to be undeniably the most catastrophic of suffering.

Our children have been taken from us in all sorts of circumstances, and each and every devastating loss is an agonising tragedy to you as their parent. From illness to accident; from stillbirth to miscarriage; from suicide to homicide; from abortion to drowning; we emotionally bleed and have to grapple with our agony. Certainly some losses without doubt spawn 'complicated' grief depending on the circumstances of death, but for each and every parent who has to deal with this violation of the natural cycle of life, there is no easy road.

While the experience of grief and loss is universal, transcending culture and class, the grieving process is a very individual and personal experience. It is an error to assume that there may be less attachment, for instance, to an infant than to an older child, as for all your legacy has been cruelly expunged. Some grief may not be as socially acknowledged as it should, making for invisible, isolating loss. For example, gay couples may have less support from those who disapproved them becoming parents in the first place; or a teen having fallen pregnant by 'mistake'; maybe a grandparent isolated on the periphery.

I remember standing bereft in the hospital carpark, having had to relinquish my toddler as he grew cold, and a well-meaning friend told me I would be ok as I could have 'another one'. I wailed in despair and to this day, I have never forgotten that terrible feeling of wanting my dead child back again, not a replacement.

But in time, it is possible move from victims to empowered survivors. "You lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp." Anne Lamott

With love,

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