



For the Newly Bereaved...

IN THE BEGINNING

Your child has died and you've entered this strange new world of bereavement, where many people like you think they are losing their mind. Others, who have not had your experience, think that you will "get over" the loss of your child. Neither of these assertions is true. Eventually, when you've had the necessary time and proper support, you will find the pain will lessen, as you learn how to live with this terrible loss. Time is needed and thus of high importance as you patiently work through this process. Although we tire of dealing with the sorrow of it all, we ultimately learn that no one is able to hurt with the intensity of fresh grief forever.

HOW LONG WILL THIS FEELING LAST?

You wonder how or if you can survive this devastation and how long it will take for some normalcy to return to your life. Well, there are no timetables. You will be quoted times like two years, and it is true that some people will work through the process in that length of time. It all depends on your needs and how you have dealt with other losses in your life.

SHOCK

Most of us experience shock. This can last differing periods of time for different people. Some look back on it as a blessing, for it is God's way of protecting us from the full impact of all that we've lost. It's difficult to imagine that anyone can physically stand it if all of that occurs at once, so the Father is looking out for us. He wraps us in a protective cocoon that keeps out much of the pain. He allows us to continue functioning as we take care of the necessary things involved with the solemn task of making plans for the final rights of someone we love. People find themselves taking care of others during this time. Bystanders may comment on how well we are doing and admire our great strength never understanding that it was God's cocoon doing its job.

DENIAL

Some people experience denial. This gives evidence that "the shock" phase is disintegrating and the pain starts coming in. To avoid it, their self-protection mechanisms come into play. People do this by denying that the death has taken place. "He's not dead. He's visiting Grandmother," or "She's not dead. She's visiting with her friends." They're somewhere, but they're not dead. This is called denial, and it's a normal thing for some people to try to prevent reality from setting in. It works for a while, but that invented protective coating also dissolves. This may be when we find ourselves dealing with the reality of our loss. It doesn't get better for a while, but we've touched bottom for now. Some people bypass these diversionary tactics. They go directly to the heart of the matter and their grief starts right away. Such resolve to deal right away with what has to be dealt with before their grief can soften.

ANGER

Anger is another emotion that rears its head. It is a very normal reaction when someone dear to us has died. Although society frowns on anger and doesn't understand why it happens after a death, it is quite typical. When a grieving party feels as though they have been 'robbed' of their loved ones anger is often expressed. We look for someone to blame. Justice needs to be served. It could be doctors and nurses, or the medical establishment in general, if our child died in a hospital. A spouse, relatives or friends who do or say the wrong things in their efforts to comfort, may also be blamed. In addition, our religious beliefs may have to undergo some questioning. If we had depended on God to take care of our family, we may have anger at Him for His failure, as we see it. It may take some time for us to make peace with God.

There are constructive ways of directing your anger into positive channels. Physical activity, such as hard work or exercise, may help relieve the tension which would allow anger to be turned inward and become depression. When we understand that God desires us to permit Him to give us peace, He grants us the Holy Spirit which eliminates our tension. God is our best Friend who suffers with us in our loss. He is not our enemy. Telling our experience enough times, especially when it is a blessing to another hurting soul or having a 'good cry' alone or with another can also be a good tension breaker.

GUILT

Someone has said that if one separates grief from guilt, he/she will cut grief in half. There probably is some truth in this statement. But this is not a carte blanc statement. In many cases, the loss of a loved one is beyond the control of the remaining family members. As human beings we were not made to deal with the loss of a loved one, period. This is compounded when loss occurs prematurely, out of the natural order of things. Further, we are not capable of ourselves to think right.

In the loss of a child, parents will tend to blame themselves, especially if wrong parenting skills were involved that led to the child taking his life, even if as an adult. As parents, we naturally feel responsible for the outcome of our children, good or bad. In most cases, we must remember that we loved our child and did the best we knew how, with the tools we were given.

The Good News is that One has taken our brokenness and our infirmities and our guilt, each one and we can embrace this reality and praise Him for it. In His suffering for us we can experience healing. This is the only genuine source of healing—mentally, emotionally and spiritually that is effective

COMMON COMPLAINTS

Common complaints among bereaved parents include the loss of the ability to concentrate, excessive fatigue, inability to sleep or sleeping too much, loss of appetite, physical complaints--such as stomach disorders, ulcers, higher blood pressure and other health issues which are tied to the loss. It will be beneficial to know that time and patience will help to alleviate many of these conditions.

THE FUTURE

An aerial view of the road of grief would show us just how arduous the road really is. If the loss of a child or sibling or very close relative occurs suddenly, the trauma to the whole person is severe and immediate. This sudden change will create some immediate health issues within the first few days. These typically, will turn into intermediate, even long term physical and psychological chronic conditions during the duration of the "grief process." One may begin on this 'road of grief' going along on the "straight and narrow", then suddenly veer right or left into the steep, rough terrain of uncharted land. One can see that sometimes the road crisscrosses and returns to already traveled sections that have to be covered again. If we noted when our road made the wildest and most unexpected turns, we would see that the dates of

special family-oriented events coincide with those trips deep into the hinterlands. Such times as birthdays, holidays, death dates, Mother's Day, Father's Day, season changes, school beginnings and graduations and any date that is important in a family's history, all have signs near them that clearly mark them as detours.

Although the terrain alongside us is uncharted now, this time next year it will be more familiar. Though the second year typically has challenging "deep gorges" which the first year escapes, the unknowns of the year of 'firsts' will be behind us. It is very comforting to know that in the days we are living, it won't be long before the Restorer of Life will return and we will be reunited with our loved ones snatched from us in death. This strange, painful and difficult road we've be traveling will one day soon give birth to a bright and glorious morning when death will be swallowed up in victory. We will be reunited at last with our loved ones never more to part.

+ + + + +

It is our hope and prayer that you will find help to assist you in this 'grief journey'. Hope for Hurting Hearts is an expression which Brianna's Wings of Passion Foundation has embraced. We offer comfort, healing and support to those who have experienced grief in the loss of a loved one due to illness, sudden death, suicide, homicide or any unnatural loss of life experienced. This information was adapted from Bereaved Parents of the USA.

For additional information, contact BWP Foundation at P.O. Box 1456, Magalia, CA 95954. You can reach us by phone at 530-475-2742 or visit our website: briannacassidy.com for these resources and other materials available that brings hope to hurting hearts.

© 2016 *Hope for Hurting Hearts*
Brianna's Wings of Passion Foundation