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Please contact us at
1-800-336-6475
if we can be of any
assistance to you.

Another Perspective

HOLIDAYS 2015

Quarterly readings for Families and Friends from the Sudden Infant and Child Death Resource Center.

Dear Friend,

As the holiday season begins, we extend to you our hope for peace now and in the New Year. For those touched by the death of a beloved child, this time of year is full of celebrations that may be difficult for grieving families to enjoy. We hope you will experience compassion for yourself in your time of sadness, and will find some blessings in this season to sustain you.

~The Staff of the SICD Resource Center

HOLIDAY TIME ~ The whole world seems consumed by holiday joy—but those who grieve over the death of their child are only aware of the terrible hole in their hearts and in their lives. Here are helpful thoughts other parents have shared with the hope of making your holidays easier to handle.

Decide what is really meaningful for yourself and your family, what you can handle comfortably—and let friends and relatives know:

- ◆ Whether or not to talk about your child openly;
- ◆ Whether you can handle the responsibility of the family dinner, parties, etc., or if you wish someone else to take over these traditional tasks;
- ◆ Whether you will stay home or feel more comfortable in a different holiday environment.

Don't be afraid to make changes: it can really make things less painful:

- ◆ Open presents or have dinner at a different time;
- ◆ Attend a different service or go to a different church/synagogue;
- ◆ Let the other family members take over the decorating, making holiday foods, etc.

You may feel you can acknowledge your loss more meaningfully by:

- ◆ Giving a gift in memory of your child;
- ◆ Donating to charity the money you would have spent on your child's gift;
- ◆ Adopting a needy family for the holidays;
- ◆ Inviting a guest (foreign student, senior citizen) to share your festivities.

Whether it's sending cards, holiday baking, putting up decorations, or having a big family dinner, ask these questions before making any decisions:

- ◆ Have I involved or considered my other children?
- ◆ Do I really enjoy doing this: Do other family members enjoy doing this?
- ◆ Is this a task that can be shared by other family members?
- ◆ Would this holiday be same without this?

Some other special things you can do to honor your child:

- ◆ Put notes with thoughts about your child in his or her stocking and have family members read them (a chance for younger children to express feelings).
- ◆ Burn a candle on all special days to include your absent child.
- ◆ Buy a houseplant as a holiday living memorial.
- ◆ Make a list and then do gift shopping quickly on one of the "good" days.

Remember to take one day at a time and don't forget that when that "special day" arrives, it's truly often not as bad as anticipated. And whatever you do this year, you may decide to handle things differently next year. Growth and change go hand in hand.

Adapted from Handling the Holidays by Bruce Conley



Sometimes

By Marcia Updyke

Sometimes,

Memories are like rain showers
Sprinkling down upon you
Catching you unaware.
And then they are gone,
Leaving you warm and
refreshed.

Sometimes,

Memories are like
thunderstorms
Beating down upon you,
Relentless in their downpour.
And then they will cease,
Leaving you tired and bruised.

Sometimes,

Memories are like shadows
Sneaking up behind you,
Following you around.
Then they disappear,
Leaving you sad and confused.

Sometimes,

Memories are like comforters
Surrounding you with warmth,
Luxuriously abundant.
And sometimes they stay,
Wrapping you in contentment.

Angel Tree Makes for Roses in December

“God gave us memories so we would have roses in December.”
~James M. Barrie

By late 1998, I was preparing for my first holiday season without my precious daughter, Alexandria, who had died January 29, 1998 as a newborn. I had a 33-month-old son, Bryce. It had been almost a year since my daughter died and I was halfway into the subsequent pregnancy with my third child, another girl. Surely I was through the worst of the grief and my mind and heart would observe the expectation I had set for myself that I was beyond the heartache.

I could not have been more wrong. By the grace of God, I made it through that first Christmas without my daughter. The day was miserable, though, a train-wreck of sorts, when my emotions came out sideways.

That first Christmas and my assumptions surrounding it taught me important lessons about myself and my life after Alexandria: My life was not going to return to the normal I knew, I needed to be more gentle with myself, and, most importantly, I needed to find a path in which I could honor my spiritual relationship with my daughter and find my own path with my grief. I vowed that the upcoming birthday, anniversary, and year of holidays were going to be different.

The second holiday season after Alexandria was born and died rolled around all too quickly. It was still painful but, amidst the thorns, there were roses this time. I took the time to plan ahead and remember my daughter even in light of all the craziness of the season.

Bryce was almost four and Savannah, my rainbow baby, was seven months old. It was a hectic time, to be sure. My stepmother gave me a small tabletop Christmas tree. I found special angel lights to adorn it. By then, I had collected a number of angel ornaments that were gifts from others and tokens I had purchased myself in memory of Alexandria.

I carefully decorated the tree. With each angel I placed on the tree, I remembered something special about my experience with my daughter, treasured moments when I was able to hold her, give her a bath, see her smile. I still missed her terribly, but was able to find some peace in my loving ritual.

This is the twelfth December without my precious Alexandria. I will faithfully decorate the baby tree while quietly longing for her and remembering through tears the special time I carried her safely inside me and the memories from the week we had together.

I will have roses in December.

~Amy Daly 2010
(from www.OpenToHope.com)

