

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

Dear Friend,

As we move through these winter months, there may be some who are dreading the warm, Springtime weather and others who can not wait for it to arrive. Here is one parent's perspective comparing her ever-changing grief journey with the changing of the seasons. We hope you will uncover a path through your own grief that gives you comfort.

~The Staff of the SICD Resource Center

HOW GRIEF AND WINTER'S END ARE SIMILAR

Have you ever noticed that it's hard to tell when winter really ends and spring begins? Just when it seems all the snow has melted and that there hasn't been any falling for awhile, we get hit with more. Sometimes, it's just a little and hardly lasts long at all. Sometimes it's a blizzard and that cold, wet, white stuff is everywhere.

When it's light and fluffy, we can remove it easily. When it's heavy and compacted it is much more difficult. Sometimes, not long after another snowfall, we wake up and the sun is shining and the air is warm and spring like. We may wonder how it can be so different from one day to the next. We may also wonder when spring will really be here and are anxious for it to arrive, knowing that summer is not far behind.

If you live in Wisconsin, as I do, or somewhere like it, this probably sounds very familiar to you. For some, it is this very uncertainty and variety that people love about living here. Many others deal with it and endure it while longing for a more predictable climate.


The more I have learned about grief, the more it has struck me that in many ways it is not unlike our weather. Those of us who are grieving often wonder: When will this end? When will I be better? When will this cold, bleak time be finished? Is there no end to it? Will life always be like today?

After awhile, we may actually begin to feel better, less sad. More like we are really alive. We may get our hopes up thinking, "Ah finally, I have turned the corner. I am on my way. Life will be good again starting now." Perhaps those feelings and thoughts will last for moments, hours, days, maybe weeks, depending how far along we are in our grief. But for most of us, at some point much like the snow, our tears will fall again. Our anger will be back in all its force. Loneliness and our longing for the past will once more be a part of our present. When this happens we need to know: That this too shall pass. We haven't done anything wrong. We are not a failure at this grief stuff. The sun will shine again and the next time it will stay with us longer.

Just as the meteorologists attempt to forecast the weather, oftentimes we or others in our life try to predict when we will feel better, how we will feel next, and what we should do in the meantime. Just as the weather forecasters' best guess or researched opinion is not always right, nor are those of whom try to have us and our grief fit some sort of formula or pattern.

While gathering knowledge about grief and what it has been like for others may help us prepare for what comes, it cannot and we cannot with certainty, predict what will come. So just like when the forecast says it may or may not rain, we may want to

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

Ways to Thaw, Survive and Find Hope

- **TAKE CARE** of yourself physically. Eat right. Exercise (or at least watch someone else exercise). If nothing else, jog your memory.
- **KEEP YOUR ROUTINE.** Brush your teeth, every morning. No matter what else happens, do that and you are on your way. Just keeping a routine is a way to counteract the craziness.
- **BE REALISTIC.** It will hurt, but don't try to block bad moments. Be ready for them. Let those hurting moments come, deal with them and let them go.
- **TAKE OUT THE TRASH.** Just get it out of the house. Someday you can try getting it out on the right day.
- **GET OUTSIDE.** Catch snowflakes. Build a snow man. Take a memory walk.
- **BREATH.** In and out, in and out. It's that simple and that hard. Some days just breathing is all you can manage. Other days it's a bit easier, so relax and enjoy those moments when you can remember your loved one's life instead of focusing only on his or her death.

take our umbrella just in case. In grief that means knowing that: We may be angry. We may feel numb. We may not be able to concentrate. We might feel our loved ones' presence. We may not have the same priorities. We may view the world differently. We might feel relieved and free. We might be glad our loved one is no longer in pain yet still sad that now we are in pain without him or her. Our grief will have peaks and valleys.

Talking to others who are grieving, reading books about grief, attending a grief support group, or talking with a grief counselor will not make our grief disappear. It will not cause us to feel better sooner. These things may help us, though, to understand better what we are experiencing. And that understanding may make us feel less vulnerable as we face and embrace our grief.

Here in Wisconsin, when we get a good snow, we know that it is not something we can go around. The only way to the other side of town, even in the snowstorm, is to go through it. And the only way to get to the other side of grief is to go through it too. Bring along your umbrella.

Written by Deb Kosmer on April 16, 2012
(www.opentohope.com)



"To Honor You"

To honor you, I get up every day and take a breath, and start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile and the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love. I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked, and sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back, risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You are my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source. So every day, I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

By Connie F. Kiefer Byrd
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