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Please contact us at
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if we can be of any
assistance to you.

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

Dear Friend,

We hope that as the days lengthen and spring approaches, you may find some comfort and peace. This article reflects the grief journey of one bereaved parent, and her struggle to come to terms with her loss. Each journey is different, and each season brings up new challenges to face for grieving parents.

It is our hope that through learning how some have faced these challenges, you will uncover a path through your own grief that gives you some comfort.

~The Staff of the SICD Resource Center

Seasons of Grief

It is winter today. There is no sun, not even a flash of light to focus on. The air has become murky as if it has solidified, losing its clarity. Ice covers everything, smothering any life that might have been.

Staring out my window, I compare the bite of winter to my grief: the coldness, the shadows, and my reluctance to breathe in any more discomfort. Grief, like winter, appears uninvited and unwelcome. We hate the pain and wonder why we must endure the distress, while all along we feel its imminent arrival.

Winter forces the earth to rest. Everything stops struggling, stops performing, and sleeps. Nature's need to "do" is gone and "being" is all that is necessary. All that was living before appears lifeless. The leaves disappear from the trees, flowers no longer grace our gardens, and the grass is covered by snow. But what is going on beneath that which we see? Are the flowers really gone, or are they only changing . . . becoming new, becoming different?

Grief requires a retreat from living. We stop struggling, stop performing, and freeze. Our desire to "do" dissolves, and "being" is all that is possible. Our life as we knew it disappears, dreams are shattered, and our hearts are ripped from us in the blink of an eye. We are gone, lost in our grief. But what is happening in our heart? Is everything gone, or is it only changing . . . becoming new, becoming different?

Grief is harsher than winter. While winter always ends and I remember that spring will arrive, grief makes no such promise. I must wait without assurance. There are moments when winter is beautiful: a blanket of fresh snow or the surprise of a warm breeze in February. There are nights when winter is hard and ugly, when temperatures plummet and the howl of the wind threatens our sanity. Grief is the same. A special memory comes into my heart and grief becomes bittersweet . . . beautiful. Then, a letter addressed to my son arrives in the mail, and I am back to the harsh reality that he is gone.

My grief transformed me. It tore out everything within me and said There! It is GONE! What are you going to do? You have NOTHING LEFT TO HANG ON TO! You must begin again. You must change.

And change is what I did. As winter changes the earth, my grief changed me. It gave me a period of time to step back from living and just be, a space in my existence to feel only that which I needed to feel. It was a time for reflection, reprioritizing, and searching.

"But it was painful, horrifying, and devastating," you say. "How can you be thankful for such a thing?"

(...continued on back)



When my son died in 1996, I had no other option but to change my thinking. I could not live another day presuming he no longer existed. By saying to myself that I am changing my perception of death, I announced to the world and myself that I intended to change what I believed. I expressed my intent, reached for it, and settled for nothing less.

I began searching for and finding information to support my new view. I read books about life after death, spirituality, and reincarnation. I perused websites, joined email lists, and joined chats where these topics were addressed. I found like-minded friends who understood what I was feeling. I began to support my new belief system with knowledge.

I invited experiences by talking to my son and asking him to come to me in a dream or to give me a sign of his presence. I meditated and made myself more aware of that which isn't seen or touched. I opened up a doorway of possibility and welcomed all that came from love to enter.

Finally, I accepted what happened and expressed gratitude for it. When the lights went off and then on again for no apparent reason, I was quick to say "thank you." If I was only thanking the power company, it didn't matter. No one knew. The more I accepted as being real, the more I experienced. We hear often that "seeing is believing," but this is about "believing is seeing."

My journey has been both trying and inspiring. There have been moments when I thought the cold and darkness would never end, and moments when tears of joy washed away the pain and light flooded my being. I invite you to walk the path of grief a little differently: to nurture winter's bleakness and look deep into its purpose. And just as we must think differently to see winter's grace, we must think differently to see the gift of grief. It is there, buried beneath a frozen crust that protects and restores while the winter of our soul . . . arises.

Edited from an original article by Sandy Goodman. (loveneverdies.net) Sandy Goodman is the author of *Love Never Dies: A Mothers Journey from Loss to Love* (Jodere Group, 2002), and the founder and chapter leader of the Wind River Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. She has presented at national conferences for The Compassionate Friends, Bereaved Parents of the USA and the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.

Winter Grief, Spring Healing

This time of year can be especially difficult for many who are grieving a personal loss. The December holidays have come and gone, and the days are long and dreary for many. It sometimes it feels as if the warmth of Spring may never get here, but instead of waiting for light at the end of the long dark tunnel of Winter, you can create a beacon of light for yourself!

You have the power to inspire renewal and hope within yourself at times when you may need it most. Many of us enjoy special gardens and other projects that foster healing while also honoring our loved ones. And the long winter days and nights can be a perfect time to start planning ahead.

Spring is just around the corner, isn't it?

<http://www.opentohope.com/winter-grief-spring-healing/>
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