

New Year



After a few years, we begin to look to what we might do with the new year that is offered to us. This is a year that our loved one will never know, but one we can make part of her/his life. We often hear that it is not so much what happens to us, as what we do about it.

Maybe this is the year to start a volunteer activity in memory of our loved one. Groups who work with needy children are always looking for someone with some love to give to a child who desperately needs it. How proud your child, grandchild, or sibling would be to know that you are making another child's life easier in their name. And you will find that it gives you a reason to get up each day and, maybe, even to welcome a New Year.

By Betty Ewart, past national president of Bereaved Parents of the USA, Editor of the BPUSA national newsletter
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To the TCF Waterbury members:

Being the Chapter leaders along with all the other "jobs" people have taken over listed on page 2, including myself, many of us have realized that in helping others we help ourselves. We initially did things in memory of our child that we lost but find, in time, we are helping people in situations we found ourselves in, lost and confused and find a satisfaction in helping our "family" find a new life. In this New Year, give some thought as to extending yourself in memory of your child/grandchild/sibling and donating a part of you and you will find that you are actually helping yourself but with a deep satisfaction.

Judy, Editor of the TCF Waterbury Newsletter

The Myth of Perfect Parenthood

The feeling of worthlessness is strong in many bereaved parents. I believe that the myth of Perfect Parenthood that is deeply set in us is one of the main causes. We expect that we will raise perfect children, provide them with the very best we can afford, and most of all, see that they are safe and secure in their lives. Then, when the unspeakable happens and our child dies, we feel we have failed totally and completely.

We did not see the unhappiness in our child in time to prevent this suicide. We did not spot the symptoms of her illness in time to prevent her death. We let her take the car instead of driving her ourselves. We were enjoying ourselves somewhere else when he was run down by a careless driver. It's our fault. WE failed to be perfect parents. It sounds ridiculous but subconsciously, below our awareness, lies the idea that if we had been doing our job as "Good Parents," we could have prevented our child's death.



Not one of us has ever said, "I expect to be the perfect parent," but on all sides of us, it is implied that we should be. The television and advertising media are big contributors to this myth. The "Father Knows Best" type of TV program convinces us that we should be perfect parents. The parents in the TV shows always see that their child is depressed and know the right words to talk him out of it. The TV mother always discovers the illness in time for the doctors to cure it. The TV child has been taught to drive carefully and if he does get into an accident, he comes out of it with fixable injuries.

Advertising tells us the right things to do to raise perfect children. If they are not perfect, it tells us the right things to use to make them that way. It even tells us what insurance to buy that will help us pay for that perfection.

We ourselves expect to do a better job of rearing our children than our parents did. All around us, other parents seem to be doing a better job with their children than we are.

We are bombarded from all sides by the idea that we should be perfect parents. Even before our child died, many of us felt inadequate as parents at times, but when our child died, we saw ourselves as total failures. Our unconscious minds told us we were not perfect parents. Therefore, our child was dead. We failed. We were worthless.

How unfortunate this is; as human beings, we cannot be perfect parents. WE need to realize that we did the best we could for our child with the emotional, intellectual and material tools we had.

Our child's death, no matter what he died from, was not caused by our failure as parents. We need to be aware that this myth of Perfect Parenthood is actively at work in our subconscious minds and feeds our feelings of worthlessness.

The pain of the loss of our child is devastating enough, we don't need to beat ourselves down even further by allowing this myth to consume us.

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