

For Siblings



already got a good start—by having a caring friend like you.

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You Did Not Die

You live in the beautiful wind that blows.
You live in the sound of birds that crow.
You live in the sun that shines so bright.
You live in the peaceful dark at night.
You live in a star I see in the sky.
You live in ocean waves that come in with the tide.
You live in the smell of flowers and grass.
You live in the summer that goes so fast.
You live in my heart that hurts so much.
You did not die, we only lost touch.

By Shari Swirsky, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Reprinted from "This Healing Journey," A Bereaved Sibling's Anthology



Change is Natural

Sometimes I sit and think of what my life would be like today if my brother were still alive. I think of my graduation day and cry because he wasn't there to share my laughter and joy when I received my diploma. Then I think back to his graduation day, knowing how happy he was and how excited he was to join the real world. Now that I have graduated, I don't feel the same excitement or joy because he is not here to share it with me.

Ask Dr. Paulson

Q. I am in college and my roommate just received word that his younger brother was killed in a car accident. He has left for home and the funeral and already told me not to expect him back for several weeks. He and his brother were as close as two people could be and this must be tearing him up. I'm concerned about how to help him when, and if, he does come back. I say this because five years ago my older sister died and I didn't want help from anyone. All I wanted to do was drop out of life. Fortunately a lot of people did care and eventually I came out of my depression. But I know how hard it was, looking back. How would you suggest I help?

A. Having already gone through this terrible experience yourself, you have some idea of what your roommate is feeling. No one knows exactly what another is going through, but he is lucky to have a friend who cares enough to want to try to help and understand. Probably the best thing you can do for your friend is just be there to listen to him. Listen to him talk about his brother, how his life is changing (and has changed), his fears, his struggles. Just listen. The second thing you can do is help him keep going—not necessarily partying and playing but eating, sleeping, attending classes, finishing his course work, studying for exams, etc. Don't let him pull back so far that he can't catch up. It's not usually the grand gestures that end up meaning the most—but rather the little day-to-day consistencies. He's

The loss of my brother has changed my life forever. I would do anything to bring him back so everything would be the same as it was before. But I can't. I love my brother and I always will. I miss him more than anything.

When you lose someone as close to you as a brother, you tend to change for good and for bad. Sometimes people change by becoming more loving to others who are close to them, and that can be good. There are some people who change by becoming more withdrawn into themselves. That is what happened to me.

Before my brother's death, I would very rarely discuss my problems with someone else. Now I don't discuss them at all. Now I tend to react much more quickly to all kinds of situations. Sometimes I blow up at people when they did nothing wrong. I will apologize and they think I am crazy. But if you simply explain the situation and apologize, they do understand.

What I am trying to say is that change is a natural thing; we just have unique circumstances under which we change. Most people will automatically understand, but there are a few who need some explanations. Just know that you are okay and don't worry about what others think. Know inside that you are doing what you need to do to get better.

By Marydith Ferris, TCF St. Petersburg, FL

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