

## Another Year Without My Child

~excerpts

It's a new year and I am marking it, for the first time, without my child. This is one more milestone in the journey of a bereaved parent. The new year brings the promise of new adventures, happiness and prosperity to others.

To bereaved parents, it adds another dimension to our loss. It also brings the opportunity to look at where we are and how far we have come.

I remember the first New Year's Day without my son. What an empty, hollow feeling I had on 1/1/2003. My world had ended, the shock was still systemic in my mind and body, and I counted the days since he last walked, talked and laughed on this earthly planet, dwelling on the passing of days, hours and minutes since the moment of his death.

I am a different person than I was before my son died. I have simplified my life from what it once was. I have many new friends who share the experience of losing a child. I have become more solidly spiritual. I have gone through Dante's seven circles, walls and gates of hell and emerged as the unique person I should have been all along. People change. Bereaved parents change a great deal.

By Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF Katy, TX, Jan 2007  
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## The Miscarriage

Broken dreams  
and shattered hopes  
for a child  
who never was.  
Unfulfilled and empty.  
Deprived of a chance  
to know,  
to nurture,  
to love and to treasure  
the child  
who will never be.



By Lynnette Titus, TCF Waterville/Toledo OH  
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## Grief Education

Recently, I overheard a lament by a very young, bereaved mom and it got me to thinking. She said, "I don't feel young anymore." Grief has that effect on all of us, regardless of our age, don't you think?

We've instantly been made older when we are new survivors.

Of course she was referring to all of her friends. They are having babies, rejoicing over each new tooth and new step. They talk of mortgages, house plans, new carpet and wallpaper. They have baby showers, write thank you notes and take pictures for a baby book. But all this young mom was doing was making funeral plans, picking out a casket, getting sympathy cards instead of presents and suddenly feeling old. The bloom of youth had been replaced by the reality of life and death.

Nothing really grabs our attention like death. Everything that seemed important the day before suddenly has no significance now. What we worried about in the past has no bearing on today. Compared to death, everything else seems like a piece of cake. But, in the midst of this incredibly heart-wrenching time, I wonder if we haven't been given an opportunity to learn things our friends can't grasp. We have learned the value of enjoying each day as it comes, not always saving and waiting for a rainy day but doing things now.

We have learned the importance of giving hugs, saying thank you and sharing joys while our families are with us. We have learned to be grateful for the privilege of doing their laundry, fixing their lunches, buying groceries, waiting up till they come home, giving them advice and picking up the pieces when they don't follow our advice.

We have realized the satisfaction that comes from cheering their endeavors and overlooking their faults. We understand that memories are made each day and we need to make them count because we may not have an opportunity to "add to our memory banks."

Yes, grief has made us older, but I hope that as time passes, we can look back and say that it has also made us wise in ways that never would have been possible before. It's not that we wanted to volunteer to be bereaved! I often say that when someone says we only learn through actual experience, we should raise our hands and ask if we couldn't just try the correspondence course as an alternative. But, since the experience is upon us, I hope you can know that your family and friends and those you work with and live nearby are going to benefit from the life-changing things you've already learned. I'm proud of all of you enrolled in this most dreadful course in grief. You've earned an A!

By Carlene Vester Eneroth, Spokane WA  
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