



## HOW CAN I SURVIVE THE LOSS OF MY CHILD – Personal Tail

If your reading this as a bereaved parent, like myself you feel that your world has been ripped apart, at times you would look into your sole and wonder how do I continue! How can you survive until the next moment of each and every day without my child being there? Your heart is broken, as it has never been broken before. A black hole of emotions has been torn into your sole and nothing would fill the void that has been left.

I am of course speaking as a parent who loss his son, I do not have all the answers and I'm full of questions like 'why us!' At my darkest times I felt so alone, not knowing where to turn to or even if there was anyone out there, I felt so lost. The obvious choice was my wife, but how could I burden her? She too was carrying the woes of the world on her shoulders. Our baby left us and I had no answers, why!

It was my wife who pulled me back from the brink and has been there for me and the whole family, she has been my rock. I am lucky I have someone there who knew what we all were thinking. But who is there for her? And who is keeping her from going over the edge? I try, sometimes saying the wrong thing, sometimes just trying to help but ending up going about it in the wrong way. I hope she knows that I'm trying...

When we first lose our child, as parents we are devastated, facing the world with a missing part of our being. A piece of yourself is lost and your future is forever changed. It doesn't matter the age of the child or even if they past away before they could meet you, the pain and suffering doesn't lessen, they would have completed you and now that they have gone, we are left behind, picking up the pieces of our own personal hell. We will always be missing our children with wings and this feeling will never go away.

It is unnatural for a child to die before a parent, and this is why many grieving parents would start to question what will life hold and whether life will now hold any meaning for them, they would wonder how they will survive the pain of their loss. It is quite normal to blame themselves and ask, "If only I had." or "I should have seen." The self-destructive nature of the human would look for answers and may blame their partners or loved ones. Feeling of rage towards doctors or the medical profession is also quite normal and so is the outrage with officials and the government, with the lack of help that provide. We may question our believes and of God, more so with the people who tell us "that its a part of God's plan" or "God has a reason."

Parents feel so alone and isolated in their grief, in some ways it is partly the society we live in, friends and family often don't know what to say, how to react or even feel that they are not able to talk to us when a child dies. As the isolation becomes deeper, it can leads to depression and other problems. So it is important to talk to people who understand the loss. This could be family or friends, it could also be the priest or clergy of your place of worship. If you feel that is not possible, you could talk to your doctor or grief counsellor. You may find a support group within your area.

This may sound simple, but normally it is the simplest things that work the best, don't hide behind a false smiles and say every think is ok, it's not, and we all know it.

There is also not a right way to suffer a child loss, this can differ from person to person, it can depend on beliefs or family history, if the baby is a miscarriage or even if they were ill prior to their death. With a million and one factors, no wonder each one of us would feel the pain in so many ways and it doesn't mean that others care less if they mourn differently to you. With all the stresses, the marriage or the relationships can be affected. So with both parents going through the same loss, why do they grief so differently? Its not that simple! Often parents of a child loss, will experience more anger, depression, guilt and physical symptoms than those grieving other losses. We tend to depend on the other partner thinking, blindly at times, that they will understand or that they will know magically, what the other one is feeling. This is not the case, conflicts can occur due to the lack of understanding about how each other express their grief, this can lead to finding a friend to talk to, this doesn't always leads to affairs and generally will just be a friendship, and as I said at the start everyone will react differently to each situation. Sometimes when a relationship is having problems before the loss of the child, this can re-emerge, often more explosive than before, this cocktail of raw emotion, can lead to one blaming the other, but saying things in the heat of the moment can leave a lifelong impact.

Most couples, have a few problems from time to time, but being there for each other is probably one of the most important things you can do, you have shared one of the most traumatic and heart ranching things any parent can go through. Start to listen to each others needs and don't shy away from what is uncomfortable, if you don't understand what they are going through, who will? Try and be more patient with your partner, at times they just want to know your there and will always be there for them. They may just want to be held while they cry. Sometimes we will need to forgive them, they may not want to go to an event or a night out, but you have been looking forward to it for weeks and they just are not up to it. One last thing, is to start re-getting to know your partner, you both have changed and are finding a new way in the world, find the person you fell in love with once again.

When you are suffering the death of a child, you will be finding it very difficult to adjust to the immense changes happening in your life right now. You may go through a wide array of emotions that is totally out of your character, such as denial, self-blame, sleeplessness, fatigue, anxiety and despair. These are quite normal but not a given, as you may lose your appetite and just can't get out of bed in the morning, but grief can shake everything up, your beliefs, your personality, and even your sense of reality. While your feeling this way, you may not notice that you need help and will find it hard to cope with everyday matters. Grief and bereavement goes hand in hand, although normal, but it can manifest in a huge range of unexpected ways. Some people get angry, some people withdraw further into themselves and some people become completely numb. Sometimes, grief can turn into something more serious, like depression.

Bereavement is the time we spend adjusting to loss. There is no standard time limit and there is no right or wrong way to feel during the bereavement period, everyone must learn to cope in their own way.

For me, I began writing a blog, sometimes it is helpful to write down your feelings and what you are thinking. I don't always



keep it up to date and I would welcome anyone else who feels that they would find it a help or comfort. I also talk about George, at times I think it's painful, but in some ways it can help you heal.

I try and spend time with the family and I must say my wife is far better at it than me. She will book events where we can all be together and provide stability in a chaotic world.

The family has seen a bereavement counsellor and later I saw a grief counsellor, this was due to others around me seeing how I was handling my feelings after my mother past away and this just compounded my already drained feeling of loss. I am also trying to set up a dads support group; I have a number of fresh ideas and a possible partner with a local bereavement group.

And hopefully I will improve who I am, as we become better people. Hopefully you have found this article helpful as it is written from the heart, I know each day I miss my baby boy and the pain of his passing still remain, we all find way to make it liveable