



M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Loss After Loss: When Does Grief Stop?

I did not realize how truly foreign grief was to me until the stillbirth of my son Jonathan in 1995. As a little girl, I was not sheltered from death; seeing a dead person in a coffin was not scary to me. Death was openly talked about in our home, and we kids were taught that with life comes death. My parents took us to visitations and funerals of our grandparents, various relatives, and some of their older friends. Regularly, we visited the gravesites of my mom's parents and her baby sister who died before my mother was born (next to whom Jonathan is now buried). And like most kids, I had experienced the loss of a handful of pets. As a young woman, I thought I knew all about death and grief. How wrong I was! Those experiences paled in comparison to the stillbirth of my baby boy.

I did not realize there is physical pain with grief. The heart actually aches and feels as though it is literally breaking. I did not know sobs could come from the depth of the soul. I was not aware it was possible to feel phantom kicks and hear a baby cry in the middle of the night, even when there is no longer a baby. At 26 years old, I thought I had experienced many aspects of life until I was introduced to ugly, lonely, dark grief.

For me, the intense, gut-wrenching grief lasted for about a year before it began to subside. Each year lightened the pain, but certainly there have been - and will still be - triggers that kick me in the stomach and remind me of those awful emotions. You think you will never forget how horrible grief feels until you grieve again and are reminded of its ugliness. And while initially grieving the first real loss in your life, you think you are immune to ever feeling that way again. Or at least I did.

Six years after Jonathan's stillbirth, and one year following a kidney transplant, I became pregnant with our third baby who was supposed to be our "happily ever after" - the reward for all my husband, Byron, and I had endured the past few years. I was extremely excited about my pregnancy, yet scared I would lose again. People said to me, "God would never let you lose another one ... He'd never allow you to go

through that again." Because I was the director of a national pregnancy and infant loss organization, I knew better. I had seen numerous families who had endured more than one loss, and I knew I could not assume I was entitled to any less suffering than some of my fellow M.E.N.D. families. Sadly, I did lose again. My little baby was miscarried when I was 10 weeks along. Once again, grief returned. I had forgotten how horrid it is to grieve.

A few years later, I grieved again when we made the decision not to have any more children. Years after that, I grieved when our living son went away to college. I grieved when my father-in-law died. And I grieved yet again when my two beloved dogs died. The death of Jonathan has been the worst sorrow of my life, and therefore, the grief that followed his death is by far the most significant. What I have learned is the additional losses I've endured have been followed by grief, but they really resurrect the deep grief I still have from the loss of Jonathan. I now know the circumstances - usually deaths - that cause grief are all different, but grief is grief. And no matter what we have lost, grief is miserable.

So, we wonder ... when will the grieving stop? I say never. It is part of life. Some losses - like deaths - we will always grieve to some degree. Other losses we grieve will no longer be losses to us, such as a child going off to college. Jesus warned us in John 16:33 that we will experience many troubles in this world. Paul, Peter and James wrote a number of scriptures in the Bible telling us to expect suffering. We are not exempt just because we are followers of Christ. But praise the Lord for His promise that one day He will wipe every tear from our eyes and there will be no more death, mourning or crying (Revelation 21:4). Let us all cling to that assurance and know that just as King David wrote in Psalm 30:5, "weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning!"

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*
Mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell
M.E.N.D. President/Founder

Nota Español: El artículo de Rebekah Mitchell aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina.
Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la pagina numero 14.

M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly meetings, this newsletter, and our Web site at www.mend.org.

For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the newsletter, contact us at

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A Case of PTSD From Pregnancy Loss

Written by: Lindsey Henke

Published on *Still Standing Magazine*

The “P” in my PTSD should stand for pregnancy loss, because pregnancy loss is what has created my post-traumatic stress syndrome. My PTSD stems from the stillbirth of my daughter. I know outside of the loss community people don’t often want to hear about the trauma that is associated with the death of our children, or in the case of pregnancy loss, the trauma that we experience as our children are so confusingly born into this world, yet have already died inside us.

Below are some of the criteria for PTSD with **my own personal experience added** to share with others how my PTSD is specifically shaped by pregnancy loss. Yours might look different.

Symptoms of **My** PTSD from Pregnancy Loss:

- A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both the following are present:
 1. The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with a pregnancy that ended abruptly, never began, or resulted in the death of their unborn child.
 2. The person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror as they were forced to intensely participate in the birth of their dead child, which also resulted in the demise of their hopes and dreams.

- B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
 1. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the delivery or loss of pregnancy and child.
 2. Nightmares of the event or associated nightmares such as: your husband now dying, your dog dying, future babies you do not have dying, and horrific things happening that you did not dream of before the event.
 3. Flashbacks to the moment when you heard the words “No heartbeat” and “I’m sorry your baby is dead” from doctors and nurses.
 4. Intense psychological and physiological distress and reactivity at exposure to triggers from the event and reminders of not having the child you planned for (i.e. exposure to hospitals, living babies, pregnant women, the empty nursery, your own menstrual cycle, and even car seats make your heart race.)

- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and emotional numbing including:
 1. Efforts to avoid thoughts (of your baby and the way it was supposed to be), feelings (sad, anxiety, guilt, grief, anger, confusion, despair, etc.), conversations about the event (“How’s the baby?” is the worst. I try to avoid that one all the time.).
 2. Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse

recollections of the trauma (baby showers, your doctor's clinic, ultrasounds, friends' newborn babies, pregnant women, thinking about getting pregnant again ... I could go on).

3. Feeling detached and estranged from others – Ah, yeah! Especially from people whose pregnancies result in living children.
4. Sense of a foreshortened future – YES! Thinking – “My child didn't live; why should my life be all of a sudden guaranteed?”

- D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the loss):
1. Difficulty falling or staying asleep – Who sleeps well after knowing the worst can really happen to them and has?
 2. Irritability – Having a short fuse because life has played a cruel joke on you.
 3. Difficulty focusing – On anything but your own grief.
- E. Duration of experience is more than 1 month. – Yup! I have a feeling it will be a lifetime.
- F. Causes clinically significant distress or impairment of everyday functioning. – Yes! Your life is never the same, people at work think you should get over it but you can't focus, your relationship struggles in ways you never thought it would, and even doing a simple task like going to Target is impossible because you cry every time you walk by the baby section.

In conclusion, I think I have it! I have PTSD, but my “P” stands for pregnancy loss.

I want readers to know that you can have PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) from a pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or the death of your child AND it's okay to seek help. I wrote this piece to let people see that even someone who is supposed to have her stuff together, as a mental health therapist, can still get sideswiped by life and experience mental health struggles – like PTSD.

If you feel that some of the symptoms described in my personal version of PTSD from pregnancy loss apply to you, please consider talking to a professional counselor or therapist to help you address your pain. I know that seeing a therapist at first might be scary, but finding the right one has helped me address my traumatic grief and PTSD from the stillbirth of my daughter. I will never forget my trauma or my grief. Instead I try to integrate it into my life as part of my story—a part I hold close to my heart.

Retrieved from www.stillstandingmag.com on February 3, 2016

*The reality is that you will grieve forever.
You will not “get over” the loss of a loved one;
you will learn to live with it.
You will heal and you will rebuild yourself
around the loss you have suffered.
You will be whole again but you will never be the same.
Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.*

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

May/June Topic

Mother's Day/Father's Day

Deadline: March 31, 2016

July/August Topic

Praise During the Storm

Deadline: May 31, 2016

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcomed. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please see page two of the newsletter for the appropriate address to send your submissions. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our website indefinitely unless we receive notice in writing that you are only granting permission for your submission to appear in the printed version of the newsletter. Because our newsletters are posted online, please understand that your name will likely be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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Letters to the Editor should be sent to jennifer@mend.org. All letters submitted to the editor are subject to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests that it not be published.

Birthday Tributes: M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding newsletter. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at www.mend.org.

<u>Heavenly Birthday</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January/February	November 30
March/April	January 31
May/June	March 31
July/August	May 31
September/October	July 31
November/December	September 30



Birthday Tributes

Happy 4th Birthday, Jake! Happy 1st Birthday, Zac!

Dear little ones,
We never dreamed you'd be so beautiful...
In all of the times we tried to imagine
Every last detail of who you would be,
Through all of the nights we spent quietly thinking
Of how we would feel
When we first looked at you,
We patiently waited
And silently wondered.
We hoped and we prayed
And we tried to imagine...
But we never dreamed you'd be so beautiful.
-Kimberly Rinehart

We love you, boys. We think of you daily
and send you each pieces of our hearts.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Brother

Jacob "Jake" Martin Wilhite
April 25, 2012
PPROM due to incompetent cervix
Isaac "Zac" Odell Wilhite
April 1, 2015
Placental abruption
Parents: David and Kessi Wilhite
Brother: Caleb Daniel



Happy 1st Birthday, My Little Man!

We miss you so much. You were loved and will always
be remembered, our precious sweet baby boy. You made
me a mother, and I will always love you, my little man.

Randall Loudamy, Jr.
March 19, 2015
Cord accident
Parents: Randall and Melissa Loudamy



Happy 4th Birthday, Bryson Cross!

Happy 4th birthday to my little monkey. You brought
me so much love and joy in just a week. You touched and
changed so many. Always remembered never forgotten. I
love you, sweet boy. Give Ama Nancy a big hug for us. We
miss you, sweet boy.

Love xoxo,
Mommy

Bryson Cross
February 25, 2012—March 3, 2012
Placental abruption/premature
Mommy: Carrie Galyon
Siblings: Brayden, Breanna and Brooklynn



Happy 1st Birthday, Adalynn!

Our sweet baby girl, Adalynn Faith, we love you so
much. When we first learned we were pregnant with you,
we prayed for a redheaded little girl. When you were born,
you were an answered prayer. God blessed me with a
beautiful redheaded baby girl. We miss you every second
of our lives. We wish you were down here to spend this
special day with us, sweet girl. We hope you have an
amazing birthday in heaven. We know you're having so
much fun up there! Your whole family misses and loves
you to pieces. We can't wait to see you again.

We love you, Addie.
Mommy and Daddy

Adalynn Faith Price
April 22, 2015
Placental abruption
Parents: Stephen and Linsay Price



Happy 2nd Birthday, Ashlynn!

Happy 2nd birthday, baby girl. We love you, our tiny
but mighty. You will forever be remembered and always
missed.

Ashlynn Caroline Davis
November 29, 2013—March 20, 2014
Respiratory distress
Parents: Stevan and Faith Davis
Siblings: Keona and Katie



Happy 7th Birthday, Michael!

It is hard to believe another year has passed. We hope
you have a great heavenly birthday and love you more than
anything.

Mommy, Daddy, Lucas, Seth

Michael Stephen Parris
April 9, 2009
Clostridium innocuum/infection



Happy 6th Birthday, Madison!

Happy heavenly birthday, our sweet baby girl! We miss
you more than anything. Until we meet again, we love you!

Mommy, Daddy, Lucas and Seth

Madison Nicole Parris
March 5, 2010
Prevotella bivia/infection
Also remembering
Baby Parris (Madison's Twin)
January 2010
Unknown cause
Parents: Sam and Stacey Parris
Brothers: Lucas and Seth



Happy 8th Birthday, Dharma Lucille!

You made me a mom. You helped shape the mom I would be to your living brothers and sister, as well as your sisters in heaven. You always remind me God has "removed my sack cloth and clothed me with joy." I miss doing the girly things mommies get to do with little girls, like painting each other's toenails and teaching you how to cook. Your legacy has helped so many others. We love and miss you! Please ask George Harrison to sing "Happy Birthday" to you and your sister for me!

Mommy, Daddy, Max, Molli and Milo

Dharma Lucille Drude
 March 31—April 1, 2008
 Anencephaly
 Also remembering
 Liza Belle Drude
 Stillborn February 23, 2015
 Unknown cause
 Stella Darling Drude
 Stillborn January 23, 2014
 Anencephaly
 Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude
 Siblings: Maxwell, Molli and Milo



Happy 1st Birthday, Jaden!

Happy birthday, baby boy! You are so dearly missed. We think of you every single day. We hope you're keeping Grandpa Mike very busy and that he's giving you all the love and hugs we can't. You're always in our hearts, and someday you'll be in our arms. We love you!

Love,
 Mommy and Daddy

Jaden Leopold Brissette
 March 29, 2015
 Hydrops fetalis/cystic hygroma
 Parents: Joseph and Amy Brissette
 Siblings: Giana, Johnathan and Gemma



Happy 7th Birthday, Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray!

Seven years ago your precious eyes opened and the very first thing you saw was the beautiful face of sweet Jesus. You never hurt from the pain of this world, you never hungered after a hole only He can fill. And that beauty is what gives us hope. Today and every day, we hope for the day we finally go home to be with you, that our whole family will rejoice and sing and feel a love like no other. You are there now, and we pray you are proud of us. We know you watch over us. We love and miss you, Sweet Princes. Happy 7th birthday!

Never Forgotten, Always Loved
 Mom and Dad

Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light
 February 23, 2009
 Placental abruption
 Parents: Kirk and Diana Light
 Siblings: Brayden and Lexi



Happy 7th Birthday, Owen!

Happy 7th birthday to our sweet Owen! We know you will be celebrating your birthday in heaven with Jesus, which is the ultimate celebration. Not a day goes by Mommy and Daddy don't think of you. We are very lucky to have your twin sister with us to always remind us of your life. She misses you very much, too. Both of your sisters are quick to point out to friends and strangers alike we have five kids in our family, and you are just in heaven. What a special brother and son you are to our family. We love you, Owen Patrick!

Owen Patrick Webb
 Stillborn April 30, 2009, at term
 Unknown cause
 Parents: Brian and Melissa Webb
 Siblings: Sophia (Owen's twin sister), Natalie,
 Zachary and Samuel



Happy 6th Birthday, Arianna!

Happy 6th heavenly birthday to our sweet angel, Arianna! We love and miss you every day. We are so thankful for every moment we had you here with us and know we will see you again. This year you will get to celebrate with your Papa, and I know he will enjoy his time with you. We love you, sweet angel!

Mommy and Daddy

We wish you were here so we could see what a beautiful little girl you are with your pretty dresses and bows in your hair. This year Grandpa Paul will be living there with you and Aunt Elizabeth. We miss all of you, so send down butterfly kisses to us. Draw pretty pictures in the sky for us to see.

Love,
 Grandma Jeannie

Arianna Elizabeth Wilkinson
 Stillborn April 12, 2010
 Tear in amniotic sac
 Also remembering
 Baby Boy Garcia
 Miscarried August 2006
 Baby Girl Wilkinson
 Miscarried November 2008
 Baby Boy Wilkinson
 Miscarried August 2011
 Parents: Leroy and Monica Wilkinson
 Grandma: Jeannie Garcia



Happy 5th Birthday, Baby David!

Hi, my baby boy. You were my firstborn. I miss you every day. I think about what I would be doing if you were still here. You will always be my lion cub. Happy 5th birthday, son!

David Ortega
 April 18, 2011
 Congenital renal agenesis, hypoplastic lungs
 Daddy: Michael Ortega



Happy 2nd Birthday, Rosi!

Dear Rosi, not a day goes by without remembering you in our lives. You are remembered during good and bad times. You are missed very much by all of us. We send you blessings, greetings, love and hugs on your birthday. With Jesus by your side and lovely friends to play with, I believe you will have a wonderful day. We are looking forward to that bright and glorious day so we can celebrate it with you. Don't forget to catch your birthday balloon as it comes your way with tons of love and kisses. Our dear little angel, we love and miss you a lot. May God be with you on your 2nd heavenly birthday.

Rosilyn Angel Bob

April 20-21, 2014

Two vessel cord

Parents: Manidhar and Willuna Bob

Siblings: Romilyn, Raelyn and Rhealyn



Happy 7th Birthday, Baby Wheeler!

Hi, sweet baby! We can't believe it's been seven years! We remember the excitement of learning you were on the way only to be quickly followed by the heartache of learning you were already gone. We love you and miss you so much. Julianne mentions you in our prayers every night.

Baby Wheeler

Miscarried March 2009

Also remembering

Michael Noah Wheeler

Stillborn January 27, 2010

Abigail Mercy Wheeler

Miscarried June 3, 2014, at 14 weeks

Cystic hygroma

Everly Hope Wheeler

January 2015

Vanishing twin syndrome

Parents: Jim and Larissa Wheeler

Sisters: Julianne and Evelyn



Happy 2nd Birthday, Levi!

Hey sweet boy, I think about you every single day. Our lives are still so incomplete without you here. I often wonder how similar you and your little sister would be. Would you sing along to every song the way she does? Would you hug my neck as tightly? I can feel you close through every hug she gives. You are so missed and loved, my precious Levi. We are longing for the day when we will be able to hold you close again. Until then, we wish you the best birthday blessings in heaven. We love you always.

Life is short. Heaven is forever.

Love,

Daddy, Mommy and little sister, Evelin

Levi Samuel Bowmer

April 19, 2013

Trisomy 13

Parents: Sam and Jenae Bowmer

Little sister: Evelin Jean



Happy 5th Birthday, Lily!

Dear Lily, when I think of you being 5, my thoughts are less about wanting to hold you and more about wanting to know you ... "Who is this young lady; what is she like?" I imagine a little girl showing more personality, more preference and more passion. You would be looking for your place, testing your boundaries and finding your friends. We would be cheering you on, correcting your missteps and comforting your hurts while always pointing you to Jesus, because He is what it is all about. But you already know that. Happy birthday! We miss you!

Love,

Mom, Dad, Isaac and Judah

Lily Joy Moore

March 2, 2011

Early pregnancy loss

Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore

Brothers: Isaac and Judah



Happy 4th Birthday, Paislee!

We can't believe you are 4, baby girl! Your baby sister has arrived, and oh how it has made us miss you in a different way. We so wish you could have been here to meet her and that we could watch the two of you grow up together. However, we know she is so blessed to have the best big sister and her own guardian angel watching over her. We love you, and not a day goes by we don't think of you! Every day is one day closer to being reunited with you. We can't wait!

Mommy, Daddy and Colbie Ann

Paislee Ann Frette

April 4-5, 2012

Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome

Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette

Little sister: Colbie Ann



Happy 4th Birthday, Everett!

Our dearest Everett, you would be 4 years old this year. How we miss you and wish we could see you blow out your birthday candles and play with your little brother and sister! You are always on our minds and in our hearts. We look forward to being with you someday in heaven.

All our love,

Mommy, Daddy, Christian and Clara

Everett Christopher Delmar

Stillborn April 18, 2012, at 28 weeks

Unknown cause

Also remembering

Baby Delmar

Miscarried December 20, 2014, at 9 weeks

Unknown cause

Parents: Chris and Miranda Delmar

Siblings: Christian Matthew and Clara Evelyn



Happy 6th Birthday, Alexander!

Wow! Six years! Time flies by ... But sometimes it feels still. Your memorial is beautiful and is displayed in our new house! We finally put your ashes in an urn—so special.

Today I heard a beautiful song about pregnancy loss. It says that your first steps will be on holy ground! So true! There is no place like heaven.

We miss you every day. We talk to Abraham and Leah about you, and we will never forget you!

Te amamos

Daddy, mamá, Abraham and Leah

Alexander Seely

April 30, 2010

Cord accident

Parents: Ron and Raquel Seely

Siblings: Abraham and Leah

**Happy 6th Birthday, Baby Brooke!**

Wow, it's hard to believe you would be 6. We are another year closer to meeting you in heaven. Your perfect little life still inspires us to minister to grieving families. We have learned so much from you, especially to never take life for granted. Please continue to watch over us, especially your sisters, Sarah and Savvy. We love and miss you every day!

Love,

Mamma, Daddy, Sarah and Savannah

Brooke Sophia Daily

March 11, 2010

Vasa previa

Parents: Jeremy and Lisa Daily

Sisters: Sarah and Savannah

**Happy 1st Birthday, Mason!**

I love and miss my baby boy every day.
Until we meet again, Baby Mason.

Mason Lewis Hendrex

April 13, 2015

*Extremely premature, ruptured lung and esophagus,
cardiac arrest*

Parents: Todd and Stephanie Hendrex

Brother: Nathan

**Happy 9th Birthday, AJ!**

We miss you so much each and every day. We daydream of what you would look like, what you would be interested in, or what your voice would sound like. We work every day to keep your memory alive, and through God's grace, we find the strength to keep going.

We will hold you in heaven. Our love for you is endless!

We love you more!

Daddy, Mommy, Eli and Alex

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alex

**Happy 6th Birthday, Sophia!**

Happy 6th birthday in heaven, our sweet angel. We cannot believe it has been six years since we said hello and goodbye. Our lives are forever changed because of you, and we are grateful for you. We talk about you every day and look forward to the day we get to see you again.

A moment in our arms, forever in our hearts.

Sophia Rose McGhee

Stillborn March 29, 2010, at 33 weeks

Unknown cause

Parents: Matt and Stacy McGhee

Siblings: Micah and Scarlett

**Happy 1st Birthday, Leo!**

Your wings were ready.

Our hearts were not.

Love you, little boy.

Leo Baldwin

Stillborn March 12, 2015

Placenta detachment

Parents: Jeremy and Novella Baldwin

**Happy 1st Birthday, Audrey!**

Precious girl, it's hard to believe it's been a year since we last held you and kissed you! Not a day goes by you are not thought of and missed. We so wish we could have you here to celebrate your 1st birthday. While we are sad you can't be here, we will be celebrating our short time with you. You are so very loved and missed, and we cannot wait to hold you again someday. Happy 1st birthday in heaven, sweet little butterfly!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Big Sister Ella and Big Brother Adam

Audrey Claire Schauf

Stillborn April 2, 2015

Severe IUGR

Parents: Kyle and Katie Schauf

Siblings: Ella and Adam

**Happy 5th Birthday, Jaliyah !**

My little princess ladybug, not a day goes by I do not think of you. I miss you so very much. I wish you were here with me. I talk to your baby brother often about you. I will let him know how strong you were. I love you, baby; we miss you. We can't wait until the day we meet again.

Forever in my heart ... love you always,

Mommy and baby brother Fernando

Jaliyah Danielle Rodriguez-Peel

April 29, 2011

Anencephaly

Mommy: Rosa Rodriguez

Little Brother: Fernando



The Counselor's Corner

"Providing Guidance Through Life's Storms"
Written by Susan A. Adams, PhD, LPC-S, NCC
www.drSusanAdams.com

And the losses keep coming ... Sometimes when we are caught in the grief web we don't see any way out. The pain is so sharp, the sadness so deep, the future so black. We probably all have heard that grief is not like a cold – we never get over it. There is a lot of truth in that.

Often people struggle to go back and try to recapture their life as it was before the death of their loved one. However, that life doesn't exist and never will be recaptured. Does this mean we are destined to never laugh or find the joy of living again? It certainly does feel that way.

About the time the tears stop flowing or our sadness quits threatening to swallow us whole, we begin to discover "other losses" that are associated with the death of this precious life. Sometimes we lose our support system because these people just don't get it and move on with their own lives. People often avoid those who are grieving because they don't know what to say or how to "fix" the hurt. Family members may love and care about you but pull away because of their own difficulty in dealing with grief.

Other losses can be a sense of identity (Who am I now that...?). It is not uncommon for some to feel they are "less than" or wonder how to define their family. The answer to the question about the number of children you have can be challenging. There is no template or correct response to that question.

The make-up of your family (e.g., spouse, partner, extended family, etc.) can create many facets of grief. Each of them is grieving as well, but their grief may look very different from yours. Truly no one understands exactly what you are feeling, because we cannot feel another's pain. Couples often grieve very differently, and conflicts that existed in the relationship prior to the death can carve deeper scars. These scars can make it difficult to travel their grief journey together.

The question I am most frequently asked by clients is, "Will there ever be a time when I no longer grieve?" There is no cookie cutter response to this because each person is different. However, I do compare their pain to the sharp edges of an exploded can. These edges are painful and dangerous because you can easily cut yourself, but over time, the sharp edges get smoothed so they aren't as painful. You can learn to find joy in life again ... laugh again ... and love again. It happens over time, but you cannot be afraid to embrace the life that is while finding ways to embrace your loved one within your new life.

This issue's recommendations cover diverse topics. I included one on pet loss because many people struggle with this type of grief. It also provides some good insights about children and bereavement for parents. Resources are available from www.centering.org – one of my favorite resources for grief-related books.

Parenting Through Grief, by Brock and Pierce. Raising kids has always been a balancing act. When someone in the family dies, however, everyone's world is turned upside down. Getting through the pain of your own loss while having to attend to the needs of your kids, who are also grieving, is an incredible challenge. This book provides a framework for how to navigate parenting in the shadow of loss and helps you to pay attention and tune in to what matters most.

Saying Goodbye To My Awesome Pet, by Van-Si

Losing a pet in childhood is a profound event that is seldom forgotten. It's an early influence on our understanding of life itself. Laurie Van-Si's new book provides children with a way to navigate their grief that is both soothing and creative. Its engaging, open-ended questions and enjoyable activities encourage kids to write their own unique stories in meaningful ways and at their own developmental levels. Experts in child development agree that honoring a child's bereavement helps them move through their grief and into healing. It can serve as both a powerful guide on that journey and an ongoing source of comfort for a heartbroken child.

My NICU Baby Book: A Centering Corporation Resource

Since you can't go to a store and buy a baby book that measures blood gases or records the date your baby goes off the respirator, Centering Corporation wrote one. It has charts to measure baby's growth, lots of places to write out questions, journal feelings, record numbers you need to know, charts for feedings, any surgeries and tests. You will also find a family tree, notes to siblings, words to learn, treatments and more.

Sowing in Tears

Teardrops fall but not in vain
For like a field needs falling rain

My heart needs moisture, yes indeed
To grow faith of my mustard seed

So rather than hold back my tears
I'll give to God my hurts and fears

And trust Him as these hills I climb
And wait for joy at harvest time

Each tear that falls, falls at His feet
And there a lasting comfort meets

He grows my faith year after year
And I know He never wastes a tear

So soon the trials will be past
His never-ending love will last

And we will trade tears that fall
For shouts of joy to the Lord of All!

♥ Krista Stoller,
Mommy to Matea

Waiting for the Shout

Loss after loss ... When does grief stop? As I first reflected on this topic in preparing the newsletter, I imagined it would be about those who have suffered multiple losses. Those who have endured seeing the pink lines or positives over and over again, only to see signs days, weeks, months later that reveal another life is gone too soon. Or the moms and dads who have multiple little ones, buried alongside each other in the cemetery, waiting for the day their physical bodies will join them in the ground and their souls will be reunited in heaven. But after attending another funeral in January for a life who survived 41 weeks in his mother's womb and then was snatched away due to an issue beyond anyone's control, I found that even though I only suffered one loss, grief never stops.

When I first came to M.E.N.D., I thought it was just a place for me to find some answers and find comfort. Little did I know I would attend funerals for babies gone too soon: for a teenage girl who should never even know this part of life existed; for a family and culture where all I could do was sing the hymns I knew in my own native tongue, and listen to the words in their native language, praying they were providing comfort to the hurting family; for families who prayed for miracles, but still had to say "hello" and "goodbye" within hours and days; for other funerals I have attended, watching the single pall bearer cradle the tiny casket in his arms, as we say goodbye to the precious little life for the last time.

You grieve the loss of your baby or babies, and while we would grieve the loss of any life, we grieve it so much more after we have suffered our own loss. We grieve the loss of their child. We grieve again the loss of our child. We grieve the loss of innocence for us and them, knowing now the worst possible things could happen, because they did happen. We grieve the loss of all the first moments, birthdays, holidays and celebrations missed. While we may think with each year it gets easier because the pain is not as piercing, each time we comfort another friend enduring another loss or watch another casket gently lowered into the ground, all of the pain emerges again. We grieve with the parents and grieve our own losses all over again. We grieve, and it never stops.

As I looked around the graveside service, I noticed the variety of ages, from young girls with braids in their hair to older women with snowy white tops, young boys playing in the gravel when their mom wasn't looking to older men longing for snowy white tops or at least something to protect their heads from the bitter cold wind. I couldn't help but wonder how many of these who have endured life and death many times over grieve with each service they attend, especially a long-lived life, and they relive their losses as if they happened yesterday. And unfortunately, how many young ones attending this service will experience the same as we have many years down the road and remember seeing the sorrow then, and now living in their own.

So when does the grief stop? It doesn't stop with our loss. It doesn't stop years after our loss, because it always returns, especially as we try to comfort others as they grieve a loss similar to our own. Grief will not stop in this lifetime.

Grief will stop when Joy comes in the morning. Psalm 30:5 tells us weeping endures for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. I wish joy came the day after we spend our night weeping, but we all know we weep for hours, days and weeks at a time, and still continue off and on for years. But the Joy that stops grief is not just a distraction or happy moment. It is THE MOMENT - the moment we finally see our Savior, the Joy, face to face. Whether it is in our death, or His return, it matters not, only that we will be reunited with our babies, and no family will ever hear the words "there is no heartbeat" or lay a child in the ground again, because there will no longer be death.

So while I weep for the night for my loss and grieve with others for theirs, I am anxiously waiting for the Shout—the moment Jesus returns, and He takes me Home to spend eternity with Him, and my little baby, as well as all the other family and friends who passed on before me. I look forward to the day of seeing the blessed Joy we are all long awaiting.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain
unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel,
and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds,
to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 (KJV)

♥ Jennifer Harrison,
Mommy to Serenity,
M.E.N.D. Newsletter Editor

M.E.N.D.

Chapter Corner**Chapter Meeting****Information****M.E.N.D.—Houston**Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.4500 Bissonnet, Ste 337B,
Bellaire, Texas 77401Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Lone Star College,

3200 College Park Dr, Room A228,

The Woodlands, Texas 77384

Director: Stormy Mitchell

stormym@mend.org, (281) 374-8528

Subsequent pregnancy group meets

on odd numbered months

on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,

led by Chiara Ott (chiara@mend.org).

Daddy's group meets quarterlyon the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,

led by Greg Miller (stephaniem@mend.org)

M.E.N.D.—TexarkanaMeets the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital

2400 St. Michael Drive

Texarkana, Texas 75503

Director: Monica Davis

monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

M.E.N.D.—NW WashingtonMeets the 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room

1800 Myhre Rd.

Silverdale, Washington 98383

Gig Harbor Meeting

Meets the 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

St. Anthony Hospital/Greenpoint Dining Room

11567 Canterwood Blvd NW,

Gig Harbor, Washington 98332

Director: Stacy McGhee

stacym@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

M.E.N.D.—SW MissouriMeets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Project H.O.P.E.

1419 S. Enterprise

Springfield, Missouri 65804

Director: Kathryn Gold

kathryn@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates**Tulsa**

I recently went to Dallas and had a wonderful time at the M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference. Thank you to Rebekah and her team for being such gracious hosts. It is always nice and very insightful to be able to fellowship with the other chapter directors. I hope to utilize the information I learned to continue to minister to grieving families.

*Lisa Daily***NW Washington**

Our leadership team traveled to Texas for our fourth year for the annual Leadership Conference. We always learn so much and enjoy the fellowship with all the other leaders of M.E.N.D. from around the country. We have already welcomed new families this year and sadly had some M.E.N.D. members with additional losses. We continue to pray for all these families.

*Stacy McGhee***Wichita Falls**

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls has continued to meet and welcome new families each month. Our leadership team is also growing, with members interested in learning how to help our group. This spring we will hold our 2nd Annual Mother's Day Ceremony. It was a success last year with a guest speaker and balloon release, and we are already beginning to plan for this year's event. We are praying for all of our families.

*Sarah Fukasawa***SW Missouri**

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri continues to gather for our support group meeting the first Thursday of each month. I am pleased that it is a safe place to laugh, cry and share our experiences together.

Tickets are now available for our 6th Annual Scrapbooking and Craft Event on April 23. This event is from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and located in rooms 210 A and B at Second Baptist in Springfield, MO. The cost is \$30.00 and includes breakfast, lunch, snacks, drinks, table space, make-n-takes and prizes. Silent auction items will also be available. Please contact April Wood for registration at april@mend.org. If you would like to come but don't have supplies and cannot afford them please contact April. Albums, pages, stickers and more have been donated for your use. Also, I will bring my tools for your use and will give any assistance in putting together your album.

Save the dates:

Balloon Release—October 15, Christmas Candlelight Ceremony—December 12

*Kathryn Gold***Houston**

We are already having a wonderful year in M.E.N.D.—Houston. My assistants and I had an enriching time at the M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference. It is something we look forward to every year, as we get a chance to learn more about how to serve grieving parents and evaluate how our chapter is doing. We are always so honored to be able to walk alongside fellow bereaved parents.

*Stormy Mitchell***Bryan/College Station**

M.E.N.D.—Bryan College Station is continuing to contact our local hospitals, doctors, and birthing centers to spread the word about M.E.N.D. and what we provide the loss community. If you would like me to send M.E.N.D. information to your local doctor or hospital please let me know at Jennie@mend.org.

Jennie Drude

Texarkana

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana continues to minister to hurting families in our area through meetings, our Facebook page, and phone calls. For more information about M.E.N.D., please contact Monica Davis at monica@mend.org or 903-490-1210.

Monica Davis

Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland is so thankful to be able to continue serving our existing parents and new grieving parents in our area. Whether it is through emails, phone calls, or our monthly meetings, we are seeing God continually at work, and we are honored to be a part of His work in helping, supporting, and healing families when they lose a baby.

Sara Hintz

*But in all of the sadness,
when you're feeling that
your heart is empty, and lacking,
You've got to remember
that grief isn't the absence of love.
Grief is the proof that love is still there.*

Tessa Shaffer, Heaven Has No Regrets

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.
Texas Avenue Baptist Church
3400 State Highway 6 S,
College Station, Texas 77845
Director: Jennie Drude
jennie@mend.org, (979) 220-7851

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa

Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
Canyon Crossing
1651 E Old North Rd.
Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063
Director: Lisa Daily
lisa@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls, Texas

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
Christ Home Place Ministries
1420 Twin Oaks Street
Wichita Falls, Texas 76302
Director: Sarah Fukasawa
sarahf@mend.org, (940) 642-3284

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland, Illinois

Meets the 1st Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
St Peter Lutheran Church
202 E Schaumburg Road
Schaumburg, Illinois 60194
Director: Sara Hintz
saraann@mend.org, (630) 267-9134

M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings in the Dallas Metroplex

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings

are held the 2nd Thursday of
every month
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Daddies group

meets the 2nd Thursday of
March, June, Sept. and Dec.,
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

*A time for dads to meet together and
discuss topics relevant to them as fa-
thers. Our moms and dads meet together
for introductions before dividing into two
groups for discussion.*

Subsequent pregnancy group

meets the 4th Tuesday
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Led by Liz Walker: liz@mend.org
*For families who are considering
becoming pregnant or are currently
pregnant after a loss.*

Food and Fellowship

are held the 4th Thursday of
every month at 8:00 p.m.
at the Corner Bakery in
Southlake Town Center

*A time to relax and meet with other
M.E.N.D. parents in a social setting.*

Contact Brittney Fish:
brittney@mend.org

Infertility group

meets the 3rd Monday
at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Cheryl Davis for meeting
location and information at
Cheryl@mend.org

*For families experiencing
infertility after a loss.*

Parenting After Loss Playgroup

Meets monthly at various locations in the
Dallas / Fort Worth metroplex.

Contact Magen Kaye: Magen@mend.org
or call (214) 435-3870

**Mommies AND daddies are both
welcome at all M.E.N.D. meetings.
Unless otherwise noted, all support
group meetings are held at:**

**Wells Fargo Bank
800 W. Airport Freeway
Irving, TX 75062**

(Located in the Crystals Pizza parking
lot, between MacArthur and O'Connor)
Meetings will be in the bank board room,
located on the first floor.

For more information,
call (972) 506-9000.

In Loving Memory**Grace Irene Biglieni**

December 6-19, 2007

Congenital heart defect

Hypoplastic left heart syndrome

Given by mommy Lindy Biglieni

Brooke Sophia Daily

Stillborn March 11, 2010

Vasa previa

Gifts given by

Parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily
and sisters Sarah and Savannah
Grandparents John and Carol Eck**Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Prematurity

Given by Parents Rob and Cheryl Davis
and little sister Annalise**Paislee Ann Frette**

April 4-5, 2012

Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome

Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette

Sister: Colbie Ann

Given by grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin

Serenity Harrison

Miscarried December 3, 2009

Given by parents Curtis and Jennifer Harrison
and siblings Levi and Ziva**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

Baby Mitchell

Miscarried December 2001

Given by grandmother Marnie Mitchell

Margot Lily Perry

Stillborn June 10, 2013

Cord accident

Parents: Brandon and Marisa Perry

Siblings: Adeline and Bennett

Given by Grammie Marie Perry

Kyleigh Elaine Rabe

October 1, 2012 – January 26, 2013

SIDS

Parents: Kyle and Kristen Rabe

Given by grandparents Gary and Karen Rabe

Mindy and Maggie Smith

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTTS and Polyhydramnios

Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith
and siblings Travis and Julia**Alexis Raine Sonnenberg**

January 24—February 3, 2009

Diaphragmatic hernia

Daddy: Alex Sonnenberg

Given by grandparents Mark and Ruth
Sonnenberg**Arianna Elizabeth Wilkinson**

Stillborn April 12 2010

Tear in amniotic sac

Baby Boy Garcia

Miscarried August 2006

Baby Girl Wilkinson

Miscarried November 2008

Baby Boy Wilkinson

Miscarried August 2011

Given by parents Leroy and Monica Wilkinson

Gifts of Support

Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation –

Patterson Family Advised Fund

Junior League of Texarkana, Arkansas

IBM Employee Charitable Campaign

Wolleat

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

Information Technology Alliance, Scottsdale, AZ

Subsequent Births**Anthony and Lauren Martinez**

of Weatherford, Texas,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Doltan Garrid,

born October 17, 2015,

measuring 6 lb., 6 oz.,

and 20.25 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers

Pieper Adelaide,

stillborn August 25, 2014,

IUGR

Tim and Laura Bateman

of Carrollton, Texas,

along with big sisters

Leah and Hannah,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Noah Timothy,

born January 7, 2016,

measuring 7 lb., 13 oz.,

and 20.25 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers

Andrew Robert,

stillborn October 7, 2014,

unknown cause

Joshua Totherow and Danielle Hyer

of Mesquite, Texas,

along with brother Landry,
joyfully announce the arrival of

Mia Elisabeth,

born August 19, 2015,

measuring 4 lb., 8 oz.,

and 18.5 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers

Faith Marie,

October 9, 2014,

unknown cause

Brian and Melissa Webb

of Houston, Texas,

along with siblings

Sophia (Owen's twin),

Natalie, and Zachary,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Samuel Isaac,

born November 11, 2015,

measuring 8 lb.,

and 20 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers

Owen Patrick,

stillborn April 30, 2009,

unknown cause

Jason and Jennie Drude

of Montgomery, Texas,

along with big brother Max

and big sister Molli,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Milo Theodore,

born January 27, 2016,

measuring 9 lb., 4 oz.,

and 20 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers

Dharma Lucille,

March 31—April 1, 2008,

anencephaly,

Stella Darling.,

stillborn January 23, 2014,

anencephaly,

and Liza Belle,

stillborn February 23, 2015,

unknown cause

Brent and Courtney Frette

of Burleson, Texas,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Colbie Ann,

born February 9, 2016,

measuring 4 lb., 10 oz.,

and 17 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers

Paislee Ann,

April 4-5, 2012,

Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome

The Path I Was Given

I lost my daughter, Dharma, April 1, 2008, to anencephaly. She lived for 21 hours and 22 minutes. I then went on to have a healthy son and daughter. It was not until a few months shy of Dharma's 3rd heavenly birthday that I was able to say (and believe) I would not change how things went at all. God had been showing me blessings from her life from day one of finding out at 20 weeks she would not live. It was during a lecture at Bible Study Fellowship that God did bring healing, but in a much bigger way than I had been wanting or expecting. Soon after that I had tattooed on my arm "clothed with Joy." It was part of Psalms 30:11-12, the verse we had placed on Dharma's headstone. My head always believed it would become true, but now my heart was up to speed. I would even go as far as saying, "We would do it all over again if we have to" ... not knowing that we would.

December 26, 2013, we learned our fourth baby, Stella Darling, also had anencephaly and would not live long after birth. I was mostly shocked because this is VERY rare ... like only a handful of us in the United States have had this happen. We began our preparations to say hello and goodbye. We thought we had many months to buy her burial plot, prepare our living children who were now 3 and 4 years old, and complete our "bucket list," if you will, for our short time with her. Well, at my 16-week doctor's visit we learned our sweet girl had gone to be with Jesus the night before. I felt so betrayed, picked on and robbed just to name a few. I had had all scheduled C-sections, but this would be my first natural delivery. I was not prepared for anything! Thankfully, my M.E.N.D. girls had my back, and within hours, they had brought me a tutu in her tiny size, a hand painted memory box and birthday decorations for my hospital room! We were going to "Stella-brate" my sweet girl's short life! Stella was stillborn the next day. I felt like my joy was stolen from me. I wondered how long it would take to get it back.

It took months to glue myself back together to just be a functioning member of society again. I missed my girls so much, but I still longed to hold another baby. Because anencephaly has no known cause, it would be a real roll of the dice as to whether we should try again.

We did. I found out December 26, 2014, I was expecting my fifth baby! At my 8-week visit, it was confirmed this baby did not have anencephaly, and we were overjoyed! We decided to tell our living kids, and they were also so excited. They kept asking if God was going to let us "keep this one." I would just say, "I hope so."

At my 12-week visit to my MFM doctor, we learned our baby did not have a heartbeat. Once again, I was crushed. Our round-headed baby lay there on the ultrasound without movement. Because of complications from the birth of Stella, it was advised I have a D&C with this baby, whom we learned the next day through blood work I provided weeks earlier was another girl, Liza Belle. I was so sad I would not be able to hold her like her sisters. No pictures. No footprints. No memories. The next day, I went to pre-op for my "procedure" as they kept calling it. I would just say, "I'm having my dead baby, not my gallbladder removed." This is her delivery. I delivered her. She was a girl. I came home from the hospital to my M.E.N.D. girls and their best comfort foods. They left their sad eyes at home. They understood. Liza was not a miscarriage. She was my daughter and she died.

As I write this today, we just "Stella-brated" Stella's 2nd heavenly birthday. The girls were once again by my side with Dr. Pepper, cake and pizza rolls. They even sang "Happy Birthday" to her. I am a few weeks away from Liza's 1st birthday, and I still wonder why her life was so short. I miss her terribly. I will say that I am still working on being "clothed with Joy" again, but I do know God keeps His promises and will once again remove my sackcloth. I could not have survived my losses without my M.E.N.D. family or trust in God. There is hope that one day, I will truly be thankful for the path I have taken through motherhood. It was not the path I would have chosen, but it is the path I was given and will use to bring others to God and share the legacy my daughters have left. I am forever grateful for all six of my children: Dharma, Max, Molli, Stella, Liza, and our newest addition Milo, who shares a VERY strong resemblance to his big sister Dharma.



My six children
who made me a mother



♥ Jennie Drude

Mommy to Dharma, Stella and Liza

M.E.N.D. Chapter Director—Bryan/College Station

¿Pérdida tras pérdida: Cuándo se termina la aflicción?

No me daba cuenta realmente lo extranjero el dolor de pesar era para mí hasta el día que nació mi Jonathan sin vida en el año 1995. De niña, no fui protegida de la muerte; ver a una persona muerta en un ataúd no me daba miedo. Se hablaba abiertamente de muerte en nuestro hogar y a nosotros de niños se nos enseñó que con la vida, viene la muerte. Mis padres nos llevaron a las visitas y los entierros de nuestros abuelos, varios parientes y algunos de sus más viejos amigos. Regularmente visitamos las tumbas de los padres de mi mamá y su hermanita que murió antes del nacimiento de mi madre (con quien ahora Jonathan esta enterrado a la par.) Y como la mayoría de niños, yo había experimentado la pérdida de un puñado de animales domésticos. Como una mujer joven, pensé que sabía todo sobre la muerte y el dolor. ¡Que equivocada estaba! Esas experiencias palidecieron en comparación con el parto de mi niño.

No me daba cuenta que hay dolor físico con la pesadumbre; el corazón realmente duele y se siente como si literalmente se rompe. No sabía que sollozos podrían provenir de la profundidad del alma. No sabía que era posible sentir patadas fantasmas y poder escuchar un bebé llorar por la media noche, pero no hay un bebé. A los 26 años de edad, pensé que había experimentado muchos aspectos de la vida hasta que conocí el feo, solitario, y oscuro dolor de aflicción

Para mí, el dolor intenso y aflicción desgarradora duró aproximadamente un año antes de que empezara a disminuir. Cada año aligeraba el dolor, pero sin duda ha tenido y seguirá teniendo disparadores que me dan una patada en el estómago y me recuerdan de esas emociones terribles. Crees que nunca olvidarás lo horrible que se siente el dolor, hasta sufrir una vez más y ser recordada de su fealdad. Y mientras inicialmente lamentando la primera pérdida real en tu vida, te crees que eres inmune a la sensación de esa manera otra vez. O al menos así lo pensé yo.

Seis años después del nacimiento sin vida de Jonathan y un año después de un trasplante de riñón, me encontré embarazada de nuestro tercer bebé que iba a ser nuestro “feliz siempre después” - la recompensa de todo mi esposo Byron y yo habíamos sufrido los últimos años. Estaba muy entusiasmada acerca de mi embarazo, pero tenía miedo que lo iba perder otra vez. La gente me decía: “Dios nunca permitiría perder otro... él nunca le permitiría pasar por eso otra vez.” Porque era el director de una organización nacional de pérdidas durante el embarazo y de bebés, yo sabía mejor. Yo había visto numerosas familias que habían sufrido más de una pérdida y sabía que no podía asumir que estaba sobre menos sufrimiento de algunos de mis compañeros de mis familias de M.E.N.D. Lamentablemente, si lo perdí otra vez. Mi pequeño bebé fue abortado involuntariamente cuando tenía 10 semanas de embarazo. Una vez más, volvió el dolor de aflicción. Me había olvidado que tan horrible es pesar.

Unos años más tarde, pase dolor otra vez cuando hicimos la decisión de no tener más hijos. Años después de eso, me dolió cuando nuestro hijo vivo se fue a la Universidad. Dolió cuando murió mi suegro. Y una vez más cuando murieron mis dos queridos perros. La muerte de Jonathan es el peor dolor de mi vida, y por lo tanto, la aflicción que siguió después de su muerte es el más significativo. Lo que he aprendido es que cada una de las pérdidas adicionales, ha sido seguida por dolor, pero realmente resucita la profunda pena que me queda de la pérdida de Jonathan. Ahora sé qué circunstancias, generalmente las muertes, que causan dolor son diferentes, pero pena es pena. Y no importa lo que hemos perdido, el dolor es miserable.

¿Por lo tanto, nos preguntamos... cuando terminara uno de endecharse? Yo digo nunca. Es una parte de la vida. Algunas pérdidas, como muertes, siempre nos entristeceremos a cierto grado. Y otras pérdidas que sufrimos, ya no serán pérdidas para nosotros, como un niño que se va a la Universidad. Jesús nos advirtió en Juan 16:33 que vamos a experimentar muchos problemas en este mundo. Paul, Peter y James escribieron un número de escrituras en la Biblia que nos dicen que esperemos sufrimiento. No estamos exentos porque somos seguidores de Cristo. Pero alabado sea el Señor por su promesa que un día él enjugará todas las lágrimas de nuestros ojos y no habrá más muerte, luto o llanto (Apocalipsis 21:4). Así que vamos todos adherirnos a esa seguridad y saber que así como el rey David escribió en Salmo 30: 5, “El llanto podrá durar toda la noche, pero con la mañana llega la alegría!”

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*
Presidente y Fundadora
Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y Mitchell bebé Mitchell

La realidad es que la aflicción es para siempre.

Usted no va “superar” la pérdida de un ser querido; Usted aprenderá a vivir con él.

Se cura y se reconstruirá a sí mismo alrededor de la pérdida que ha sufrido.

Usted será completo otra vez pero nunca va a ser ni desea ser el mismo.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

Joy and Pain, Easter 2012

It is Easter time ... and after a long-awaited pregnancy our daughter Matea is home. Only it was not us who brought her home as we had anticipated. Rather, it was God who took her home.

And so this Easter brings JOY and PAIN.

JOY because this week will always remind us of Matea. The one we longed for and prayed for and to whom God granted life.

PAIN because this week will always remind us of our daughter Matea. For 36 weeks we knew her in the womb, dreamed for her, prayed for her, and anticipated the day we would see her ... and then she died ... and the dreams died, or at least changed.

JOY because joy is all she knows. Matea knows nothing of the sadness we have and the tears we cry because we wanted to walk here with her awhile. She knows nothing of our desire to talk to her of Jesus and to dream with her of Heaven ... all she knows is the presence of Jesus and the glory of Heaven ... for she is already there.

Easter brings JOY and PAIN.

PAIN because of what God felt when He had to separate Himself from man because of sin.

JOY because God had a plan for restoration.

PAIN because the plan was going to be costly and God, being God, could not be satisfied unless He paid the price himself.

JOY because the pain was temporal but the joy is eternal.

PAIN because no one should have to experience the loss of a child ... but God did.

JOY because the grave could not contain His Son and neither can it contain our daughter.

PAIN because what we thought was ours to hold was ours to hold but for a moment and His to hold for an eternity.

JOY because someday God will wipe all tears from our eyes ... and our little Matea was blessed enough to never even have to cry.

PAIN because this is the path God chose for us.

JOY because ultimately joy is where the path will lead.

PAIN because God made the choice to give His Son to us.

JOY because God's grace enables us to give our daughter to Him.

PAIN and JOY alive and present at the cross alive and present at the crossroads of life.

And so...we choose to embrace the PAIN, that we might embrace the JOY.

Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. II Corinthians 9.15

♥ Krista Stoller,
Mommy to Matea
Written Easter 2012
<http://chocolatefilledhope.wix.com/home>

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“... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:4)

M.E.N.D. Fundraisers *As a non-profit organization, M.E.N.D. is funded solely by private donations and fundraisers. Any assistance you can give us by participating in any or all of these fundraisers is greatly appreciated.*

- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers in Texas and Louisiana who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D. To link your card, go to www.krogercommunityrewards.com and set up an account if you do not already have one. Once you receive the email after setting up your account, click on “My Account,” then go to “Edit Kroger Community Rewards” and input your Kroger Plus card number. You’ll see a screen with your information in boxes, at the bottom right, there is a box that says Community Rewards. Click that, then enter the M.E.N.D. number, which is 80513. Once that’s entered, you’ll confirm that M.E.N.D. is your charity of choice. This link will be good until the 2015-2016 program expires. You must link your card each year to M.E.N.D.
- **Tom Thumb** also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please contact Rebekah (rebekah@mend.org) to obtain the Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D. Reward cards can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.
- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.
- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D., visit www.missionfish.org to find out how.
- **Igive.com** will donate a penny a search and a portion of each purchase made through their website to M.E.N.D. Sign up today! M.E.N.D.’s cause number is 52025.



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