

## FATHER'S DAY - A TOUGH DAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A CHILD

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Happy Father's Day to all fathers. Today is your day, and I hope you celebrate it with loved ones. Many fathers react differently to this day depending on where they are in their lives; it may be especially difficult for a father who has lost a child.

One bereaved father wrote this poem:

*As this day approaches, I wonder how I will react.  
Am I still a father?  
I will sit quietly never allowing family and friends to see how I feel.  
I will miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break."  
I must remain strong and always be the "rock."  
I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel.  
How much I cry and how much I miss hearing "Dad, I love you."  
I am a father, but I wonder, will I just pretend, as usual, that it doesn't bother me?  
Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.*

Another father says it took him many years to accept the death of his child, but he has now moved on. "When my daughter was alive, she, with the help of my wife, made a big deal about Father's Day, always serving me breakfast in bed, giving me a little gift and spending quality time with me. Knowing and understanding how I feel, my wife continues to make it a special day. One of the things we do is visit her grave and tell her what we did that day. At home we light a candle in her memory."

Gerry Hunt from a Compassionate Friends chapter wrote: "Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong...and must not cry. But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving, and protecting has been able to stop their child's death."

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father, it is a poignant reminder of the bittersweet memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of the inability to stop what happened. Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Oftentimes, they are unable to do so.

Perhaps this Father's Day should be a time when family members, whoever they are, give Dad a hug, do something special, help with the chores, and most of all, let him know how important, needed and loved he is.

## About the Author



Sandy Fox has won four finalist awards for her recent book "Creating a New Normal...After the Death of a Child" with over 80 coping articles and a huge resource section. One award is from USA Book News in the Health/Death and Dying Category for 2010. The second award is from ForeWord Reviews in the Health Category for 2010. The third is from Royal Dragonfly Book Awards. The most recent finalist award is for the self-help category of the 2011 Indie Book Awards. She is also the author of another grief book, "I Have No Intention of Saying Good-bye." "I Have No Intention of Saying Good-bye" tells the stories of 25 sets of parents and how they moved on with their lives after the death of their child, offering hope and survival techniques. Sandy has headed two national bereavement conferences for childless parents and spoken for many years at Compassionate Friends National conferences, POMC and across the U.S. to a variety of bereavement groups. She also writes articles for the Open to Hope site, EZ articles, and Journey through grief newsletter in addition to her own weekly blog: [www.survivinggrief.blogspot.com](http://www.survivinggrief.blogspot.com). Sandy can be contacted at [sfoxaz@hotmail.com](mailto:sfoxaz@hotmail.com) to set up any speaking engagements or to ask any questions related to surviving the death of a child. Sandy was a guest on the radio show "Healing the Grieving Heart" discussing: "I have no intention of Saying Good-Bye: Coping Techniques for the Now Childless."

To hear Sandy being interviewed on this show by Dr. Gloria & Dr. Heidi Horsley, click on the following link: [www.voiceamericapd.com/health/010157/horsley010407.mp3](http://www.voiceamericapd.com/health/010157/horsley010407.mp3)