

Mother's Day Madness - Day 6

The Circle of Friends

I wonder if you have experienced a change in your friendships since your child died? Many of us find that our "old" friends don't call very often any more, if at all. For some of us, even calls from family are few and far between. And if they do call, when we bring up our child, they cut off the conversation. After the death of our child, when we need friends to stand by us... we may end up feeling deserted. What's up with that?

I can't think of a time in my life when I felt more alone than I did after Zack died. How could anybody else have possibly felt as devastated as me? It's not unusual to feel that way, especially when everybody else goes on about their business and you're left with your tears. I needed to know I was not alone.

Our moms group is like a life boat for many of us, and the thing is, we're in this boat together. It's a place where we can feel safe and accepted. We can talk about our child and how we feel. We share information and ideas about what helps us, and invariably it's helpful to someone else, too. We help each other learn how to smile again. And we laugh together through our tears. Tears are ok no matter how long ago our child died. Hugs are plentiful, and sometimes we have group hugs!



Our support group is a place where we make new friends to replace those that inevitably drop out of our lives. At our moms gathering last week in Carmichael, Lise said, "I'm happy to be here with my friends." During our meeting in Auburn, Debra told us that she considered the ladies in our group to be her family because they were people she could talk to about her son and they were interested. As Corinne said after she started attending, "It's a place where my son's death finally makes sense." We're in this to receive help and to help each other.

When we meet another mom who has experienced the death of a child, whether it's at work, in a store, or at a park, there's an instant bond. It's a sisterhood. About six months after Zack died, I was at church and the youth pastor approached me. He pointed out a lady across the room and asked if I would speak to her because her grandson had died the week before. He chose me because he thought that out of all the others in the room, I would understand how she felt. All I had to do was give her a hug and our new friendship had begun.

I would be devastated to think that after enduring the tragic loss of a child there would be no place for me to belong. We often refer to bereaved parenthood as "The Club-That-Nobody-Wants-To-Join." I'd prefer to call it the "Circle of Friends." Whether it's a support group you attend, a person you chat with on the phone or by email, or an on-line group, we are part of this circle and we are not alone.



Ours is a circle of friendship united by a common tragedy. Within this circle, we receive encouragement to survive and move forward together, one day at a time. You are part of this circle and you are not alone.

Click on this link to the [Hope, Healing and Help Radio Program](#) facebook page, look for this post, and share what has been helpful to you in your recovery from loss. Visit the website for the [Sac-Placer County Chapter Bereaved Parents](#) to view and print the articles in pdf format.

Chris Harder with inspiration from Lise Mecham, Debra Murano & Corinne Summers
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