

**“Suggestions for Healing After a Baby Dies -
From one bereaved parent to another”**

By Lori Martini



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After a baby dies, the excruciating grief & healing process can be lengthy and beyond difficult...to say the very least. And incorporating this huge loss into your life takes much time, diligent grief work and a lot of patience. **As hard as it might be**, it is important to be gentle with yourself right now and give yourself the time you need to grieve...and thus to begin to find healing.

As well as facing your grief, it is most important right now to gather people around you who are supportive, caring and willing to listen (**over and over again**) to your story of loss and to your on-going pain. It is also **very** important to take good care of yourself at this time, through the basics of proper sleep, nutrition & exercise...because it takes a lot of energy to grieve. **Armor yourself, by taking good care of yourself!!**

It may seem hard to believe, in the early days and months, when the intense grief can consume your life, but as you allow yourself to fully grieve, you **WILL** begin to find healing...even though you may continue to feel the void in your life from your baby who died. **You will** begin to have good days and moments of joy and **you will** begin to be able to remember your baby without the deep, profound pain that you feel in the early months after your baby's death. **Including myself, every bereaved parent that I've spoken to, that I've helped support personally or read about, has also experienced this healing as well.**

However, even once you have begun to heal and feel a bit better, there may still be times that your emotions are as intense and as raw as they were in the early months...even if you have gone on to have other children. It can often come as a complete surprise when unexpected moments (or events) trigger feelings you thought you had dealt with and moved on from. This can happen even years down the road on days such as your baby's birthday, holidays, anniversaries, milestones such as the first day of school, as well as times when your friends and family members have babies.

Allow yourself to (**FULLY**) feel both the sad & joyous moments. And allow yourself to **Experience & Outwardly Express** these sometimes complex and varied feelings. Expressing your thoughts & feelings (on a regular basis) is **key** to finding healing!

Our babies have died. We did not lose them **or The Love We Have For Them**. Our babies are still (**and always will be**) a part of our families and our lives going forward. **You cannot lose that love**...even when your grief and suffering begin to lessen in time (**...and it will lessen.**) **The love will forever remain...death cannot take away love or your title of being your child's parent!**

Fully Grieve...Surround Yourselves With Compassionate Support...Educate Yourselves About Baby Loss Resources & Grief...Express Your Thoughts & Feelings Continually Through Talking & Writing...Experience The Healing...Allow For Happiness To Re-enter Your Lives Without Guilt...And Never Say Goodbye, Nor Stop Loving Your Baby That Has Gone All Too Soon. Honor and Parent Your Baby's Memory Forevermore...

With Warm & Healing Wishes,
Lori Martini (Bereaved Parent, Perinatal Loss Coach & Consultant, Author & Speaker)
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“Every bereaved person differs in what they find to be helpful in their grief journey...and what is not helpful. Please look at the suggestions below and take what works for you and skip over what doesn't quite fit for you and your family. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to grieve, as long as you actually take the time to 'uniquely' grieve. These are merely suggestions for each of you to consider...”

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- **Acknowledge the depth of your loss;** Facing the harsh reality is the beginning of working through it.
- **Even though it might be very difficult to do right now...be as 'Open' & 'Honest' as you can about your needs, at any given moment, to those around you.** Family, friends, co-workers and church members are not mind readers. They won't know how to best support you, unless you continually guide them as to what is helpful...and what might be hurtful.
- **Gather around you support of all kinds. Build a support system of compassionate listeners.** (Such as; Friends, Family, Co-Workers, Church, Professional Grief Counselors that specialize in the loss of a baby, Baby Loss Support Groups And **“Peer Support Parents”** (these are parents that have experienced the loss of a baby and have found much healing; they can now offer support and guide you through your grief journey.)
- **Allow yourself to experience ALL of the emotions of grief.** Because truly, the only way to get through grief...IS TO GRIEVE!
- **Find ways to Express and Release your anger & pain in non-destructive ways.** (Such as; Crying, Talking, Screaming into pillows, Throwing tomatoes at a tree, Journaling your thoughts & feelings, Writing poems & letters to your baby, Exercising, Playing Sports, Dancing, Music, Meditating, Spending time in & observing nature, Creating a memorial garden, Creating art in honor of your baby and/or as a way to express your pain, etc...)
- **Research and learn about your specific type of loss (miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal or SIDS death.) And ask your doctors all of your lingering questions.** No matter what the questions are ...ask them. Get second opinions, if you find you are not satisfied with the answers that are given to you (this is your right.)
- **Forgive yourself for whatever 'you believe' you have done...or not done.** Release the hurts, the anger and guilt. Ask yourself this... “Would my baby want me to continue to suffer and feel guilt?” Or “Would my baby want me to continue to remember, love him/her and to also live a full and happy life by releasing (over time) the hurts & guilt?”
- **Push yourself to take occasional 'breaks' from grieving (if possible.)** Learn new ways of re-engaging in living and finding things that bring you some comfort and happiness. No matter how small that might be right now...

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- **Work TOWARDS Healing.** (By...Attending baby loss support groups, talking about your thoughts & feelings regularly, journaling, acquiring a “Peer Support Person” to guide you through your grief, reading baby loss grief & healing books, joining online baby loss support groups, chat rooms & websites.)
- **Practice forgiving yourself for living, laughing and finding moments of happiness.** It's okay to let some light into your life every now and then while still grieving. This is NOT betraying or being disrespectful to your baby.
- After much grieving has taken place, and over time, eventually move on to **concentrating on the beauty & gifts of your baby's short LIFE... not just the death.**
- **Discover the person you are NOW.** Be proud of the good you see in yourself and work to improve on what you don't particularly like so much right now. Choose to make positive changes in your life (your baby & family would want this for you...and eventually, you will find that you want this for yourself as well.)
- After MUCH grief work, you can then begin to **release the hurt in search of HOPE.** Slowly letting go of suffering (over time) does **NOT** mean forgetting or leaving behind the memory of your baby. By letting go of suffering (when you are truly ready to let go) you can then go on to create a new space in your life...why not consider filling that new space with MORE LOVE for your baby that has died, rather than more suffering.
- **Never forget your baby LIVED! There is truly Healing in the Remembering...and NOT in trying to forget.** Remember your baby by... looking at his/her picture (if you have any,) frame your pictures (if you feel comfortable doing so,) look at your cherished ultrasound pictures, create a memorial scrapbook, gather pictures of you pregnant and put them in your baby's memory box, keep your positive pregnancy test, create memorial jewelry to remember your baby by, look at & touch any keepsakes you have of your baby, spend time at your baby's grave, shrine or ash scattering site, create an ornament and new family traditions for the holidays to honor your baby, donate to a baby loss organization in memory of your baby...and in the future, when you are feeling stronger, possibly consider reaching out to support a newly grieving parent (share with them the tools that you've learned in your journey of grief.)There is truly 'additional healing' to be found by reaching out to others in need (when are ready to do so.) **MAY LOVE BE WHAT YOU REMEMBER THE MOST ABOUT YOUR BABY...**

Grief Metaphor – “You Can Talk Your Grief To Death”

If you can envision fresh grief in our bodies as being like wet, heavy sand. Every time you do something to express your thoughts & feelings of grief (such as crying, talking, art or journaling, etc.) it's like expelling a grain of that sand (otherwise known as...grief.) Even if it's only one grain of the grief that you expel at a time...it is still being expelled. And that is the goal, not matter how long it takes to do this. There is NO time limit when it comes to grieving. Everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time...but DO make & take the time to grieve. It is vital in order for grief healing to take place...

Poem - "You Still Have Hope"

~author unknown~

If you can look at the sunset and smile,
then you still have hope.

If you can find beauty in the colors of a small flower,
then you still have hope.

If you can find pleasure in the movement of a butterfly,
then you still have hope.

If the smile of a kind stranger can still warm your heart,
then you still have hope.

If you can see the good in other people,
then you still have hope.

If the rain breaking on a roof top can still lull you to sleep,
then you still have hope

If the sight of a rainbow still makes you stop and stare in wonder,
then you still have hope.

If the soft fur of a favored pet still feels pleasant under your fingertips,
then you still have hope.

If you meet new people with a trace of excitement and optimism,
then you still have hope.

If you give people the benefit of a doubt,
then you still have hope.

If you still offer your hand in friendship to others that have touched your life,
then you still have hope.

If receiving an unexpected card or letter still brings a pleasant surprise,
then you still have hope.

If the suffering of others still fills you with pain and frustration,
then you still have hope.

If you refuse to let a friendship die, or accept that it must end,
then you still have hope.

If you look forward to a time or place of quiet and reflection,
then you still have hope.

If you still buy the ornaments, put up the Christmas tree or cook the turkey,
then you still have hope.

If you still watch love stories or want the endings to be happy,
then you still have hope.

If you can look to the past and smile,
then you still have hope.

If, when faced with the bad, when told everything is futile, you can still look up
and end the conversation with the phrase...."yeah....BUT..."
then you still have hope.

Hope is such a marvelous thing. It bends, it twists, it sometimes hides,
but rarely does it break.

It sustains us when nothing else can.
It gives us reason to continue and courage to move ahead, when we tell
ourselves we'd rather give in.

Hope puts a smile on our face when the heart cannot manage.

Hope puts our feet on the path when our eyes cannot see it.

Hope moves us to act when our souls are confused of the direction.

Hope is a wonderful thing, something to be cherished and nurtured,
and something that will refresh us in return.
And it can be found in each of us, and it can bring light into the darkest of
places.

NEVER lose hope...

Baby Loss Resource List:

“AMEND” – (FREE) Baby Loss Support Group...Located In Tampa, FL.
Karen M. Frazier, R.N., Program Director at (813) 631-9519 or
via Email: ksmfrazier@aol.com Website: <http://www.amend-fla.org/>

“Suncoast Perinatal Loss Hospice” - (FREE) Professional Pregnancy & Infant Loss
Counselors. (727) 523-3458
http://www.thehospice.org/resources_support/grief_counseling.aspx

“SHARE” – (FREE Online) Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Website, Free Bereavement Packet
& Newsletters...Plus Many More Resources. <http://www.nationalshare.org/>

“Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep” - Bereaved Parent Discussion Forum
<http://www.nowisleep.com/> and Beautiful Remembrance Photography...honoring a child's
legacy (FREE of charge to the families.) <http://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org/>

“A Blog for Fathers, When a Baby Dies” – Run by bereaved father & author, Tim Nelson.
<http://fathersgrievinginfantloss.blogspot.com/>

“First Candle” - Find out how you can be connected with other parents who have had a similar
perinatal loss experience (it's called **“Peer Support”**) by calling 1-800-221-7437.
<http://www.firstcandle.org/?s=Peer+Contact>

“Healing from the Start” – An online support website, providing **‘one-on-one’ Peer Support** to
bereaved parents. As well as, a **FREE** (Downloadable) Coaching Manual for the **Caregivers** who
take care of newly bereaved families in the moment of their loss.
Lori Martini...Bereaved Parent, Author, Speaker and Perinatal Loss Coach & Consultant.
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“Babies Remembered & Wintergreen Press” – The website of Sherokee Ilse... Bereaved
parent, Speaker, Educator and Author of **“EMPTY ARMS.”** Plus 17 other Baby Loss Books.
www.Wintergreenpress.com

“AGAST” (An Alliance of Grandparents, A Support in Tragedy) –
This website is specifically for grieving Grandparents...after the loss of a grandchild.
www.agast.org

“My Forever Child” - Artisan handcrafted and personalized jewelry and keepsakes to comfort
those touched by the loss of a child. <http://www.myforeverchild.com/>

“Mary Madeline Project” – A non-profit organization that donates infant /baby burial gowns and
blankets to hospitals for bereaved parents. Women donate their cherished wedding gowns to the
project and volunteers give of their time, talents and love by making the baby burial gowns and
blankets. <http://www.marymadelineproject.org/>

“A Place to Remember” – Uplifting support resources for those who have been touched by a
crises in pregnancy or the death of a baby. Infertility, Bed rest, Preterm Birth, Miscarriage, Stillbirth,
Early Infant Death and SIDS. <http://www.aplacetoremember.com/>