

To the Grieving Parent

I KNOW THIS IS YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE REALIZED. I KNOW THIS WASN'T PLAN A, B, C, OR Z. I KNOW THE WEIGHT OF IT ALL IS SUFFOCATING, SOUL-CRUSHING, DEVASTATING, AND EARTH-SHATTERING IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE. I KNOW YOU WOULD TRADE IT ALL JUST FOR ONE MORE MOMENT.

I KNOW YOUR HEART IS BROKEN. HOW I WISH I COULD MAKE YOU FEEL AT HOME AGAIN. HOW I WISH I COULD TAKE AWAY THE PAIN. HOW I WISH I COULD PLACE THAT BABY BACK IN YOUR ARMS. YOU COULD WATCH THEM GROW. ALL THE GIGGLES, SKINNED KNEES, AND ESKIMO KISSES. I KNOW YOU WOULD SAVOR EVERY MOMENT. I KNOW YOU WOULD BREATHE THAT BABY IN TILL YOU NO LONGER HAD ANY BREATH IN YOU. KNOW YOU WOULD GIVE EVERY OUNCE OF YOU TO SAVE EVERY OUNCE OF THEM, ONE THOUSAND TIMES OVER. I KNOW YOU MISS THEM. I KNOW YOU WISH YOU COULD JUST SMELL THEM ONE MORE TIME, SEE THEIR FACE ONE MORE TIME, KISS THAT SQUISHY CHEEK AND THEN FREEZE THAT MOMENT SO IT WOULD LAST FOREVER. THERE ARE THINGS THAT PICTURES AND VIDEOS CAN NEVER REPLACE AND HAVING THAT BABY IN YOUR ARMS IS AT THE TOP OF THE LIST.

ON THE DAYS WHEN IT'S ALL YOU CAN DO JUST TO FUNCTION, THAT'S OKAY.

ON THE DAYS WHEN YOU TRY YOUR HARDEST TO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, AND SOMEHOW THINGS JUST DON'T WORK OUT, GIVE YOURSELF GRACE. GIVE YOURSELF ROOM TO BREATHE. ON THE DAYS WHEN NO ONE BUT YOU MENTION THEIR NAME, I AM SO, SO SORRY. SAY THEIR NAME BRAVELY. KNOW THAT THEY ARE STILL REAL, THEY WERE STILL HERE, AND YOU ARE STILL THEIRS. ON THE DAYS WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COULD BURST FROM ANGER AND PAIN, GO SOMEWHERE ALONE, CRY IT OUT, CURSE AT THE SKY— THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN HAVING TO FAKE IT. SO DON'T. PLEASE, LET YOURSELF FEEL IT. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH TO PUT ON A FACE, AND HEALING DOESN'T COME WHEN WE ARE LIVING UNDER A FACADE.

ON THE DAYS WHEN THE WORLD TELLS YOU TO "HEAL" AND TO "MOVE ON", HEALING FROM CHILD LOSS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HEALING FROM AN INJURY. OUR CHILDREN WERE NOT A BROKEN BONE, THEY ARE A PIECE OF OUR HEARTS, AND NOW A PIECE OF OUR HEARTS IS GONE FROM OUR ARMS. FRIEND, YOU WILL HEAL, JUST NOT IN THE WAY THE WORLD WANTS YOU. YOU WILL BREATHE EASIER. YOU WILL ACHE MAYBE A LITTLE LESS, BUT I'VE HEARD FROM OTHERS MUCH, MUCH FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD THAN I, THE LONGING WILL NEVER, EVER, EVER LEAVE. THAT IS THE BEAUTY AND THE FIERCENESS AND THE STRENGTH OF A PARENT'S LOVE YOU ARE IRREVOCABLY CHANGED, IN THE SWEETEST, HEAD-OVER-HEELS, ALL-IN, NEVER-STOPPING WAY. YOUR LOVE IS STRONG. THAT'S THE PROMISE YOU MADE WHEN YOU SWORE TO LOVE THEM EVERY SECOND OF THEIR LIVES AND EVERY SECOND OF YOUR OWN, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST WAS ON YOUR HEART. NOTHING ON THIS EARTH HAS SHOWN ME UNCONDITIONAL LOVE BETTER THAN THE LOVE OF A GRIEVING PARENT. I SEE YOUR LOVE. I SEE THE POWER OF IT. IT'S STRONGER THAN ANY AMOUNT OF PAIN, THAN A SEA OF TEARS, THAN EVEN THE GRASP OF DEATH.

I KNOW, BECAUSE OF THAT LOVE, YOU WOULD BRAVE EVERY OUNCE OF PAIN ONE THOUSAND TIMES OVER JUST FOR THEM. EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL IT... LOOK. HERE YOU ARE... YOU'RE STILL BREATHING. YOU'RE STILL STANDING. YOU ARE SO BRAVE.

KNOW THAT WHERE THERE IS GREAT PAIN, THERE IS EVEN GREATER LOVE.
SO MUCH LOVE TO YOU--
A PARENT WHO KNOWS

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