

## ▶ Monthly Newsletter

### Other's Response To Your Loss

Volume 2, Issue 2, March/April 1997

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*Praying today that  
in the silent moments  
you will find peace  
in knowing God's  
promises are true.*

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## ▶ Varied Responses to Our Loss

### Couldn't We All Write a Book on the Varied Responses to Our Loss?

I believe every woman who has lost a baby could write a book about the way relatives and friends have responded to their loss. One would think all of these books would be filled with sweet and tender stories of the nice and compassionate deeds of others. But unfortunately, I think many of these books would not only be filled with thoughtful remembrances, but with stories of hurt and bitterness as well.

Most people are not very comfortable dealing with death. Some don't know what to say; therefore, for fear of saying the wrong thing they opt to say nothing at all. Those unspoken words are oftentimes the most hurtful. We find ourselves mentally begging them to at least say *something* and acknowledge our loss.

Others are well meaning and think they know just the right cliché or theory that will make us feel better. These responses usually leave us feeling irritated and sometimes outraged. In our

time of grief, we don't want long revelations of why they think it happened nor do we want to hear make-it-better statements. All we want is a simple "I'm sorry...I don't know what to say except that I'm really sorry."

Thankfully, despite most people's "innocent ignorance", as I call it, there are those who have been our literal lifeline. I will forever be grateful for the friends and family members who always have a listening ear. They may have heard the story one hundred times and are wondering if I have anything else to talk about. They have allowed me to say things that are irrational, and maybe full of anger; but they let me vent. They have known the soft and gentle words I've needed to hear and tell me they hurt, too. These people, some without even realizing it, will always have a special place in my heart.

As you read this issue, I'm sure you'll relate to every one of these stories and hopefully realize you're not alone in your encounters with insensitive people. If you have a family member or friend who is "just not getting it," you might want to consider making a copy of this newsletter and giving it to them. The only way other than from personal experience for someone to know what to do or say to a bereaved family, is for us to educate them. And hopefully when we have a friend enduring a suffering, we'll know from our own feelings how to be sensitive to their situation.

Rebekah Mitchell

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## Please...

PLEASE - don't ask me if I'm over it yet. I'll never be "over it."

PLEASE - don't tell me he/she's in a better place. He/she isn't here.

PLEASE - don't say "at least he/she isn't suffering." I haven't come to terms with why he/she had to suffer at all.

PLEASE - don't say "Well, you're lucky, he/she would have been born with a lot of problems." Would you love your own child any less if they had been born with problems?

PLEASE - don't tell me you know how I feel, unless you have lost a child/infant/pregnancy.

PLEASE - don't tell me to get on with my life. I'm still here, you'll notice.

PLEASE - don't ask me if I feel better. Bereavement isn't a condition that "clears up."

PLEASE - don't tell me "God never makes a mistake" or "It was God's will." You mean He did this on purpose?

PLEASE - don't tell me "at least you had him/her for \_\_\_\_ years/days months." Or, "At least you have/or can have other children/babies." Or, "At least you know you can get pregnant."

What year would you choose for your son/daughter/pregnancy to die/end?

PLEASE - don't tell me God never gives you more than you can bear. Who decides how much another person can bear?

PLEASE - just say you are sorry.

PLEASE - just say you remember him/her or my pregnancy/our excitement if you do.

PLEASE - just let me talk if I want to.

PLEASE - just let me say his/her name without turning away or changing the subject.

PLEASE - let me cry when I must.

Rita Moran  
The Compassionate Friends

## People Respond Differently to Loss

- [Laurie Ottinger Allen, Texas](#)
- [Linda Beacon, Cochrane, Alberta Canada](#)
- [Kim Dawley, North Andover, Massachusetts](#)
- [Bonnie Randolph, Laurel, Maryland](#)

### Laurie Ottinger

Besides losing our daughter, one of the hardest parts of our grief was how others responded to our loss. In the early weeks and months everyone is sympathetic. But very quickly I learned that they all just wished we would "get over it," "move past this." I want to scream "My daughter is dead! She is buried in a grave with her name on it." My only daughter is not something I really want to "get over."

My head knows that all these well-meaning people want to see us in our happier times; in happier days. But my heart is so hurt by the thought that these people think I should forget about my daughter.

It's been seven months since Cailey died, and most friends want to talk about other things. They have "gotten over it."

But one friend has walked with me in my grief. Lori cried with me. She never tried to move me down the road any faster than I could go. It was always okay to "talk about it." She got on the Internet and read some newsgroups pertaining to pregnancy loss. She tried so hard to understand how I was feeling. She wanted to know what to do to help. She asked to see Cailey's grave when the marker was put there. She is the only one who has asked. She is never tired of hearing about my beautiful daughter Cailey.

I am told that I am lucky to have a friend like her. And I think I am. So many responses to our loss seem so trivial to me. So many people's response to our grief seem to say "Please get over it." Lori has been like an angel here on earth: comforting me when I have needed it most. And I can't think of a better response to my loss.

Laurie Ottinger, Allen, Texas  
In loving memory of her daughter, Cailey Elizabeth  
Stillborn June 7, 1996  
Cord Accident

## **Linda Beacon**

Our best friends were married last summer, and I was the matron of honor and my husband was best man. I lost my fifth baby two weeks before their wedding...while I was away on Vancouver Island helping out my sick sister-in-law. When I came back home I didn't have time to grieve...I placed too much importance on "not spoiling" our best friends' wedding. The night after I arrived home I played hostess to a large bridal shower (which I had planned for, for months), and I smiled and pretended everything was okay.

I maintained that facade for the next ten days leading into their wedding. By this time, they knew I had lost yet another one. But this was not the time for me to show my pain, and I understand (to a small degree) why they were not so keen on getting "into it" with me. However, the real godawful moment came on the morning after their wedding. We were all having brunch together (there were 20 of us) and the groom, our best friend (what a joke), told a "miscarriage" joke. The whole table went silent. I burst out crying and had to run from the restaurant. He has since apologized, but I seem incapable of forgiving.

Linda Beacon, Cochrane, Alberta Canada  
In loving memory of her six babies lost to miscarriage

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## **Kim D.**

I have been incredibly touched with the many people that sent me cards with heartfelt notes, including people I haven't worked with in years, and one person I haven't seen since high school. I was amazed at how the cards kept coming, even when we felt for sure that everyone we knew had already sent one. I looked forward to getting the mail each day, and I think that got me through those first few weeks.

One package in particular warmed my heart. Three sales reps in a remote office, with whom I am friendly but not particularly close to, sent me the Precious Moments figurine "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," with a note that explained that one of the reps' sisters had lost two babies, and she had a figurine for each of her four children, the two with her and her two angels.

We are now planning to start that tradition as well. This tragedy certainly has a way of showing you who your friends are, and at times, they materialize where you least expect it.

Kim, North Andover, Massachusetts  
In loving memory of Molly,  
Stillborn November 7, 1996  
"True knot" in cord

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## **Bonnie Randolph**

Within two weeks of the loss of my David, family and friends were telling me "get over it!" How does a parent "get over" having their child die in their arms? How does a mother "get over" the empty feelings in her arms and in her heart? Even my husband was concerned because I wasn't the way I "used to be." Family and friends wanted the "Old Bonnie" back. What about the "New Bonnie?" It seems as if the woman I was, no longer exists and rightfully so. Once you have lost a child, you are forever changed. I will never be the woman I once was; how could I?

After David's death I found myself desperately searching for others who had suffered a similar loss. People that I called "friends" no longer called. It was as if I had contracted some horrible ailment and no one wanted to be around me for fear that they would catch it. When I needed them most, my "friends" and "family" abandoned me, leaving me to mourn a child that some say I should forget.

Comments, painful comments, were made. "God knows what's best." "It was meant to be." "Try to forget and move on." Of course those statements were made by people who have never lost a child. At first I was angry, enraged with an emotion that I'd never before experienced. Now when people make crude comments, I feel pity for them; pity because I know what it is like firsthand to lose a child, and that is something I would never, ever wish on them.

Now, my life is better. The pain is still there, fresh sometimes but the difference is that now I have surrounded myself with people who truly understand how I feel - parents who are grieving also. Only another parent who has walked in your shoes can understand. How have others responded to my loss? My new "friends" and "family" have been there to give me the love and the support I need. Without them I would not have made it this far; far enough to lend a shoulder for a new grieving parent.

Bonnie Randolph, Laurel, Maryland  
In loving memory of David Thomas  
3/28/94 - 7/27/94  
Sepsis due to ruptured duodenum  
Born with Tricuspid Atresia and congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia.

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## Poem

You can only imagine the pain we have suffered;  
But we do ask that you try.

You don't know what it is like to stand there helplessly  
Holding your son as you watch him die.

Only the Lord can give us the strength we need to pull through.  
Kindness, caring, and compassion is what we need from you.

Because he came early, our son is a bigger part of our life than yours.  
Let us share our memories. Please do not close all doors.

Some people choose to say nothing as not to address the pain.  
But that only leaves us feeling as if we were left out in the rain.

Just always remember he is a big part of our family.  
Now he is in heaven where he awaits the arrival of you and me.

Jamie Gibbs

Christmas Eve 1994

In loving memory of Brian 10/9/94-10/9/94, Matthew 8/8/95-8/8/95, Rita 4/25/96-4/26/96, and  
Baby 1 and Baby 3 miscarried 3/31/94 and 12/5/94.

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## Don't

Don't tell me that you understand,  
Don't tell me that you know...  
Don't tell me that I will surely survive,  
How I will surely grow...


Don't tell me this is just a test,  
That I am truly blessed...  
That I am chosen for the task,  
Apart from all the rest...

Don't come at me with answers,  
That can only come from me...  
Don't tell me how my grief will pass,  
That I will soon be free...

Don't stand in pious judgement,  
Of the bonds that I must untie...  
Don't tell me how to suffer,  
And don't tell me how to cry...  
My life is filled with selfishness,  
My pain is all I see...  
But I need you, I need your love,  
Unconditionally...

Accept me in my up's and down's,  
I need someone to share...  
Just hold my hand and let me cry,  
And say, My friend, I care...

Author Unknown

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- [36 Hours With An Angel \(Book\)](#)
- [The Cherry Blossom Tree \(Children\)](#)
- [Zoom \(Internet\)](#)
- [Voices of Longing, Voices of Hope \(Poetry Collection\)](#)
- [The Compassionate Friends, Inc. \(National Organization\)](#)
- [He Is Able \(Music\)](#)

**Note:** M.E.N.D. has no financial interest in any of these product reviews. The purpose in reviewing them here is to let others know what we have found to be helpful in our own situations so that you may find some comfort in these resources as well.

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### **36 Hours With An Angel**

by Lindsay Roberts.

Published by Richard and Lindsay Roberts Ministries.

Lindsay Roberts, wife of evangelist Richard Roberts and daughter-in-law of evangelist Oral Roberts, shares her story of suffering two miscarriages and the death of her baby, Richard Oral.

Lindsay begins her book by stating, "In January of 1984, I endured a sorrow deeper than my worst nightmares and fears. I saw my newborn son's life slip away from me after only 36 hours on this earth."

"As the sorrow and loss began to surround me, I struggled to survive like any mother would. It didn't matter that I was part of a well-known family and married to an evangelist. It didn't matter that they were known by millions of people across America. The grief still cut me like a knife. Despair still haunted my waking and sleeping hours, and I wondered if I could ever know joy again after losing my precious baby.

In that desparate time, I turned to God. Although pain and sorrow can invade anyone's life, I believe God is quick to bring comfort and healing to those who call out to Him."

*36 Hours With An Angel* can be purchased by sending \$2.95 to:

Richard and Lindsay Roberts Ministries  
P.O. Box 2187  
Tulsa, OK 74171

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### **The Cherry Blossom Tree**

*A Grandfather Talks About Life and Death*

by Jan Godfrey. Illustrated by Jane Cope.

This is a sweet story about a child having a heart to heart talk with her grandfather about life and death. Each year on Harriet's Grandpa's birthday, Harriet's favorite cherry tree at his house is covered with pink blossoms. This year the cherry tree wasn't there.

She and her Grandpa discuss how everything that is born has to die. The cherry tree had gotten old and it was time for it to die. Harriet feels sad at the thought of her Grandpa dying. After all, he is old like the cherry tree.

She learns from her Grandpa, though, that God's love makes everything new and that everyone who loves God will be with God forever.

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## **Zoom**

Zoom is an absolutely wonderful web site with several pages full of grief resources. You will find beautiful poetry, tributes, pictures, stories, etc. submitted by bereaved families from all over the world who have suffered the loss of a loved one.

Zoom was created by Bill Chadwick from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, after the death of his teenage son. Of all web sites visited on the Internet, it is in the top 5%! You can access Zoom at:

<http://www.premier.net/~zoom/>


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## **Voices of Longing, Voices of Hope**

*Voices of Longing, Voices of Hope* is a collection of poems published by Precious Children Remembered. It includes poems that have been written by bereaved parents as well as other poems that have offered comfort to bereaved parents.

To order a copy of the 160 page book, send your name, address, and \$5.00 to:

Precious Children Remembered  
P.O. Box 534  
Huron, Ohio 44839

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## **The Compassionate Friends, Inc.**

For more information regarding this national support organization or to find a group near you, contact them at their national office:

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.  
National Office  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

(603) 990-0010  
(603) 990-0246 Fax

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## [He Is Able](#)

Sung by Joni Lamb. Words by Jon Mohr.


[He Is Able](#) is one of several songs on Joni Lamb's *He's Been Faithful* recording. To purchase Joni Lamb's *He's Been Faithful* recording, write to:

KMPX TV-29  
P.O. Box 612066  
Dallas, Texas 75261

or call (972) 432-0029

Send \$10 for a cassette tape or \$12 for a compact-disc (CD).

- The Mind through education and information.
- The Spirit through the emotions of poetry.
- Communication through the sharing of feelings and experiences.

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## **He Is Able**

Like peering through a window blurred with rain,  
Emotions run together in a flood of doubt and pain.  
We've prayed as best we can,  
Now we must leave it in His hands.

Chorus:

Yet, I know when my eyes fail to see, He is able,  
And even though it seems impossible to me, He is able.  
But if He chooses not to move in the way we prayed He would,  
I'm confident He's working all together for my good.  
And I will stand behind His word, for He is able.

Questions seem to haunt us night and day.  
How could God allow my heart to be torn this way?  
Does He listen when I call? Is He even there at all?

Chorus:

Yet, I know when my eyes fail to see, He is able,  
And even though it seems impossible to me, He is able.  
But if He chooses not to move in the way we prayed He would,  
I'm confident He's working all together for my good.  
And I will stand behind His word, for He is able.

And as the night gives way to dawning and evaporates away,  
I'll stand to face another day.  
And I will stand behind His word, for He is able,  
He is able, He is able!

Words by Jon Mohr.  
Refer to our Resource Review of [He Is Able](#) for information on  
obtaining a recording of this song.

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## **Subsequent Births After Loss**

Congratulations And Best Wishes!

*Cindy and Darryl Ley of Wadsworth, Ohio* with their four year old son, Matthew, remember Marisa Angel, 7/5/95-7/9/95, and welcome Michael James, born 11/8/96.

*Jeanette and Richard Wayne of Winston-Salem, North Carolina* welcome Emmaline Victoria, born 2/11/97, while remembering Oliva Grace, 5/11/95, and Baby Wayne, miscarried 4/20/96.

If you have had a subsequent birth after loss that you would like to announce, please send the appropriate information to [Rebekah Mitchell](#).

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## **Home Free**

*M.E.N.D. would like to dedicate this song to our friends, Randy and DaLana Hambrick-Barsanti whose twins, Joshua and Jeromy, were stillborn November 21, 1996 due to anencephaly. And to all the parents whose babies are indeed, Home Free.*

### **Home Free**

I'm trying hard not to think you unkind  
but Heavenly Father, if You know my hear  
Surely You can read my mind  
Good people underneath a sea of grief  
Some get up and walk away  
Some will find ultimate relief

### **CHORUS**

Home free-eventually  
At the ultimate healing  
We will be home free  
Home free  
Oh, I've got a feeling  
At the ultimate healing

We will be home free

Out in the corridors we pray for life  
A mother for her baby  
A husband for his wife  
Sometimes the good die young  
It's sad, but true  
And while we pray for one more heartbeat  
The real comfort is in You

Pain has little mercy  
Suffering's no respecter of age  
Of race or position  
I know every prayer gets answered  
But the hardest one to pray is slow to come  
Oh Lord, not mine  
But Your will be done

*Words and music by Wayne Watson.  
Used by permission from Word, Inc.*

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## **Just Say "I'm Sorry"**

You don't know how I feel;  
please don't tell me that you do.  
There's just one way to know -- have you lost a child too?  
"You'll have another child" - must I hear this each day?  
Can I get another mother, too, if mine should pass away?

Don't say it was "God's will" -  
That's not the God I know.  
Would God on purpose break my heart,  
then watch as my tears flow?  
"You have an angel in heaven - a precious child above."  
But tell me, to whom here on earth shall I give this love?

"Aren't you better yet?"  
Is that what I heard you say?  
No! A part of my heart aches -  
I'll always feel some pain.  
You think that silence is kind,  
but it hurts me even more.  
I want to talk about my child  
who has gone through death's door.

Don't say these things to me,  
although you do mean well.  
They do not take my pain away;

I must go through this hell.  
I will get better slow but sure -  
and it helps to have you near.  
But a simple "I'm sorry you lost your child"  
Is all I need to hear.

Gail Fasolo  
Mayfield Heights, Ohio  
In memory of Christina  
Stillborn 2/5/91.

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## **What They Say, What They Mean**

### What They Say

### What They "Mean" To Say

"It was God's Will."

"It wasn't your fault."

"It happened for a reason."

"It wasn't your fault."

"It was for the best."

"It wasn't your fault."

"At least you know you can get pregnant."

"I am so uncomfortable with your loss that I don't know what to say, but I am happy that you can experience another pregnancy."

"You are young; you will get pregnant again."

"I hope that you will give parenthood a second chance."

"You need to move on and not dwell on this."

"I wish I could take the pain away from you because you don't deserve this kind of grief."

"When this new baby is born you can put all this behind you."

"I hope when this new baby is born that you will find some healing and be able to feel joy. My children bring me such joy that I want you to feel that too."

Laurie Ottinger, Allen, Texas  
In memory of Cailey Elizabeth  
Stillborn 6/7/96 due to cord accident

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## (Untitled) from the Compassionate Friends

There is something I would like to tell this world about dealing with the grieving parents. That is, you never tell them how they should grieve. In my experience, as a bereaved parent, I was hurt so many times by my friends who would say "Oh, you shouldn't feel that way!" How do they know how I should feel, unless they have walked thru the same pathway. Did your child die?? No. Until you know the pain, you cannot know how to begin to handle it.

There were people who tried to use the "at least -----" method to make me feel better; "At least, you have two other children"; "At least, you are young and can have more babies"; "At least, you can adopt"; and worst of all, "At least, he was only four and one half months old, so you didn't get attached to him or bring him home from the hospital."

Don't people realize how utterly ridiculous these "at least" statements are? No matter how many children you have, that place in your heart for your child can never be filled by another.

All that a bereaved parent needs from a friend is a shoulder to cry on. Someone who will listen, and not judge. We need people to talk about our child, and not change the subject when their name is mentioned. Sure, some of the memories are painful, and we might cry, but it is good for us to remember. Memories make us "Sappy." This means we are sad and happy at the same time, and sometimes our eyes will leak.

Last of all, don't avoid us. We don't have a disease. Your child cannot catch it and die, too. I will talk about my child and my experiences to anyone who will listen. Be a Compassionate Friend for some day, you may be the one who needs a Compassionate Friend.

Anonymous  
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National Office  
Oak Brook, Illinois  
(603) 990-0010

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## Our Babies Are Waiting For Us

**Jesus Went Ahead to Prepare a Place.  
Our Babies are There Waiting for Us.**

For most of us winter is fading and spring is finally upon us. I have always loved this season as

it is symbolic of freshness and newness. It is also the season of one of my favorite holidays: Easter. However, for those of us who have experienced the loss of a child, Easter along with other holidays can bring about a sense of sadness. Most people think of Easter as a holiday for children with the dyeing of eggs, preparing for the big "hunt," the Easter bunny, and shopping for that special new Sunday outfit. But for us, it is yet another reminder that our child won't be participating in what other children all over the world are enjoying.

However, I believe if we focus on the true meaning of Easter, the Lord will give us that extra ounce of comfort we need to peacefully get through the holiday. Instead of dwelling on the absence of our babies, let's rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples that, "In my Father's house are many rooms,...I am going there to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). And although we would do anything to have our precious babies here on earth with us, it's a comfort to know that they are in that *prepared place* we call Heaven and are awaiting our arrival.

Rebekah Mitchell

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## **Junk Mail**

### **Remove Your Name from "Junk Mail" Mailing Lists.**

To delete your name from junk mail mailing lists (including baby product junk mail), send you name and address to:

Direct Marketing Association  
Mail Preference Service  
P.O. Box 9008  
Farmingdale, New York 11735-9008

To delete your name from phone lists, send your name and address to the same address listed above. For more information call (212) 768-7277.

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## **In Loving Memory...**

### ***Jonathan Daniel Mitchell***

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
Cord Accident

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by his parents,  
Rebekah and Byron Mitchell  
and brother, Byron, Jr.

### ***Grateful Acknowledgement***

M.E.N.D. gratefully acknowledges gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D's mission by providing our newsletter, web-site, and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by grandparents Lyle  
and Marnie Mitchell.

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by grandparents,  
Dennis and Sue Brewer, Sr.

**Michael Joseph Böer**

Stillborn July 17, 1996  
Trisomy 18

Donation in memory of  
Michael by his parents, Lynne  
and Paul Böer and siblings,  
Paul, Jr. & Maggie.

Donation in memory of  
Michael by his grandparents,  
Jo and Dennis Askew.

**David Neese**

April 2, 1993 - June 17, 1996

Parents - Sarah and Dan  
Neese and sister, Shelby.

Donation in memory of David  
by Lynne and Paul, Paul, and  
Maggie Böer.

refer to the page entitled [Contributions](#) for  
more information on where to send your  
donations and what information to include.  
**Thank you so much!**

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 **Future Newsletter Topics/Submission Deadlines**

**July/August Topic\***

Health Care Professionals and Loss  
Deadline - May 1, 1997

**September/October Topic**

Subsequent Pregnancy  
Deadline - July 1, 1997

\*Note: For the July/August topic, we would like to invite health care professionals to write how a patient's loss has affected them.

*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. Refer to the page entitled [Subscriptions](#) for the appropriate address to send your submission.*

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This page was last updated June 29, 1997.

For Questions or Comments, e-mail [Rebekah Mitchell](#).  
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