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Miscarriage/Ectopic Pregnancy Volume 3, Issue 2, March/April 1998

Miscarriage

Miscarriage...

A few years ago a good friend of mine suffered an early miscarriage. This was her first pregnancy and I truly did not understand why it was so painful for her. I told Byron many times that she was making too big of a deal out of this and good grief, it was only her first try and surely she will be pregnant again in a couple of months! I really thought she had flipped when she told me she was considering attending a support group. I didn't know such support groups even existed.

How "innocently ignorant" I was! I'm ashamed to say that I was one of those insensitive friends who either said nothing at all when a friend miscarried or said the wrong thing. After we lost Jonathan I apologized to every one of my friends who had previously lost a baby and asked that they forgive my heartlessness. I now realize that a pregnancy loss is extremely painful no matter the gestation of the baby.

I have found that society drastically minimizes early pregnancy loss. It is considered by many as a medical happenstance and at times a blessing! All too often couples who have miscarried hear well-meaning friends say, "I'm just glad you weren't very far along" or "be glad, there must have been something wrong with IT." As mothers, we are attached to our babies the moment conception is confirmed and sometimes even before fertilization occurs if the pregnancy was planned in advance. And certainly, we don't love them any less if an abnormality is diagnosed.

Most of the parents who attend our M.E.N.D. share groups have either suffered a late term stillbirth or a neonatal death. But there is always at least one set of parents who have lost their baby to an early miscarriage or an ectopic pregnancy. The grief is no different for any of the parents. I try to always make the miscarried families feel just as comfortable as the late term loss parents; we've all lost a child. Occasionally, a mother who has miscarried will attempt to apologize for being there as if she didn't belong. We never compare grief! Every parent who has lost a child deserves to mourn and have their grief validated.

If you have suffered a miscarriage or an ectopic pregnancy, I hope this issue ministers to you as several families share their experiences of losing a baby in early pregnancy. Know your are not alone in grieving for your tiny baby and you have every right to mourn the loss of your child.

Rebekah Mitchell

Prayer For A Parent Whose Child Has Died

Prayer For A Parent Whose Child Has Died

Mysterious Lord of Life and Death, a very part of my own life has died in the death of my child. My soul is weighed down with sorrow and bears the wound of a lifelong scar. Send to me Your angel of consolation for the pain is heavy and deep.

Come to my aid, Lord of Mercy, for I lack the power of the holy parent, Abraham, who was willing in obedience to Your command, to sacrifice to You his beloved son, Isaac

Lord God, You who are also a parent surely know my Pain at the loss of my beloved child who has been taken from my side by death.

Do not take my tears and sorrow as a sign of my unbelief that all who have died are resurrected to eternal life in You, but, rather, see in these tears a sign of my great love for my child.

As I held him in the embrace of love, may You, his Divine Parent, hold him close to Your heart forever.

Help me, Lord, for I do not seek to understand the why of this mystery of death as much as I desire to accept it in a holy way and to be healed and once again whole. Support me, my Lord and God, and wrap me in your gentle love as I attempt to carry this bitter cross as Your Son, Jesus, carried the cross which you gave to Him.

Amen

from Prayers For The Domestic Church by Edward Hays

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Spoken From The Heart...Miscarriage Grief

Spoken From The Heart... Miscarriage Grief

Jody Friz

Max Friz

Anne & Dan Keough

Christopher Wayne Brown



Jody Friz

WOW! A MOM! I was so happy at the thought of our first baby! After two years of marriage, my husband, Max and I could hardly wait to spread the exciting news to everyone! What joy!

But something went horribly wrong, and after only a few short days of pure elation, I lost our first baby. Feelings of devastation at this loss washed over me, and there was no consolation to be found. Max and I wrappped ourselves in a cocoon and dealt with the feelings of grief, loss, emptiness, and anger the best way we knew how. There were tears, talks, and prayers, but it seemed to be of no avail. The need to be comforted, to have comfort, was there, but this devastation could not be shared with anyone. This was a private loss, a private tragedy, and it had to be borne alone. I didn't even want my mom there. It was something Max and I had to conquer alone.

The feelings I experienced were foreign to me. I had never personally dealt with anything so devastating. Friends who were pregnant or who had small babies were pulled away from, and slowly I closed out my friends, my family, and my husband. The thought of why God had let this happen to me filled my mind. He promised to give us the desires of our hearts. He said to cast all your burdens on Him. Why, then, had He allowed this to happen to me?

One year later I again became pregnant. Excitement was there this time, but it was tempered with caution. My husband and I were very careful about sharing our news. There was the thought that

something could go wrong again. If it does, how could I possibly cope again? What would I do? All these thoughts were in constant motion in my mind. Once again, after only a few short weeks, I lost my second baby. My heart was broken. I blamed everything, and everyone, from myself to God for allowing me to lose a baby the second time.

Several people approached me with "helpful" words of advice. "You can always have another one." "God knows best." "There may have been something terribly wrong with this baby." My silent response was, "I don't want another baby! I wanted this one!" I wanted my babies and my loss to be acknowledged, but not in this way. I wanted close friends and family to grieve with me, to help me deal with my pain - not to speak it away. This was a pain that was ripping my heart and my soul in two.

After talking to my doctor and other medical professionals, and after much prayer, I realized God had not caused these losses. He had not set out to punish me, and I had done nothing wrong. I was finally at peace with myself and with God. Now after several years of unsuccessful attempts to become pregnant, I was at the point of being able to say, "Okay, God, if this is my lot in life, I will accept it and be happy with what you have given me. I have an incredible husband who loves me with all his heart. I have a great career as a classrooom teacher, and I have a wonderful family to stand behind me in everything I do. I will be at peace and rest in you."

In December of 1992, while visiting in Florida, I again discovered I was pregnant. Max and I wanted to be excited, but we were so scared! The decision was made to tell no one except our immediate families. After returning to Dallas, I went to the doctor in a state of fear. After all, I had never made it through that first trimester, and here it was, facing me once again. In a moment of enlightenment, I came to understand just how much God loved me. I was thirteen weeks pregnant! Thirteen weeks pregnant and out of the dark! We shouted our news from the rooftops to the whole world!

July 10, 1993, I delivered a perfect and whole; beautiful baby boy. We have since had another boy and a baby girl. My children are my pride and joy. They are my reason for living and for daily giving thanks to God. however, I have not forgotten my two angels. I think often about the two babies I lost, and I look forward to meeting them someday in Heaven. I know they are in a much better place. Our family is complete with three earthly angels and two heavenly ones. God is so good!

Jody Friz In Loving Memory of Baby Friz 1, Miscarried October 1989 and Baby Friz 2, Miscarried September 1990



Max Friz

I held my wife's hand as she awakened in the recovery room. This was the second miscarriage we experienced in a 12 month period. My reaction was surprisingly different this time. I felt the same loss and devastation as I did with our first baby, but instead of embracing our loss, I immediately began thinking of how I was going to help Jody work through this second miscarriage.

In my attempt to be the atypical husband that demonstrated complete support and sensitivity in

everyday life, I failed to indentify the type of support and intimacy Jody really needed at this tragic time. I did not understand (during the first or second miscarriage) the importance of jointly embracing our grief. Instead, my goal was to work through the pain as quickly as possible (and help Jody to do the same) to put yet another tragedy behind us again - leaving it in the past.

My motivations were honest and sincere. Unfortunately, I lacked a combination of understanding and maturity. Experience taught me that we were able to work through the first miscarriage quickly (or so I thought). Any husband that cares deeply for his wife would naturally want to end her emotional pain and try to restore joy and happiness to her life.

This well-meant thought process was the problem. I was thinking of Jody (and myself), but I was not thinking of the babies. I should have spent significant time talking about the babies with Jody. I should have asked her questions specifically about each baby. I should have taken the time to wonder whether they would have looked more like their mother or me, what their personality would have been like, or the path they would follow in life. Instead of discussing the babies (or even allowing them to be part of conversation), I would always turn to the future. I carefully changed the subject to pleasant matters.

A couple of years later we were blessed with a healthy baby boy, then another baby boy, and finally a precious little girl. While I was pleased we were blessed with three healthy children, I still thought of the two babies we lost. Some fathers might say, "You need to let go and put it behind you once and for all," but I would suggest that healing joy comes from embracing their memory and always (consciously) reserving a very special place in your heart for each child.

Max Friz
In Loving Memory of Baby Friz 1,
Miscarried October 1989
and Baby Friz 2,
Miscarried September 1990



Anne & Dan Keough

It has been 26 years since our first pregnancy ended in what the medical books call a spontaneous abortion. I was 10 weeks along in a pregnancy that had been prayed for and awaited for five years. We had driven from New Jersey to Indiana to celebrate Christmas and to tell our families the great news. We were pregnant! We had told my family and intended to journey the 50 miles to tell Dan's family in person.

I began spotting and contacted my sister's obstetrician. He advised me to remain calm and go to bed. If anything else happened, I was to call him. I rested and prayed for four days. It was now Christmas Eve morning. Dan and I decided that everything was going to be okay and he should drive to his parents and tell them our news. I began bleeding more heavily that evening and the doctor advised me to go to the emergency room where he would meet me. My parents drove me to the hospital. I remember crying uncontrollably and praying all at the same time. My dad reached back to hold my hand and my mom tried to reassure her 26 year old daughter that everything would be okay.

At the hospital the resident on duty examined me and told me quite simply that a great percentage of first pregnancies end this way and that I probably would spontaneously abort. I was horrified.

It wasn't fair. We wanted this baby so much. We would be good parents. What had I done? Why was this happening? My sister's obstetrician advised me that while I had lost a considerable amount of blood, they were detecting what they believed to be a heartbeat and that after some observation and no further bleeding, I would be sent home for bed rest. My head raced. Where were my parents? Where was Dan? I was scared and alone with my fear. Was I going to lose our baby? About six hours later, I was released to go home to wait and see what would happen.

Christmas day was a blur. I was numb. My family had gone out and pruchased baby gifts and now they were afraid to give them to us to open. We tried to go through the motions of the holiday and be reassuring to everyone else. I rested and prayed and listened to the comforting words from family and friends. If I heard the phrase, "It is in God's hands" one more time, I thought I would scream and yet I knew it truly was in His hands. Where was my faith?

Five days later. I got up to go to the restroom and passed a mass of tissue about the size of a golf ball. Obviously the development was not that of a 10 week fetus. I remember yelling for Dan and as he rushed into the bathroom, I sank to the floor in tears. I knew our pregnancy had ended. I reached into the water and picked up the mass of tissue. Dan and I together said the words of baptism. He got a jar and we placed the tissue in it along with some water. I think we believed at the time that the doctor might be able to tell us why this had happened. I went to the phone and called Monsignor Kavanaugh. He was very reassuring and told me that we had done what was right and that he would pray for us. Was that it? More prayer? Dan called the doctor and he advised us to make an appointment and that he would probably perform a D & C in the office.

I remember walking into the office that morning with my little jar. I remember the doctor looking at the jar and then dropping it in the waste basket. He advised me to get ready for an examination and he proceeded with the D & C procedure. There were no answers as to why there had been no development of the fetus. There were no answers as to "why us?" There were many possibilities and the encouragement to try again to get pregnant after my body had time to restore itself.

What began as a confirmed pregnancy on December 8th ended on December 30th. Our family and friends tried to find the right words to say to us. "It was meant to be." If the baby had lived it might have been deformed." "You will get pregnant again." "It was for the best." I just wanted to get in the car and drive back to New Jersey and be as far away from everyone and everything as I could. We drove those 900 miles in silence. I was too numb to cry any more. I didn't want to talk about what had happened. I didn't want to think about getting pregnant again. After we returned home, I visited with my regular obstetrician and his answers were the same ones I had already heard. Why couldn't someone tell me the reason our pregnancy had ended? Why?

The memories are as vivid today as they were when I was going through the ending of that pregnancy. I can see the faces, hear the voices, remember who said what and taste the fear, tears, anger, and resentment of it all. The difference today is that acceptance, understanding, and peace have replaced the strong negativity of those early years after the end of our first pregnancy. The memories have never gone away. It takes on the ticking of the calendar, the return of the holiday, the date of what would have been the birth date of our child, the discussion of the loss of a child with someone else to rekindle the memories.

The difference today is that I wish we had been guided as many couples are today. Name your child even if your don't know the sex. Pray with family and friends in a ritualistic way for the child and yourselves. Reach out to those who have been through a similar loss and learn how to grieve your loss and heal your broken hearts. I know that God gave us the experience of that pregnancy and the ending of that pregnancy so that we might better minister to others going

through pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, and the loss of the same. Over and over again these past 26 years, God has given us opportunity after opportunity to use what we learned about ourselves and our marriage through that "spontaneous abortion" to bring His love to others, especially the four wonderful children who were born to us in 1974, 1976, 1978, and 1979. Daniel Shaun, Anne Elizabeth, Joseph Matthew, and Erin Colleen could not begin to realize how the news of their confirmed conceptions, basically flawless pregnancies, births through C-section, and arrival on this earth could bring such joy and profound acceptance of God's abundant love. As we went through each pregnancy and passed that infamous 10 week stretch, we sighed with relief. As we passed each successive week, we continued our prayer that God would watch over the baby and us and grant us the gift of a child. As we prepared for the birthing processs of each child, we waited in hope and prayer that everything would be perfect. And, we continued to walk by each of those cribs looking to make sure the little chests rose and fell with breath. We walked over and touched and blessed those sleeping infants more times than either of us can even remember.

Anne & Dan Keough In loving Memory of Baby Keough Miscarried December 30, 1971



Christopher Wayne Brown

In 1992, after about a year of trying to have a baby, my wife called me at work around 10:30 a.m. to tell me, "...we are going to have a baby!" I remember going to every office in the building (five floors) telling everyone the great news that morning. The doctor confirmed the home test (Big High 5), gave her some vitamins and out the door we went. By the end of the week, she began to bleed sightly and she had a slight pain on her right side. Back to the doctor we went. After some tests, the doctor informed us, "It's growing in the right fallopian tube; it will have to be removed. I've called the O.R. and they are standing by. The nurse will show you where to go; you'll need to go now." I was still working on "...IT" will have to be removed" when my wife was walking out the door. In less than two hours, no pregnancy, no right tube, and no explanaton why. We were back to ground zero! It all happened so fast.

What do people do in this situation? What about the baby or was "IT" a baby? What were they going to do with...what I loved so deep in my heart for a week? A funeral? If so, we'll need a name. Well, the doctor came out of O.R. and said, "She's in recovery; everything went well; she'll be out of the hospital in two or three days." I said, "What about the...uh...baby?" he said, "Oh, well the tissue... (now "IT" is called TISSUE)...was sent to the lab to be analyzed." "And then?" I asked. "It's disposed of like any other bodily tissue." I said, "Oh." I hate myself for accepting that answer as, 'Well, okay, if that's normal procedure, I'm in.' I kick myself every time I think about it. I should have grabbed that doctor by the arm and told him to make sure the lab handles my child gently while they examine him, and afterwards, carefully transport the child's remains to the local funeral home, because no one takes my child and disposes of him as if they were human garbage like a tumor or wart that's been scraped off the body and then thrown into an incinerator with the rest of the bodily tissue. I wish M.E.N.D. was around then.

Christopher Wayne Brown In Loving Memory of Baby Brown 1 Ectopic Pregnancy, July 1992 and Baby Brown 2, Christopher is the publisher of "Around Town Magazine" and this article is excerpted from the "Letter From The Publisher" in the December 1997 issue.



By My Side

By My Side by Gail Fasolo

Jesus is always by my side. I know this to be true. He was there in my darkest hour and helped to pull me through.

He gives me strength on the days it's hard to carry on.
I pour my heart out to Him.
He's the one I lean upon.

"I am with you always" said He.
I held His hand through my tragedy.
When my world was dim and happiness nil
He was there for me and loves me still.

I trust in Him to guide me in good times and in bad. I ask for hope and comfort so I won't feel so sad.

"I will never leave or forsake you." His words ring in my mind. He made sure His words would live and not get left behind.

My faith has grown much stronger and I thank God each day. I have his greatest blessing. his Love never goes away.



Who Am I?

WHO AM I TO SAY WHAT MAKES THINGS TURN OUT THIS WAY...

WHO AM I TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT MAKES THINGS GET OUT OF HAND...

WHO DECIDES WHAT IS FAIR OR HOW MUCH EACH SHOULD HAVE TO BEAR...

WHO GIVES ME THAT STRENGTH TO CARRY ON THE POWER OF HOPE FOR THE NEXT DAY'S DAWN.

GOD I PUT MY FAITH IN YOU I KNOW WITH YOU I WILL GET THROUGH.

by Lark Solis In Loving Memory of Kayla Elizabeth Solis February 28, 1993



Luke 14:1-3

Luke 14:1-3

Jesus said in Luke 14:1-3
"Don't let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God; trust also in me.
In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."



My Precious Baby

My Precious Baby

After five years of marriage we wanted to start a family. So, I visited with the doctor who helped me with my fertility.

Oh my precious baby, when will you arrive?

I just can't wait to feel you inside.

After many months of trying we finally had success.
For we had created a baby and felt so blessed.

Oh my precious baby, I love you so much already. But I only have eight months to get your nursery ready.

Sharing the news with my mom and sisters was one of life's finest hours.

They were all so thrilled and excited that they surprised me with a mother-to-be-shower.

Oh my precious baby, I can't wait for my belly to grow. So I can cover you up in these new maternity clothes.

My baby and I flew to Washington, D.C. Because I had some business there for my job you see.

Oh my precious baby, I'm so happy as can be. Almost nine weeks now that you have been with me.

But wait just a minute, something is not right. I think I might be bleeding this is such an awful sight.

Oh my precious baby, what is going on in there? Please don't leave me now I'm so very, very scared.

As I lay in my hotel room not knowing your demise. I cradled my tummy as I sang you lullabies.

Oh my precious baby, you just have to hang on. I can't get a flight home until tomorrow morn.

We finally got to the doctor's office and I hoppped up on a table So he could take a look and see if everything was stable.

Oh my precious baby, what will the doctor say? You can't leave me yet. I'm praying you will stay.

But the sonogram showed that you had already died. So your father held me tightly as I cried and cried and cried.

Oh my precious baby, how can I let you go? We had such little time together. Surely, God must know.

To remove you from my body, they performed a D & C. But memories of carrying you will always be with me.

Oh my precious baby, how I miss you so. Although I never held you, I know I felt your soul.

By Kathryn Padilla
Written In Loving Memory
of Baby Padilla I,
Miscarried September 19, 1996
Kathryn and her husband, William,
also lovingly remember
Baby Padilla II, lost to
ectopic pregnancy on April 8, 1997.



Tears

TEARS

THERE IS A SACREDNESS IN TEARS, THEY ARE NOT A MARK OF WEAKNESS, BUT OF POWER.
THEY SPEAK MORE ELOQUENTLY,
THAN TEN THOUSAND TONGUES.
THEY ARE MESSENGERS OF OVERWHELMING GRIEF,
OF DEEP CONTRITION, AND
OF UNSPEAKABLE LOVE.

Author Unknown

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The Myth of Miscarriage Grief

The Myth of Miscarriage Grief

by Susan Arlen, M.D. Somerville, NJ

This article has been written to dispel some myths and misconceptions about normal bereavement when miscarriage or stillbirth occurs. Sometimes the lack of information or downright insensitivity of caregivers adds to the already large amount of stress that bereaved parents experience, and can further deplete their low energy levels.

Often, the newly bereaved feel pressure to behave in ways that are diametrically opposed to how they actually feel. This is not only emotionally draining, but it adds to their feelings of unreality and incongruity.

"How can you be so upset, you were only six months pregnant? The baby wasn't even someone you know yet."

Mental images of the developing infant begin long before its actual birth. They can commence at the time of quickening, when a pregnancy test turns positive, or even at the thought of having a child.

We can and do love images of our future. The effect that this growing human being will have on their parents' lives and the lives of other family members is wondered about. During pregnancy, dreams of how this child will be, what the new family relationships will be and thoughts of a happy future occupy thoughts and dreams. The anticipation of the birth of a child helps to prepare the family for the child's birth.

When there is a later miscarriage, the mother has already felt the child move, heard its heartbeat and perhaps seen its image on ultrasound. The hopes, dreams and plans for this child have been made for the expanded family. Though unborn, that child is real to his or her family.

A miscarriage is the death of a child who was already an integral part, in thought and plans, of the family. Because the child has not yet been held, or seen with the naked eye, people may

erroneousy assume that the loss is minimal, but loss is very individually experienced and it is a mistake to assume anything. The parents also mourn the death of the hopes and dreams for their new family.

It is important to remember that the hormonal changes that a woman's body undergoes because of pregnancy are the same whether or not the child survives. Postartum depression is a genuine medical condition, and it has little to do with "weakness" or "strength." It has everything to do with chemical changes that occur in the mother's body that can and do affect her emotionally. Grief because of the death of an infant can deepen this sadness and depression.

The lack of recognition of the loss by other people can also deepen the depression. After a miscarriage, young mothers often feel alone and isolated in their grief. Family and friends can help grieving parents by acknowledging the loss and encouraging the parents to speak about it.

Cliches such as, "You're young, you'll have more children" are not helpful and can actually further isolate the parents. It is human nature to want to "fix" those in pain; however, there are no quick fixes with grief.

A truly helpful stance is one of support, quiet listening and no judgements. For the listener, it is often easier and less painful to provide answers such as, "It was God's will," or, "You can have other children" rather than suffer the discomfort of silence. The silence, however, is often more healing for the bereaved parents.

Parents often blame and torment themselves for having caused the miscarriage. They can focus on things they did or did not do, or things they believe may have caused this, but frequently there is no answer as to why a miscarriage occurred. As with many other natural occurrences, there is just no explanation. If a couple is blaming themselves, this is best discussed with a sensitive and caring physician who can and will help them to work this through.

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Resources

Resources published in the printed version of this newsletter and can be accessed online directly from M.E.N.D.'s resource pages. To access the resource pages (at any time), navigate to the following URL:

URL: http://www.mend.org/resources internet.asp

In the M.E.N.D. resource listing, you will find resources which include internet web sites,



Subsequent Births After Loss

Diane and Steve Galleger

Diane and Steve Galleger of Dallas, TX proudly announce the birth of their daughter, Sydney Michele, born Sunday, January 18, 1998, at 7:29 p.m. while lovingly remembering their daughter, Amanda Morgan, stillborn Jnuary 7, 1997. Sydney Michele weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz. and measured 19" long.

Congratulations and best wishes!



In Loving Memory

In Loving Memory

Austin Jeremiah Davis

Stillborn September 16, 1997

Donation in memory of Austin by his parents, Dana and Tracy Davis and big sister, Ashley.

Donation in memory of Austin by his grandmother Minnie R. Clark.

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995 Cord Accident

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 refer to the page entitled Contributions for more information on where to send your donations and what information to include. Thank you so much!

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

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

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

Mercedes Ruth Spigener
Stillborn September 21, 1995
Twin Blossoms Spigener
Miscarried July 1995 and August 1996.

Donation in memory of Mercedes Ruth and Twin Blossoms by their parents Jana and Grant Spigener and little brother, Wyatt.

Brianna Maria Shields

Stillborn October 15, 1996 Group B Strep

Donation in memory of Brianna by parents Marianne and Ted Shields.

Sarah Ann King

Stillborn June 24, 1995 Cord Accident Parents · Lori and David King

Donation in memory of Sarah by her grandparents, Bonita and Peter Jackson.

Baby Friz 1
Miscarried October 1989
Baby Friz 2
Miscarried September 1990

Donation in memory of Baby Friz 1 and Baby Friz 2 by their parents Jody and Max Friz and siblings, Jared, Davis, and Jordan.

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