

Top Ten Touchstones: **Living When Your *Child* Has Died**

(for facing the many challenges ahead)

1. **Some losses are forever losses.** The death of your child **is** one of them.
2. Listen and learn from the **experts** — other bereaved parents who have gone before on the path you now embark.
3. Your devastation will likely soften and change; but it will **never** leave the part of your heart reserved for such things. Nor should it.
4. **MEMO**
To: Well-intentioned friends and family
Your platitudes don't help — **they hurt**. They hurt because they miss the point of my longing as a parent. I miss my child beyond words. Beyond belief.
5. Thank you to those friends who want to fix this. Please know — as I do — that you cannot. It is sweet of you to want to. **Walk with me** in my struggles. There are many.
6. My journey will last from months to years and will be revisited at particular life events. Please **bear with me** — and please **BE with me**. My struggles are beyond comprehension.
7. Please, please, please — use my child's name in conversation. It is a blessing to know my child mattered, and my child is being thought of by you and others.
8. If you have a personal memory that you wish to share, please don't fear upsetting me. I could not possibly hurt more than I already do. Give me a memory piece I can put into the puzzle that I face. I am forever changed. **Are you still with me?**
9. Share with me the joys of your kids — I will support your good news as you support me through my necessary griefwork. I can be jealous and happy for you at the same time.
10. Your kindness, your compassion, your thoughtfulness on holidays and birthdays, on Mothers Days and Fathers Days are appreciated more than I can ever speak. Please, include me to balance my heartbreaking aloneness.

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