

My Grandchild Died

Author wishes to remain anonymous

Many months ago now my grandchild died, some days it feels as if it were yesterday, other days it seems a life time ago. I am told by my friends and some of my family that it is time I "moved on". They tell me that I must put "it" behind me!

It is not easy to smile back. It is not easy to tell them why I will never "get over it". How can you explain the grief? One cannot do so and I hope they never learn from personal experience what it is like for a grandmother to lose a grandchild.

I used to think my heart had broken but I now know that is not true. If my heart had broken I would not be here. My "being" broke, I feel as if I am a 3D jigsaw puzzle that broke into thousands of pieces the day my grandchild died. Slowly, through self help I have put that puzzle together. It is not perfect and regularly a piece, or sometimes a few pieces, slip out and remain out for some time. They can be put back in and need to be for me to live my life, but I find I have two pieces that will not fit back into that puzzle, no matter how I try. Some days one piece almost fits; this is the grief for my grandchild. It will always be a new piece in my being. That grief will remain until the day I die. It is a piece of puzzle uniquely shaped from happy and sad memories, from an undying love, from so many emotions. I touch this piece of puzzle often, sometimes the grief it brings is so intense it is almost unbearable, other days it does not seem so bad. Some days touching it makes me smile. It is always in my thoughts and I feel it constantly, however I can place it in my pocket and know that it rests safely there. It is at peace so I have learnt not to struggle to try to make it fit.

The other piece is more difficult. It belongs to my child, the daughter I gave birth to, fed and nurtured, loved and cuddled. The daughter I watched grow from baby to adulthood. The daughter I helped shape into a wonderful human being. She too was part of my "being", I understood her and we shared a history. We were mother and daughter. Now that piece has changed shape forever and does not even look like fitting in. Can I mould the shape to fit, no not yet. Will it ever fit back in? I do not know. I understand that she has changed forever and I love her unconditionally but I wonder if I will ever get to know this new daughter. Is it possible to find that comfortable place I once shared with her? Can that natural mother daughter relationship be learnt again now we are not child and adult? She has had to change to cope, she has been dealt the most terrible of tragedies, and her life has changed forever. She lost a child. She has needed to find strength from her deepest self. She is grown up now, she no longer needs me to nurture her as a mother but I still need her as a daughter. I long for the day when I can feel her arms around me again and hear her say I, love you Mum from her heart. Maybe then that piece of puzzle will have days when it fits into my pocket comfortably too.

It will always be a piece of my puzzle whose shape has changed but hopefully one which also becomes comfortable to hold.

Is this why they say a grandparent suffers a double grief when their grandchild dies? Maybe.