

Brendan Wyborn

By Bob Wyborn, in loving memory of his son

THE CLUB

I want to tell you about one of the most exclusive clubs that I am aware of on this planet. It is so rare that very few people even know about it. It is not widely publicised nor do you receive invitations to join it, either in the mail or by any other form of solicitation.

It has global membership. You will find fellow members in all nooks and crannies of this universe. It has no age restrictions or colour barrier. Gender is not an issue nor your belief system. It is not a club that you are asked to join nor would you want others to enlist. The membership is the highest that can be paid. The cost... the death of your child. The manner of death is not a prerequisite. It has an open exclusivity about its qualifications.

Its members are drawn from all the walks of life. There are the rich and there are those who are not. Some hold high office and some do not. Life has been kind to some whilst to others not so gentle. There are those whose life experiences have created great wisdom and those who are still on the learning trail. There are atheists and believers. For some these roles have reversed. They range from the very young to those who have lived for many years. Its members are Mums, Dads, Brothers, Sisters and Grandparents.

What is it that you get for the terrible price of your membership?

In the beginning your "dues" simply bring the most intense pain that is imaginable and one the rest of the world does not know or understand; and that is only the start. The mixture of all your emotions in turmoil and chaos produce in you a very bitter dish which is stewed daily by its own almost toxic ingredients. This club appears to have a strange policy in the way that it treats its members.

As the messages of time and experience are slowly shared by other members you come to realise that this club has specific knowledge that is not known by non members. It is really quite like "secret members business." You come to understand that those who have not paid their "subs" quite simply do not understand some eternal truths.

The Club endows you with special knowledge and insight that really changes you forever and disallows a return to your former days. The reality is that whilst you have irrevocably changed; those changes are not all negative and you become privy to some very powerful "Secrets".

You come face to face with your eternal reality and thus an understanding of mortality. You can not have life without death. What is inordinately hard to accept is the order in which it visited your family. You learn from this premature act that you truly know the depth of your love where those outside of your club have not had this test. This knowledge empowers you in your relationships with other family members and society.

You can no longer listen or read a story relating to the death of a child and not feel deeply affected. You really know the profound meaning of John Donne's words that, "no Man is an Island." You are part of the same soil and have an insider's understanding.

Your awareness of the pain of Grief is heightened to a level that produces true cognisance and this will help you in time to be a true friend to other new members. You will come to understand the journey that is Grief and the power of healing that your pain brings you. This great enigma takes

some time to resolve.

This self same enigma is what creates the unwanted hurt delivered by those who have no membership. Your pain is not understood and therefore it must be likened to some, oft times, minor experience that the speaker relates to your child. A pet canary is totally dissimilar to a human however; this does not stop the earnest comforter who feels a contribution to your healing is mandatory.

The word love is “sanctified” by the death your child and you are given your special and secret knowledge of this much misused word. You can truly find the depth of your love by the depth of your grief for they are directly related. However the length of your grief is not determined by the length of time with your child. Your attachments vary greatly by vastly different factors and expectations.

Another “Secret” is the law of Perspective. The blinding revelation of what is really important in this world is suddenly made known to you.

You see what you did not know as an eternal truth and it is as if you always had this truth. The darkened glass is now your crystal ball from which you scry as you often cry. The importance of a broken finger nail or a lost football game resumes is rightful triviality. You “see” reality. The balance of what really is significant in life is placed in your understanding and frees you from the unnecessary distortion of self importance, self pity and blindsidedness.

This can also have the side effect of making you very impatient with those who have not experienced your enlightenment.

Your level of compassion is greatly enhanced and you come to a real understanding of the word “empathy” as opposed to the far less committed term “sympathy.” The Club teaches you the significance and power of feeling with someone as distinct from feeling for someone.

As your membership lengthens your imagination will foster hope; this hope will lead to your healing and recovery. The hope that you do not have to feel that way forever and that grief is not a life sentence. It will become apparent from observation that other members are rediscovering happiness, a sense of purpose, understanding, acceptance and even exhibiting a life full of joy.

The Club will teach you many more secrets; all of which will fashion you into a person of greater substance. Above all it will teach you the awesome power of the human spirit and you will come to realise that there is absolutely nothing on this earth that you can not overcome. The power of the human spirit is almost beyond comprehension and it is the most energising and uplifting piece of reality that the Club bestows.

The question that I ask of those members that have come to discover these secrets is this; “When will you release this information to those that need this knowledge?”

Bob is a bereaved Dad whose 11 year old son Brendan died of Adrenoleukodystrophy in 1999.