

## Matthew

By Trisha, in memory of her son

Some six years and five months ago, my 20 year old son died. The journey since his death has been incredibly arduous. When I look back at my first message posted on the TCF site (18/08/1999) I am truly amazed at my "concern" that, some six weeks after Matthew's death "the pain is still unbearable". The word that amazes me now, six plus years on, is "still"! It took me so very long to realise and accept that there's no time limit. And certainly six weeks was a totally ridiculous expectation of myself that I "should" have been coping better.

I am sure that there are endless reasons for my approaching my grief as I did. None of them matter.

It took me a long, hard, five and a half years to begin to LEARN how to continue living following Matthew's death. During that time I can honestly say that I was totally lost. I imagine it's like being in "Limbo".

Despite regular grief counselling, I simply wasn't coping. Work became a trial (I dealt with children everyday and felt I wasn't worthy to be there!); my long-term personal relationship ended (he couldn't deal with me and my grief) and my relationship with my daughter (older sister to Matt) was, to say the least "wobbly". My "turning point" came following four days that will be forever lost to me. I woke up in an Intensive Care Ward in a Brisbane Hospital.

It was very soon after that that I realized I had a choice. I could try my best to learn how to live or I could choose not to live. I chose the former. I was so fortunate in that I met and "clicked" with a psychiatrist who helped me to help myself. I genuinely LEARNED how to live again.

I can't in all honesty say that I'm happy, but that's ok. I am OK about being alive and I have finally come to terms with the fact that Matthew is no longer here.

The odd thing is, that in so many ways, he actually is here. My five year old granddaughter talks about her Uncle Matthew (my daughter has always talked to her daughter about her brother). My second granddaughter, 19 months old, bears a great resemblance to Matt. And, for me, the most important thing of all is that I FEEL him. I'm not a religious or spiritual person but I know that I hold my son somewhere in my being. And that gives me great comfort.

And so here I am, checking out the TCF site, and what's more writing a (very long) message. I don't have any words to alleviate anyone's pain, no one does. But perhaps there is a newly grieving Mum out there who thinks she "should be able to cope better"; and if there is, I beg of you, please, don't allow yourself to suffer in that way. It CAN be different; it WILL change, I promise. I know how you all feel, just as you know how I feel.

Thank you TCF for providing this outlet where we can feel safe, where no-one will make judgments and, most of all where everyone REALLY understands.

Much love,  
Trisha