



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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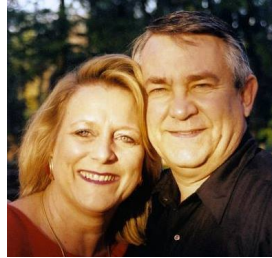
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Dear Friends,

It is Spring and for Donna and I, the month of April holds a very deep and somber reminder. It is the month we lost our child. This Thought is very personal, as all of them are, and it contains a special message and a way to improve your communication skills. I hope you will consider having a very special conversation with those in your lives who have suffered personal loss.

Please let me know if this resonates with you and if it is helpful.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

APRIL: We lost a child....and here's what we would like you to know.

Stephanie was 16 when she died in an automobile accident about three miles from our home. It was April 27, 1995. She had just returned from a church sponsored seminar in New York City. While I picked her up in D.C., Donna had not seen her for a week. She

never saw her alive after she left for New York.

First, I want to celebrate Stephanie by telling you a bit about her. Stephanie was brilliant. (e.g. "How do you think you did on the PSAT?" "I wasn't sure about the answer to one question.") Stephanie was determined. (e.g. At the age of 7, she took me up on a challenge of not watching TV for a year in exchange for \$1000. A year later, she used the \$1000 toward the purchase of our first computer.) Stephanie was strong willed. (e.g. "If you say I have to wear boots, I just won't go to the sledding party.) Stephanie was a free Spirit. (e.g. "I couldn't find two that matched. No one at school will care if one shoe is red and one is black.") Stephanie was compassionate and persuasive. (e.g. "We have to recycle! The earth needs us to take care of it and everyone on it!")

The death of a child is the most hideously cruel event that a human being can endure. It is marked by crushing grief, unspeakable loneliness, and a desperate bewilderment about the nature of life itself.

The death of a child breaks the parents in a way that is not fixable. Their lives will never, ever be the same. Even though they may seem normal and even joyful, there is not a minute of any day that the parents are not staggeringly aware that everything is forever different. And it is a lonely journey!

We had a vast array of beautiful people who cradled us with love and support. It was truly awesome. The outpouring was almost an embarrassment of relational riches. We felt overwhelmed with the mixture of grief and confusion while being in the spotlight of so much goodwill and attention.

Then time goes by. And a curious thing happens. We find that our grief continues to flourish. Every Holiday, every July 2 birthday, every April 27 anniversary, every niece and nephew wedding, every graduation, every new baby born in the extended family...all of

these carry the potential for a stinging reminder of what is not and what will never be.

This is all normal. What is also normal is that Stephanie is rarely mentioned, especially around big events. We understand that folks aren't sure what to say. We understand that people are afraid we will become sad. We understand that talking about a child who has died can trigger parent's fears about losing their own children.

What we want you to know is that it is helpful, even healing, for Stephanie and her memory to be included in whatever is going on. A simple "I'm sorry Stephanie is not here" or "I wonder what Stephanie would be doing" or "I bet you miss her" would be like manna from heaven.

You see, without any mention of her and of what happened, it is as though she never existed. It is as though all memory of her has been erased. And as if the death was not enough, this deafening silence regarding her short life and what it meant is almost unbearable. We long for celebration and recognition of Stephanie and the ways she blessed us and so many others while sharing her brief Journey on this earth.

So, if you have a chance with us or any other grieving parents, please step into the courage to mention the name of the child. Tell this dreadful club of survivors that something reminded you of their kid. Invite them to tell a funny story about their son or daughter. You will be like an angel bringing respite and relief to grieving and frozen parents who have long since given up hope that anyone notices anymore.

David

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES
COMING UP!**

Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

May 3-5, 2019, Frederick, MD

May 31-June 2, 2019, Frederick, MD

July 12-14, 2019, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

September 21-22, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Sadly enough, the most painful goodbyes are the ones that are left unsaid and never explained." Jonathan Harnisch, Freak

"Loss is like a wind, it either carries you to a new destination or it traps you in an ocean of stagnation. You must quickly learn how to navigate the sail, for stagnation is death." Val Uchendu

"The mindset of loss of a loved one is to understand that the loss will never be undone. You must live with it, like it or not. But, to live well, you must turn that loss into something positive. That way, you can become the best version of yourself; scarred, flawed and unstoppable" Val Uchendu

"Memories saturate my heart and the story of you spills from my eyes." Grace Andren

"Any woman who'd ever lost a child knew of the hollowness that remained within the soul." Brittainy C. Cherry, Disgrace

"Like a deep sad note
played beneath the ocean
waving through the orb
the memories of you
the bittersweet echoes
infixing forever in my heart" Pawan Mishra

"No farewell words were spoken, no time to say goodbye. You were gone before we knew it, and only God knows why."

We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
Bowman & Associates, PA**