My Mothers’ Day 2000

Apparent in all the media, bombarding my world, I saw advertisements saying:

***The perfect Mothers’ Day gift. Celebrate Mom! Make her day! Surprise her with style. Especially for you, Mom! Delight her with diamonds! For you Mom. Enjoy your special day, Mom…***

What are you doing on Mothers’ Day? I did not want to decide so I was glad my family did for me. A Mothers’ Day Brunch - wouldn’t that be fun? My feelings about Mothers’ Day were as conflicted as my grieving. I was a mother but I wasn’t. I had my oldest son with me after many years (as he recently returned from living out of state) but I did not have both of my children. Zac was gone and I was half a mother; half of me was here and half of me was gone. Half of me was aware of what was happening around me and half of me wanted to run away.

In the restaurant, I felt torn as I questioned, “Who am I now?” and “Am I supposed to act differently now since my mother role has changed?” Yes, I am Tyler’s mother but Zac died and I am no longer his mom.

It was eight months after Zac’s death and I was not sure who I was. I was still feeling anger, guilt, depression and riding the roller coaster of these changing feelings from one day to the next so naturally I was unsure of who I was on this special holiday day. Nevertheless, I thought since I progressed through the previous months that I could face Mothers’ Day. However, what made me think I could sail through THAT day? I suppose since I occasionally surprised myself when I could do things that I did not think I had the courage to do, that if I “mustered up some courage,” that I’d survive this day. I did and I did. I walked through that day from confusion to depression. It was not until the next month (during my first year of grief) that I had my epiphany and made a choice, which changed the path of my grief journey. I made a conscious decision to live after the death of my son. After making that choice, I not only realized I was still a mother but I was Tyler and Zac’s mother. Moreover, I was still Chris. In addition, because of the decision, I was ready to move to a different level in my grief.

Although my epiphany and decision were pivotal events in my life, they only created baby steps in my grief process as I had a long journey ahead of me in which to notice the actual progress through my grief. However, these two experiences created a foundation upon which I could build future steps that enabled me to think more positively so I could actually make that daily decision to “go on.”

I now recognize pieces of who I was prior to Zac’s death but I added a dimension to who I have become as the result of Zac’s death. When the fabric of one’s being is shredded, not only a “dealing with” but a “mending” process has to take place to repair the remnants of who you were before the death of a child in order to support who you will become when the healing journey occurs.

I had to take the shattered pieces of my life and mold them back into a foundation on which to attach my new beliefs, values, ethics, etc. Once I was able to pull together a framework, I developed my new and different life. With every step of acceptance surrounding Zac’s death (i.e.: he is gone, I will never see him again, accepting doesn’t mean I “agree” with it, recognizing/acknowledging the missing part of my grief…)I could further allow myself to move out of my steps of grief and into the steps of healing. Acceptance was essential to begin healing. Although never “healed,” I am now in a place where I know I am still Zac’s mom and that he is proud of where I am in my life because of the decisions I made since he last hugged me on Mothers’ Day 1999 and said, “I love you, Mama.”

I know Zac will be with me on future Mothers’ Days and therefore, I will “Celebrate Mom” as I have two wonderful sons and I already received “the perfect Mothers’ Day gifts” many years ago.