

Spirit Gifts

Grief is such an individual journey. We are cast on its path without our consent, enveloped by a depth of pain we never dreamed existed. We all have times when despair and loneliness threaten to engulf us.

But we do have one companion on this lonely, unsought road: our child who died. I think there is never a moment in the day when a part of me is not connected to Philip, to our years together and to our present relationship. Our journey through grief is a good-bye to the physical presence of our children, but it is never good-bye to their spirits and to the essence of their beings. Philip lives inside me now, and the same gifts he gave me when he was physically alive are still available to me through his spirit. In some ways, those "spirit gifts" are stronger, because they are contained and undiluted within me.

When the days get unbearably hard, when I think of all this wonderful young man missed by not getting to live out his life, I try to remember to focus on the present Philip, the one inside me. I try to integrate his gifts into my life, sometimes seeing through his eyes, thinking from his heart and mind. Often when I walk in hills, I'll hear his voice: "Pay attention, Mom." (He noticed the details in nature so much more than I.)

No matter how old your child who died, the essence of this unique being remains within you forever. It is through us and others who knew them that our children continue to live and affect our present world. Though not in the way we hoped and expected, our beloved children are still alive.

...May the spirit of the child who lives so deep within your heart help you through this month and through every moment of the re-establishing of your life.

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