

The Erika Whitmore Godwin Foundation



E-Haven™ Newsletter from griefHaven

Where Hope Resides™

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Father's Day What Do Dads Really Want For Father's Day?

By Susan Whitmore



Last month in our May *E-Haven Newsletter* we shared with you what Mothers whose children have died really wanted for Mother's Day.

That newsletter generated one of the highest responses we have ever received from any newsletter.

Those responses came from all over the world and included mothers, fathers, friends, specialists, medical workers, family members, spiritual advisors, and more. But you know what really made us smile? Mothers everywhere received phone calls, cards, letters, emails, and even gifts from those who had never done anything before, and all because so many of you forwarded that newsletter to those who would benefit from what was written in it. In other words, educating those outside our circle of loss about what we wanted and needed actually resulted in more of us getting our needs met! That was true even for those of us here at *griefHaven*!



Oftentimes, people just don't know what to do, so they don't do anything. In our society, we are taught from the time we are children, "It is not polite to ask, sweetie." Yet, no one can read

minds, so by letting others know in a loving way what we truly need means there is that much more chance of getting it. Conversely, if we don't tell people, we can guarantee we most likely won't get it, and that leads to feelings of abandonment, resentment, and separation.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with asking for what you want and need, as long as it is done with love and kindness, as opposed to resentment and frustration, which can easily spill out if we feel someone should "just know" what we want. That kind of thinking and approach to relationships is a no-win situation for everyone involved.

So, with the success of last month's newsletter, we decided to do the same thing for our Dads this month—share with you what our Dads really want for Father's Day.

Here you have the lovely things Fathers shared with us about their needs on Father's Day. See if you recognize the common theme that runs through these quotes. And, as we suggested with last month's newsletter (and as we encourage with all of our *E-Haven Newsletters*), please forward this to everyone you know who would benefit from what we have to share.

**Let's make sure our Dads
get what means the most to them
on this and every
Father's Day!**

And! If you don't know what that special Dad wants, please ask him and let him tell you honestly what would be most meaningful to him on his upcoming day.

Here is what our beloved Fathers said they wanted:

"I want a card from my son. I'd like my wife to

pick out that special card that she knows my son would have purchased for me on this day.”

“Here’s some things I would like for Father’s Day: I would like to sleep in (at least until 7:00 A.M.). I would LOVE to get some sort of sign from my son. A very nice Father’s Day gift would be for my wife to find peace, comfort, and happiness on this day. I



wish for ALL Fathers that lost a child to have a good day. Last – my hope is NO Father will ever go through the pain and suffering of losing a child – that is my wish for ALL Dads.”

“I want my family to be healthy, and I would love to see my wife have a day of peace. I do feel so helpless sometimes when she’s so sad.”

“I guess what I want on Father’s Day is to be reminded of the joy in my life. I don’t want to hear about sadness for one day. I would like to avoid watching the news. I would like to believe that for one day I feel peaceful. I want to do fun things with my wife and two daughters. The death of my son will always be a cloud hovering over me, but I hope that the winds for this day will blow in the right direction.”

“I’m happy with whatever my family decides to do on Father’s Day. Honestly, I’m just glad that the rest

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of my family is healthy and able to do anything with me at all. Something celebrating life would be nice.”

“Like all Fathers, I believe the most important days of our lives are when our children are born. We participate in the miracle of birth—and the pleasure of

learning through the years—that a special bond exists between a parent and a child like no other. Sometimes we are fortunate enough to see them through childhood, school, marriage, and the gift repeats itself in the birth of grandchildren. However, life, being so finite, means we sometimes lose them. And we are left with only fond memories. So what I wish for Father’s Day is that we cherish every day we have with our children, and, if they leave us before we die, that we celebrate those fond memories we shared and not dwell on the moment of their passing. And a thought I would like to pass on to all is: We are never forgotten as long we are remembered.”

“This year my son would be graduating from High School. So I want to do something that honors him and all that he gave to me as a Father. He would want that to be something fun and outdoors.”

“You know, it was never important to me that I was celebrated on a specific day, but it was important to

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me that my daughter had the chance to express her feelings and do something she wanted to do to celebrate me. However, since, in her enthusiastic, vivacious way, she did that every day, Father’s Day did not stand out to me as something so unique. And now it’s no different. I feel I have a relationship with her on an ongoing basis that is independent of what day it is.”

“I think that part of the reason men don’t respond to questions like this one, ‘What do you want for Father’s Day?’ is that it is just hard. Men are supposed to be the strength of the family and the ones that can hold it all together. When, in reality, we hurt just as bad as the Moms. I myself cannot count the number of times that I lost it as soon as I was alone. So I would say the one thing that I would like to share is that we also hurt badly and that just because we look as if we are doing okay does not mean we are. Just speaking for myself, I guess I am saying to friends, family, and the world that we hurt just as badly for the loss of our son or daughter but just show it differently.”

“What I would like for that day, and, for that matter,

every day, is to be full of good and happy memories of my family with all of my children together and including my son who died. What that day means to me is an opportunity to especially focus our energies and direct our thoughts towards happy thoughts with my son."

"We lost our only child. That makes Father's Day especially difficult, as this is our third year without our daughter. I really have no idea what I want, but I know what I don't want. What I don't want is to do anything that is sad, like going to the cemetery. I want to have fun and enjoy the day."

"On Fathers Day, we have always been on vacation, and it is also usually the week of or before our son's birthday—June 19—as we are there from weekend to weekend. I usually just want to be with his Mom and brothers that day, but I would also like to hear someone say, 'Hey, thinking of y'all today.' That would be really uplifting and it lets us know others are thinking of him also."

"I think what I want most is for my surviving son to



honor me on Father's Day as I always honored my father. Something simple, quiet. Maybe a picnic or a stroll on the beach followed by lunch somewhere outside. Just time to be together. Now that my father and my son are gone, I think the important thing is to be in the present with who we are left with. I'm more able to talk about my son now. I find myself very

cautiously talking about him with my friends and also people who never knew him. I'll say some short thing that refers to him sometimes to test how much I can say without becoming overwhelmed with emotion. If I see an opening, then I might go further. It's progress!"

"What I want this Father's Day is dinner with the family, and for my son who died to visit my wife in a way that she will *know* he has visited."

"My Father's Day Wish:

I wish I had more memories and fewer regrets.
An encore performance not just a single solo set.
A shoulder to cry on when the tears won't dry.
But most of all I wish I had no reason to cry."

"Well, one item I personally would like for Father's Day is a set of golf clubs. I know this sounds kind of trite and impersonal, but there are many reasons I

want this particular gift. I have never spent any time or energy learning how to play golf. I have missed out on so many golf outings at church, work, with my barbershop singing friends, and, most importantly, with family. It is such a great way to network and bond with both male and female friends and family.



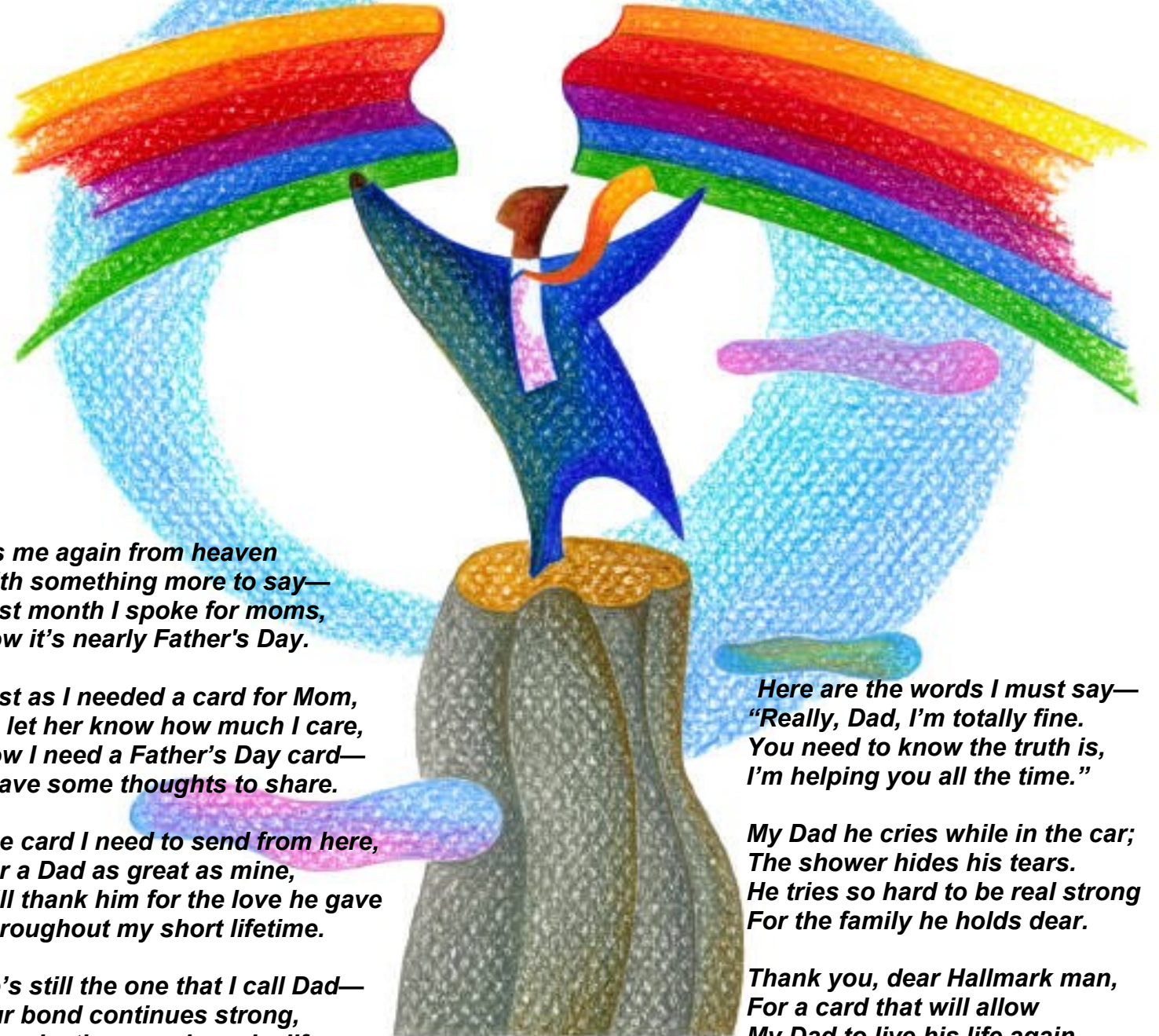
Now, the most important thing I would like for this particular Father's Day is a healthy child. In my first marriage, we lost two babies. The first was very early in the pregnancy, and the second was very difficult because, at about six-and-a-half months, she was stillborn. I will always miss her and celebrate her! So, on a happy note, my wife now of just over two years and I are about to see our son on June 3 via c-section. We are praying and hoping that he will be healthy and happy! That would be the greatest present of all!!! Happy Father's Day to all the Fathers and Dads out there. It's good to be a Father, but more important to be a Dad!"

*May you get
what you want
on this and every
Father's Day.*

Dear Hallmark Man

(On Father's Day)

—by Susan & Wendell Whitmore
(adopted from original poem for mothers)



*It's me again from heaven
With something more to say—
Last month I spoke for moms,
Now it's nearly Father's Day.*

*Just as I needed a card for Mom,
To let her know how much I care,
Now I need a Father's Day card—
I have some thoughts to share.*

*The card I need to send from here,
For a Dad as great as mine,
Will thank him for the love he gave
Throughout my short lifetime.*

*He's still the one that I call Dad—
Our bond continues strong,
'Cuz death can only end a life,
But our love lives on and on.*

*I hear him as he talks to me,
Staring at a nighttime star—
So, you see I need a way
To tell him I am here, not far.*

*I need the words to comfort him,
To soothe away his sighs,
To tell him "Dad, I am okay—
It doesn't hurt to die."*

*Here are the words I must say—
"Really, Dad, I'm totally fine.
You need to know the truth is,
I'm helping you all the time."*

*My Dad he cries while in the car;
The shower hides his tears.
He tries so hard to be real strong
For the family he holds dear.*

*Thank you, dear Hallmark man,
For a card that will allow
My Dad to live his life again
And find the peace I know now.*

*My Dad—the one with whom
I could walk and talk and play—
Will now be remembered, too,
Like other Dads on this day.*

*I'm glad we found that special way
To tell Dad all he's been,
That by his side I will stay
Until we're together again.*

May You Have
Peace of Heart™
On
Father's Day

