

Isle of Insanity and Hope

Diary of Survival:

Overcoming my Son's Overdose and Death
~ A Mother's Grief ~

I'm so glad that you picked up this free book. I like to think there's a reason you did, why you found it. The following is my diary of the second month after my son's unexpected death. Hopefully you find a bit of comfort in my diary, and perhaps it even helps you in some small way. Best of luck to you in your journey through this hard but worthwhile life. XOX

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Day 27 ~ Without him.

WHY ??? That is the biggest question that reverberates through my mind with such shocking blinding force that I'm certain my head will explode. Out of all the billions of people on earth who get to live another day, WHY did my 21 year old son have to die?

Tomorrow will be the 4 week anniversary of his death, although today seems especially horrible. I never knew so many tears could flow from my eyes all at the same time.

It was almost 4 weeks ago at about 1:30 pm that 2 detectives showed up at my door. And it was almost 4 weeks ago that my life still made sense, that my life was still mine, and under my control. When they told me the news I knew my son was present because I could feel him there lessening the load.

I have no idea how I was able to function that week and make all the arrange-

ments, but somehow I did. I have very little memory of the first evening of my new existence; I was definitely in shock ... still am.

The past few weeks I have actually been able to function by blocking his death out because for me to remember it all at once I fear would be to quite possibly invite my swift, subsequent insanity. I worry about my mind caving in on itself in shock. And I worry that if I think about my son for too long I will fall into a deep pit of despair that I may never be able to crawl out of. So I choose to block it out and let small pockets of the intense grief hit me at times ~ like waves moving in and out. I must block out many of those waves; I must. I must.

Each day I wake up to this new shocking reality. I still can't believe it's real. I really can't believe it is. No, it just can't be. I know I'll wake up one day soon and realize I was right ~ that this is all just a horrible dream. It just HAS to be. But

each new day begins with the realization that I will never ever see my first born again, not in this lifetime anyway.

I feel such guilt that I couldn't even keep my son alive. After all ~ isn't that the very least that we are supposed to do for our children? And I couldn't even get that right. Logically I know it's not my fault but my emotions are now in the driver's seat of my usual logical mind. I KNOW that his choices and life were his own but that doesn't take away the pain of always thinking that if I would have done this or this or that differently, then he still would be alive. Why couldn't I have stopped this?

How can I live without him ? Why the hell would I even WANT to keep on living without him? How can I endure this pain day after day after day? I have tried to rebel against the common held belief that after the death of a child the parent will never be the same again. I was angered that I may never be

the same again because I was very happy with who I was before. But now I realize that I won't ever be the same again, because I have now had this intensely all encompassing experience, and felt emotions that I have never felt before. I live these new emotions day after day.

I have become a different person, I know that now. But I also know that in the future I will be a better person than I was even before this tragic horrific trauma. I will someday be a better and more understanding me. And at least that is something to look forward to. And right now that will have to be enough.





Day 35

It's been 5 weeks now since my baby died. I thought it would get easier, but sometimes it's much much harder. I think about him almost every minute. A little baby at the beach, a boy on his way to school. The tears from my regrets this past week could fill a ton of jars. Why didn't I wrap my arms around him and beg him to get help? He was always so convincing in telling me that he didn't have a problem, that everything was O.K.

I fear I will never stop crying. I hate myself for everything I would have, should have, done differently. I will always hate myself for failing, for not doing the right things. How can I ever forgive myself? Each day brings a whole new level of pain and sadness. The tears don't stop. This is an entirely different world now, and I fucking hate it.

I have never wanted to go back in

time so badly, even if that meant starting from the very beginning. I don't think I'd have the strength to do it all again though. I barely have the strength to put one foot in front of the other. I barely have the strength to stay alive. If it weren't for my other 2 children then I don't know if I would still be here. I really don't think I would. This is far too difficult, unimaginable pain always threatening to tear me down for good. I can't take it anymore. I want to die. This is ripping my mind and heart apart at the same time, always.

Day 41

Tomorrow will be 6 weeks since he died. Yesterday I had to tell my 19 year old daughter not to live here anymore unless she was clean. The day before that I had to call 911 because she came home severely drunk and high. It turns out her heart rate was over 180, she also could have died. I have tried for years with her. I cannot believe this. Being back at home seems to be making her worse. Tough love may be the only solution, plus it is the only thing I haven't completely followed through on yet. I love her so much, but perhaps I have shielded her from far too many consequences. I have been her problem solver and I don't think it's done her an ounce of good. I love her so much which is what makes this all so hard. Please God help her find her way.

My mother died when I was 7, my father when I was 12, and my only sib-

ling - my brother - almost 15 years ago. They all died in horrible shocking unnatural aways ~ the worst ways imaginable. One night I went to bed living with my family, and the next day I would never live with any of them again. My mother, father, and brother all died in their 30's, my son barely into his 20's, and my oldest daughter may not make it out of her teens. Her 20th birthday is in less than 3 months. My other daughter has a 95% average and is off to University in the fall. She wants a career where she helps people. I tell her to make sure she has passion for whatever career she chooses; I want her to be happy. I hold it together for my girls. I don't really know how. At least life has prepared me for my son's death. I know it would be much harder for many other mothers who have not had such a large theme of death running through their lives. I don't feel sorry for myself but I often wonder why this is my lot in life. Did I choose to learn these

toughest of life lessons here on earth before I was even born into this lifetime? Or is this some kind of a sick joke?

A few nights ago I dreamt that I was driving with an unknown male friend and we were in a car accident ~ which I caused. On one leg he lost his foot and on the other one his entire leg from his kneecap down. I believe this represents how I feel like I crippled my son, how I am to blame for his death. In the dream I try to tell him that it's not so bad, that he'll be OK without his leg and foot. I feel like I didn't try hard enough with my son. That I should have been more serious, that I should have KNOWN more about what was going on, that I should have been less lackadaisical. I feel like I am responsible. I feel like I am a murderer.

Many days when I wake up I have to repeat this mantra in my mind over and over before I can get out of bed

"He Would Want Me to Be Happy,
He Would Want Me to Be Happy".

This is more helpful than I can imagine, because more than anything I KNOW my son would want me to be happy. I know that he loved me like crazy. He knows he was my favourite person to go out with in the entire world; I told him often. I pray that he watches over his sister while she struggles with her addictions. Her being back at home since his death has made her worse. I cripple her by letting her stay here, yet having her leave causes me immense pain. I love her so much. I wish to God I could redo everything. How things turned out has made me question almost every decision I have ever made. Fuck my life.

Oddly enough deep down inside I KNOW I will get over (or through) his death. I know there is no point in just existing, that I must live again. Peeling myself out of the nest of pillows, cushions, and blankets I have made for myself on the sofa is very difficult. Thank God for good books, and pure fluff reruns like

Sex and the City. Thank God I work for myself and don't have to leave home to work. I can't imagine how insane or stressful that would be. Then again, perhaps it would be a welcome reprieve ~ in time.

For now I concentrate on not going insane. The mornings are always the worst. I must move on, I must move on. Instead of always googling "My son died of an overdose" I find myself googling "The best things in life" and "Things that make you happy". I think of this as high success, and I will try to continue on this theme of optimism when I feel myself ONLY getting pulled into the very bad things. It is a FACT that I MUST get over this and try to be happy again. Even writing that fills my heart up a bit. I can't always think about the bad. That is what comes so easily. So I try to steer my brain into more optimistic thoughts. That is what will keep me alive and sane. There ARE many amazing things in life

still. I just have to allow myself to LET myself focus on them. I know happy things are out there and waiting for me. I know it's up to me to walk towards them slowly, even when they feel impossibly out of reach. Happiness ALWAYS exists. It never goes away. It's just hard to find right now.

Happiness never dies. And I know my son didn't die either. He is waiting for me. And I will always love him. I will LIVE my life again until we will once more be together. I refuse to just exist. I must LIVE God dammit !!!! That really is the only logical way.

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I have read that many many mothers never get over the death of a child. I don't want my son to be the cause of a lifetime of unhappiness for me. He would hate that more than anything else, because he loved me. I must honour his life by living my life well.

I have always honoured my parents and brothers short lives by trying to live a very large happy life. I must celebrate my son by trying to still live life to the fullest. I mustn't wait too long. There is time for grieving and time for living. I look forward to reaching the latter. I love my son and will not let him down. **My eventual happiness will be my gift to him.** And I know he deserves that.



Day 42

Today is exactly 6 weeks. I just finished reading an amazing article about a mother who found real joy and happiness even though she had experienced the loss of a child. I know I will eventually be her, I can feel it in my bones and heart that I will. There are far too many articles about how a mother never gets over this. I can't imagine a life where I never get over this. Of course this will always be a part of me but that doesn't mean that it must define me. I refuse to be defined by a horrific tragedy in my life. I have 2 other children, and a life full of adventures and happiness and love ahead of me. I must press on. I feel so selfish saying that yet I know it is what I must do. I must find my happiness again. I need to.

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I literally feel like I may go insane.

The stress of his death combined with my daughter's ongoing addictions is too much to handle. I have added another mantra to my repertoire: "I Can't Go Back in Time". Please God help me. Please God help my daughter. At least my son is relieved now, so I don't have to worry about him. Sometimes it feels like my son is the lucky one. Today I had a great workday monetarily, but money means less and less to me each day, because the only thing I really want I can't have. I would do anything to have him back, to go back in time and know what I know now. Why the hell do I have to feel so guilty all the time when I was never the one who gave him drugs or made him do them? In fact I have been warning my kids about the dangers of drugs since forever. Now I wonder if even that was a mistake. I question everything I have ever done or said. And I of course question why I am even alive. WHY WHY WHY??? I refuse to go insane, and when

I don't I will always congratulate myself on that ... because it will be accomplishing the near impossible. I need strength now more than ever. I need to hold it together.



Day 44

The strange thing about grieving is the massive physical toll it takes on my body, I wasn't expecting that. For the first few weeks after he died I would run out of energy for the day after having only been awake for a few hours. I would also forget to eat, forget to bathe, forget everything; because nothing mattered anymore. I am constantly reminded of my son not just by my mind but by my body as well. I have never felt so old in my life. Perhaps it will soon be time to go to the gym again; perhaps that will help. I hope I don't see anyone I know because the fewer people I am around the better. The worse thing by far though is the physical pain I feel in my heart sometimes. Where is my son? Can he see me? I think he can. I can't wait to see him again someday, although I truly think he is seeing me all the time. I love him forever.



Day 45

Sometimes my mind feels clearer than it's ever felt before. Sometimes it feels on the verge of insanity. One thing is for certain though ~ I WILL get through this all.

Today I am taking my daughter to an appointment to sign her up for rehab. This makes me happier than I've been since my son died. Having to worry endlessly about my daughter in some ways makes my son's death easier, in some ways harder.

I KNOW my son is in a better place and that logically I do not need to worry about him AT ALL. Numerous times a day a short-lived, paralyzing shock that he's actually dead takes me over.

I feel that the best thing to do is to try to keep busy ~ and that doesn't mean

working more.

I read more, watch more TV, cook more and clean more. I don't feel like going out of the house as much as before. I feel lonelier now and feel like being alone at home more often. I do make sure that I sometimes go out though and not become a hermit, that existence would be treacherous for me.

I love life too much to give it away or let it be stolen from me. My life will be exactly what I want it to be, exactly how I create it, and that is something I have always told my children. It is up to me to find the light as I swim through this murky dark soup of death.

It is up to me to decide how I want my life to go. It is up to me to find my way back to my old self, and then to even improve on the old me.

I will not sign my life away to these hardest of struggles. I will fight fight fight for happiness. The happiness IS ALWAYS there for all of us to find. We

just have to never give up looking for it.
The hard work is worth it.





Day 46

The weirdest thing is that my emotions go up and down like a yo-yo. Today I drove past the first place I lived on my own and I thought that if I had only killed myself back then then I wouldn't have to go through this horrible existence now.

A few hours later I was happily thinking about an upcoming trip to Paris. When I awoke this morning I felt such deep despair and guilt that I cried like a baby while doing dishes. Yesterday I cried a few tears of joy because my oldest daughter is back at home and hopefully getting placed in a rehab facility soon. Yesterday I feared my upcoming solo Paris trip because I thought I may feel lonely on it, whereas in the past I always preferred to travel solo.

One thing I hate most is when people say things like : It will take a year to get over this, or, that this is something you will never get over, or, that the death of a child is the worst thing someone can go through. When people say these things I feel like punching them in the face ~ because how the hell would THEY KNOW???

All parents who go through the loss of a child will experience very different things because they are all very different people. Since I have already been through so much loss I feel that my experience is probably much easier than it would be for many others. Then again - perhaps it will affect Me more and more in the future, who really knows?

What I do know though is that I am starting to feel a little bit more like my old self. I am glad I was more prepared for this than most. I am glad that I can feel like I can perhaps handle this. I am glad that I feel much better than last

week. I am happy that I am still alive. I am happy that I can still feel some joy. And I am happy for this strength to carry on.





Day 47

I finished reading the book "The Glass Castle" by Jeannette Walls yesterday. I found that very good reading material at this juncture in my life because it makes my life feel not so horrible. I always appreciate what I have in life because I have been homeless before, not for long but still homeless. And being homeless is one of the things that can make you go insane, kind of like the death of a child. I'm glad that book was able to take me out of my own problems for a little while. I love being a very thankful person and I would never want to become a hard, sad, bitter person for life. I really can't think of anything worse.



Day 48

At times when I think about his death I feel like I'm going to vomit. Sometimes I feel dizzy. Sometimes my vision goes blurry and I feel like I'm going to faint. Sometimes I have to make sure I don't stand up too fast in case my knees buckle. I sometimes hate everyone and everything ~ his father (my ex husband), my boyfriend, the bullies who tormented him in high school so much that I pulled him out of school for a year, and his teachers and the administration who wouldn't do anything about it. But most of all I hate myself for not begging him more often to go to rehab, for my not seeing how serious his problems really were. Each day I wake up with a mountain of regrets. So many regrets that I fear I will suffocate under them. This pain is

so immense that I really do sometimes wish I could kill myself. I would never of course because I still have 2 children. If that weren't the case I'm not sure if I would still be here. I am so very very tired.

Day 51

Not so shocking was me in my couch nest bawling this morning. I was crying because of the injustice in the world. Because I was/am what some would call too nice to my kids and now I was paying for it ~ just like my children have paid. My children have always been sensitive, caring, nice people ~ and often this makes them easy targets for a world that often treats kindness as a liability. Often it is the most caring and sensitive of people who succumb to drugs and alcohol.

I remember one day many years ago my son coming home from school and telling me that the kids on his bus were making fun of a homeless man on the steps of the store near their school bus stop. My son had given him all the change he had on him ~ a dollar or so. I was so proud of my son and explained that I had earlier given the same fellow a ride into town and \$20 when I saw him walking

along the nearby 2 lane highway. I am proud of my son's depth of compassion. My son was an incredibly nice person. I wish that drugs hadn't stole him away from me so soon. He made the world a better place.

Day 52

Today my boyfriend told me about seeing someone snowmobiling on the ice at the edge of the lake, while the middle of the lake was partially thawed. He then suggested he may later on take our adorable dog for a walk on the frozen parts. I told him that it was a stupid idea and he shouldn't be that careless, but if he did choose to go there then to not take our dog... and that got me to thinking:

My son was living his life walking on unsafe ice and taking stupid risks ~ and he knew it. Never in a million years would I have told him to walk out there, or take anyone with him. So why is it that he KNEW all the risks and took the walk anyway, and now I'm forever paying the price for a walk I never would have taken with him? He chose to keep taking those risks and he knew all the dangers involved ~ even death.

My son HAD OD'd before, and had told me that he wished he had died when he overdosed. But one thing I know for certain is that he wouldn't have wanted to take me down with him. At the end of the day he chose that walk, that path, and those mistakes. He made those choices himself. I did of course try to stop him but I always feel I could have tried harder. And I never would have suggested that path, all I did was discourage it.

He made his own choices and they were the wrong ones. I need to keep reminding myself that his choices were not my choices. His life was his life. And although his death feels like my death too, I cannot embrace his death or death in general as my future.

My son is still alive after all, just not here, but somewhere far, far better. He's happier now, and so shall I be. I can be at peace because I can feel him at peace.

Day 53

Yesterday was exactly 7 weeks. I had felt significantly better the past few days but that didn't last long. Yesterday while I was driving to the computer store I remembered that the last time I was there ~ about 2 months ago ~ I had been with my son, my beautiful son was right there beside me. By the time I arrived I felt a massive clutching pain in my chest, I didn't know if I would make it into the store. I gritted my teeth, went inside, and did what needed to be done. I couldn't get home fast enough.

Last night I went to my first Grieving Parents meeting. I didn't really want to go but I knew it would probably do me some good. There were only 2 other bereaved moms there, and the moderator. Their stories made me feel not so alone, and made me feel a tiny bit better. The world really is a screwed up unfair place and there are many many others also go-

ing through a world of pain, trauma, and totally unfair bullshit. I think any help is good help and it is worth at least trying many different things to get better.

Day 54

Yesterday afternoon I had too many glasses of wine - BAD BAD BAD idea. Alcohol is a depressant and only makes things a million times worse. I woke up around 2 am and I missed him so much that I thought I would die. The thought of never seeing him ever again is like a thousand huge drops of pain raining down on me. I'm drowning, I'm drowning. Note to self : No more drinking for a long, long time. I feel an emptiness and loneliness inside Me that I never had before. If this were 20 years ago he wouldn't be dead.

The strength and amount of drugs on the street right now is horrific, so many of our youth don't stand a chance. Many many more will die before this gets any better. I pray to God that it does get better. The casualties keep piling up; our children keep dying, and life apparently goes on. Drastic steps need to be

taken. And those doing drugs will hopefully realize that they could be dead any day, maybe tomorrow, hell, perhaps today. And they won't be the only ones hurting because when they die they cause a world of pain beyond belief for so many others. I pray for them. I pray they can realize how important they are to the world, how loved they are. I pray that they stay alive long enough to get help for themselves. I pray they don't end up dead like my son who will never get a second chance. Because people only have so many chances, and when those chances are up the outcome may be as finite as death. RIP.

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Everyone keeps saying that you never get over the death of a child, and this annoys me greatly. Because when you think about it ~ does anyone ever completely get over the death of anyone who was close to them? Or for that matter,

do any of us really get over any large trauma in our lives? Because my son is dead does not mean that I have to live my life in perpetual sadness.





Day 55

I feel like my heart is sliced open and it's bleeding all over the place. Tomorrow will be 8 weeks since my son passed away, soon it will be 2 months, and I don't think I feel like writing anymore.

There are a few conclusions I have come to about his death. First of all this is something that I will have to overcome. No I won't ever actually get over it, but I promise myself that I WILL still have an amazing, fulfilling life. There will always be an emptiness inside me that will never go away but I WILL overcome this and try to fill my life with as much joy and happiness as I can.

My daughter's addictions will continue to be an ongoing source of severe anguish for me, however, I know that ultimately SHE will have to fix her own

problems and her own life ~ regardless of how much I want to help her. For when all other avenues are exhausted sometimes people just have to be responsible for their own lives and choices. I cannot go on being a part of her irresponsible everyday life because it will make me go insane. Her path is her own and I pray to God she finds the strength to get better. It is her choice and her choice alone. She is responsible for exactly how her life will go.

As for my son ~ I know he is always with me. I think about him all the time. I need to stop feeling guilty for all the woulda, coulda, shoulda's, for those are what threaten to rob me of my happiness and sanity. I need to let go of all the blame I harbour. I didn't know then what I know now, and even if I did I probably couldn't have changed things. He was his own person with his own mind. He knew what he was doing and he did it anyways. We all have our

own life paths, and I firmly believe that mine will be one of much healing and forgiveness. I love my son forever and I wish he had never latched on to drugs. He could have had the most amazing future ~ the future he deserved. I wish he could have found the strength to STOP taking drugs. Now I will have to summon all the strength I have to carry on. And that's exactly what he would want me to do. May all of us find the strength to crawl out of horrible situations and help us find the light, for happiness is there for us all if WE want it badly enough. All of us are loved and worth it. ALL OF US. Peace and love, may we find our way to the joyful life every single one of us immensely deserves.



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