

Why Talk About It? Positive Reasons to Talk About Loss & Grief

A post by Devan McGuinness on August 14, 2013 - www.unspokengrief.com

I don't really understand why, for so long, talking about loss and grief due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal loss has been so taboo. Grief is not a comfortable topic — it's not uncommon to comfort someone grieving the loss of their parent, spouse, friend, older child, or pet — that type of grief seems to be a little less taboo to put right out there. That's not the same truth for perinatal loss.

Many of us talk about the strange ways people try to comfort us, using words that are less than helpful, pretending it didn't happen, or questioning why we're grieving and sad. We're told to get over it, to get help for depression when it's normal and healthy grief, and that can leave us feeling isolated, alone, and confused when trying to navigate the perinatal grief waters.

Amazing things happen when we start to talk about our story, our grief, and our children. Not just for ourselves, but for others and society as a whole — if only we're encouraged to do so, instead of silently being asked to sweep it under the rug. It can feel nearly impossible to find a reason or a purpose behind our pain and loss, which can make finding any positives very powerful when we see it. Though we're told time and time again to hide our grief — sometimes directly and other times we're told indirectly through words or actions — there are some big positives for sharing that just can't always be ignored.

For you:

It helps you process what happened: Sometimes we have a hard time recalling all that happened with details we do want to remember. Talking about your story and your child can help you process what happened and this set you up for not only remembering those moments you want, but can also help in the future.

It helps you through the stages of grief: Grief is not easy and can be very isolating — especially when it's a grief stemming from something many don't understand. Talking about your grief can help you process it all and will lead you to a healthier after.

It can give a voice to your child: Often we want people to know our child — it's hard when they're here for a very short amount of time and sometimes we're the only ones who knew them. Talking and sharing our story can help give a voice to our children and make them a part of the world when they're no longer here.

You can connect with others Grief is isolating and it can make us feel alone when we don't know anyone who's gone through it. That can be especially upsetting if we're told by others that we should be over it or a list of other phrases we often hear that doesn't make us feel better.

For others:

It helps increase understanding of perinatal grief: Perinatal grief is not well understood by the population at large. Sharing our stories and our voices can help increase that understanding for others. From knowing what phrases we find hurtful, to knowing how to support, understanding normal and healthy grief, and how it can all affect us is an important thing for gaining a wider understanding — which will only increase overall support.

It can reach other's who feel alone: There is someone out there reading or hearing your words thinking they were the only one. We as humans have a need to connect with others and when something like perinatal grief is silenced, it can greatly increase those feelings of isolation and that can hinder a grieving process. Reaching others with our words and touching their hearts is positive for us and others.

It increases sensitivity to professionals: Unfortunately many of us have encountered professionals in the medical field who are less than supportive when it comes to perinatal loss. We come into contact with cold technicians, doctors, nurses, and others in the field and that can complicate our already complicated and painful situation. By sharing both the good and the bad, we can reach professionals, make policy changes, and increase the positive support for everyone.