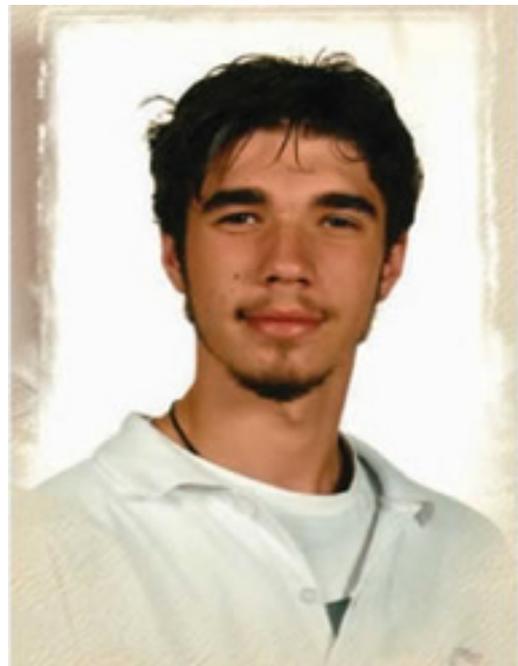




My Journey of Grief and Loss

My name is Alexandra Browne-Hill and I am here to encourage being positive despite life's challenges. I am here to share a journey of loss and grief, to share what I personally have learnt from this journey and to share a few thoughts that perhaps you might take away and mull over.

The first thing that comes to mind is this wonderful atmosphere of sharing. It is the opening up of one's heart with another that creates great strength for both oneself and each other. Shedding the anguish, sharing and gaining strength from one another is the most powerful way of dealing with difficult times. Just being here tonight is making us all grow that little bit more. I feel lucky sharing with you tonight.



History

Three years ago I lived in a family of five teenagers with my husband Mal. I am a Nurse of many years and used to do what busy working mums do. I transported a bundle of kids to schools before work, picked them up after and cleaned my home in my spare time. A busy and full life...and in all honesty, not one I really appreciated.

Then we experienced the death of our 17-year-old son as a result of a car accident. He was only a few short weeks away from his 18th birthday.

Kieran was our second son and at times our most difficult. He was the child that never sat still and regularly took off disappearing if you were too slow to redirect him. Kieran experienced some difficulty with life because he viewed it from a different perspective. An autism specialist declared that he had Autism Spectrum Disorder with

Specific learning Disability. It is true that Kieran looked at life in black and white but on the other hand he was very spiritual. He used to tell me that we had guests and had me set the table for specific people, usually young. The problem was that no-one else could see them! He continued this behavior for some years before we teased it out of him unfortunately. He would also inform me that he knew he was going to have a short life and asked me to please not cry when he was gone. Not able to deal with this, I informed him each time that of course I would cry if he went and there was no point in him asking that of me. Apart from these moments, I refused to discuss it any further.

On the eve of Easter 2007, Kieran went into the bush camping with 2 older mates. On the dirt track, the driver stopped his four-wheel-drive Ute and Kieran climbed into the back. They continued on and later rounded a corner too quickly and the Ute rolled pinning my son beneath it. That took place on the first hour of Good Friday. He was conscious for the first hour with that Ute trapping him until he lost consciousness.

He was airlifted to the Alfred trauma Centre in a coma and passed away on Easter Monday.

Overview

My family and I have been very Blessed in our grief right from the beginning. People were extremely kind. So many people have been affected by Kieran's death and so many people ached for us. Losing anyone you love is the ultimate in challenges. Losing a child somehow adds an extra dollop of shock. Although my family and I went through the motions of normal life, our lives were devastated. It was so difficult to make sense of anything.

It became clear to me along the way that we do not know what to do with grief, and we all get lost in it. It seems to me that our society doesn't discuss it and we are so very uncertain of what is normal and what is not. For my family, we were stumbling around in a daze and so were those around us.

When I was given a diary by a friend I started writing in it, largely because I worried about forgetting events and details as it would likely be a very long wait to see Kieran again. But it was also because I was unable to find much written material about what grief was and how it worked. So I wound up talking to our son in my diary and asking him questions.

This allowed me to think about why Kieran knew of his early demise and where did the knowledge come from. What could be gained from this information? So I began to question and seek.

I do not believe that anyone can lose a loved one without confronting some sort of spiritual question. Things like "why did this happen to me?", "What do I have to live for" and so on. Now I am not speaking of religion.

**Religion for me is the College you choose to pick up a few ideas.
Spirituality is what your Soul decides is healthy for you to take home
from college and live by.**

I was at this time already wondering what was going on in my world. I mean God just cannot whip by and nick off with someone's kid!! My family and I were inconsolable. What possible good could come from this?

So there I was scribbling away in my diary and it became evident to me that Kieran was trying hard to stay in touch. And I had so much that I didn't understand. There were strange events happening around us like the water feature turning itself on and amazing co-incidences of timing after telling Kieran something that were becoming impossible to ignore.

Our son was trying to communicate something to us. I made a decision to follow this and investigate further.. Overall however, it was my own study that opened the door for Kieran to reach me. I could hear single words or small sentences and I would go and get them verified. I went off to Mediums, some that impressed me and some that did not. I read like a crazy person and learnt via study that **our loved ones do not actually die**. They watch over us, hear us, answer us and help us out!!

My message is this

Regardless of the pain, it is possible to gain understanding and acceptance, and go onwards to a better future.

Do not misunderstand ...our hearts will likely never fully mend. I will never be the same. I have changed. It is impossible not to carry some sorrow.

However, there is a choice to be made.

This is the same choice that we will all face in every circumstance of loss whether it be job loss, friendship loss, health loss, educational disappointment. All of these things are losses and a normal part of life. Nonetheless each loss presents us with a choice.

Will I accept each challenge as an opportunity to grow and look ahead with curiosity to see what arises instead? Will I accept that from every pain I can learn something about myself or am I going to blame someone, curse and become bitter, hit the bottle or withdraw from life?

Each issue means a decision and I want to share how I managed to see losing a son as a positive despite it being the ultimate in life's horrors.

Lets look at Coincidences for a moment. Has anyone been involved in an event that seemed to be heading in one direction and suddenly, the event took an unexpected turn and headed in another direction and you didn't create it? I was in a car accident once and remember my side of the car rushing toward a cliff wall and I knew with certainty

that I was heading for a life exit. To this minute I cannot tell you how that car turned around and took a front impact.

Coincidence or Intervention?

Just imagine if you will, that your child at six tells you that he or she will have a short life and that comes true. Coincidence? What if that child had imaginary friends for years? What about if it is your birthday years later after this child has gone and a balloon that your family bought you in a bunch begins to move away and trail off down to your room AGAINST the wind and settle on your bed... several times..!!! Coincidence?

What about the book you wrote outlining your child's death turning up newly published on your doorstep on the anniversary of his death? Or in turmoil, you call out to your son, "I don't know whether I should put this book out to the world" ...and several grateful emails pile in that day as well as you being stuck behind a car with number plates saying KBC 89! (Kieran Browne Sees 1989his year of birth!)

I could write a book about coincidences... except I no longer believe in coincidences! There have just been too many episodes of strange events to ignore.

So what if we don't actually have to say goodbye to our loved ones? Most people accept that they will see their loved ones when they get to their version of Heaven. But what if we do have our loved ones around us and helping us?

My personal investigation included studying a variety of religions, reading about Dr Brian Weiss a Psychologist from the USA and other prominent writers, psychics and mediums.

Bear with me for a moment while I outline a scenario that fits my own soul and lines up with such names as Wayne Dwyer, Brian Weiss, Doreen Virtue, Sylvia Browne, James Van Praagh, Allison DuBois, Deepak Chopra, even the Dalai Lama.

Scenario

Picture this: You are sitting in heaven surrounded by your family group. You are all thinking about what you wish to learn when you get to earth. You decide you want to come to earth to learn about patience. You say to yourself "I am so pushy and impatient. I think I will arrange an event that puts me in a wheelchair." The soul next to you intervenes with "Oh wow, I could be your wife, I am quite selfish and could do with some lessons in giving care. I will come with you." Someone from your family group calls out "Well I shall jump in as your messy teenage son and never listen to you because I am quite arrogant and could do with a slap or two!!"

You all embark on your adventure at the agreed times and the life trials begin. However, some of your soul group have volunteered to stay put because you are going to need assistance on your life journey. Now this is the amazing part... the arrogant son may have pre agreed to arrive back early, finishing his time on earth because he

wants to be there to assist you down your road and he has also learnt his lessons to the best of his ability. That is real love!

Life is a schoolyard in which to grow. We are all given a canvas on which to draw our journey and we each have a pre-destined time in which we can develop to be what we want to be.

Most of us get a reasonable lifetime in which we can learn and correct our mistakes. Some of us are given a short time. Regardless, to those people checking out of life school, there are 3 benefits:

1. They get to go home and are safe and well. They are just fine.
2. Whatever they had to learn, they have faced and finished!
3. Their going gives us here a huge growing opportunity. We are still here and ...not fine!!

But we can be...

Healing

Kieran does not wish to see me so distraught. He is fine and safe and happy on the Other Side BUT he struggles watching the pain of his family. He deeply wishes his family to learn how to move forward and recover to the best of their ability. He gains joy to see us laugh.

Therefore if my son is well and wants to see me laugh, then what a wonderful gift I can give him. For Kieran to see his family coping is something that will make him feel at peace.

Grief is a funny thing. If you sit in it too long, it swallows you up. If you do not acknowledge it, then it never eases. **What a hell of a balancing act!** But it is quite possible to make sense of it all in your own way. Remember what I said about religion being a school. Do your own research and take away the bits that make your soul feel at peace. If it doesn't feel right for you then it's not.

Everyone knows of Intuition. Intuition if developed becomes a connection to the Other Side. That is all a psychic is ...someone with well developed intuition and a wider learning on the subject. We are all then able to have discussion with our loved onesif you want to.

I chose to get up and try and understand that my son was not altogether gone. He visits me and I can have basic connections with him. If I want to have a long talk, I go to an experienced and caring person to translate for me.

He pops by and checks on all of us. He wants us to continue to learn the things that we have set for ourselves. I have written a book with Kieran called The Flowering Gum and, Kieran shoves me along faster than I can catch my breath. He really wants you to

know that the dead do not die! They simply head off before we do and visit us. The more you ask your loved one in for chats, the more you get visited just like anyone else you love.

Over all....

There is no easy way through grief. We all still need to go through the normal stages of grief but we can ease through it by caring for ourselves and each other. We as a society could assist ourselves to talk more about grief and how we are affected. Throughout the ages young people have been amongst those that leave the earth. Death and loss are a part of life and therefore normal. So understanding that we all are here at earth school to learn and the folk who go home are the lucky ones, can make loss a bit more sensible. However because it is such a difficult process to get through, acknowledging ways to ease your own pain is important.

Every culture and religion acknowledges a Great Creator and every message is about love. So if death is normal and love is the flavor of the day, then what are we missing? If you think that there is something basic we are missing, you are right. My son tells me that he died early to let you know that he is still around. I miss his presence and I still ache but with this understanding, I can begin to heal.

I recently had the opportunities to test my own learnings with the death of my little sister 10 weeks ago from breast cancer. I walked with her as far as I could go and together we found these positive strategies helpful and soothing. I try and share these ideas with her two teenage boys now orphans due to the death of their father from cancer a year prior to my son going. I hope it helps them.

Creating is a way to connect

Writing, painting, building something, travelling, and generally finding an aim that connects you to your loved one is a great idea. I made a quilt of Kieran's clothes rather than give them to the op shop. I found creating something with a loved one is mind is enormously soothing. You often hear people say "So and so died. What a waste!" There is no waste in death. How many lessons can we learn from this one event?? With young death for instance, we think of car safety, young people learn of responsibility, families learn that life is precious and relationships are important. Individuals hunt for a spiritual centre. A person putting their hand up for an early death is certainly a special soul who has made a choice to help others learn. What wonderful and loving beings. Older people have been amazing ambassadors for many circumstances and we talk and learn from their experiences.

Lets honour them by doing the best that we can to learn the messages available to us and passing these messages on in a supportive and caring way. We really need to get over our fear of tears and open our hearts to each other. Grief seems scary but the reality is a simple one. It is a fact of life and gives us huge learning opportunities.

Note too that it is extremely important to look after yourself by sleeping well, eating well, getting a counselor, exercise. Nourish yourself physically, emotionally and

spiritually. This will make our loved ones feel peaceful. This is the gift that we can give back to them!

I wish each of you a beautiful and fulfilling future, shared with your loved one who is with you and supporting you, guiding you onwards to the next adventure in your life journey.

Thank you for your time and patience.

Contributed by: *Alexandra Brown-Hill*