

New Year's Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

I Resolve:

1. I will try not to imagine the future and take one day at a time.
2. That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary
3. I will take care of my health. A sick body will only compound my troubles. I will drink a lot of water, take multivitamins, rest (even if I don't sleep) and exercise moderately. I will help heal my body as well as my mind.
4. I will share my feelings with compassionate friends and let them share with me. I realize I am coming out of my shell when I care about the pain of others.
5. I will not shut out family and friends from my thoughts and feelings.
6. I will try to be more considerate of my spouse, children and parents. They, too, are coping and deserve my help.
7. That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a time table on my grief.
8. That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.
9. That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."
10. That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

11. That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how I feel.
12. That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.
13. I will keep the truth in my heart--the truth that my child is always with me in spirit.
14. To know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all a normal part of the grief process.
15. To know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time. To let myself heal and not feel guilty about not feeling better sooner.
16. To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous--that is, I will not make steady upward progress.
17. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the mourning process, and that these moods, too, will pass.
18. To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.
19. That I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.
20. That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.