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Chapters

turning the pages through grief

Recapturing

the light

**By Paulette
LeBlanc**

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Paulette LeBlanc
is an editor and
award-winning author
who lives on
Florida's Gulf Coast

After someone you love dies, it can feel as though the joy has been ripped from your life. It's hard to imagine that living might one day be enjoyable again. Though it will take some time, and you may feel as though you're stumbling around in the darkness, the light is coming.

I have dear friends who lost their seven-year-old daughter. She had been born with only one malfunctioning kidney. She was supposed to have a transplant around age 12, and required a great degree of care. Her little heart could no longer take the toxins her kidneys failed to filter, and one day she died in her father's arms. Her mother says it was one of the worst times in her life. She said she no longer felt like singing, or

smiling and that the joy had gone completely out of her life.

It's not uncommon to remain on a certain grieving step longer than we'd like before moving on to the next one. The stages, or steps of grieving can vary a bit in wording, but they are basically: denial, anger,

bargaining, depression and acceptance. It is also common to be at a different stage than the people you're closest to. In the case of my friends who lost their daughter, the mother seemed to linger at the anger stage i.e. not allowing herself to smile or sing, while her husband seemed to linger longer at the stage of depression. She shared with me that someone had once remarked, just after her daughter's death, that it was a beautiful day. She said she remembered thinking to herself, yes, it's a beautiful day, but I lost my daughter. When we are in pain and grieving, it is only

continued...



**"I got tired of untangling the lights,
so I bought more and just
molded them into a tree."**

**DECEMBER
2023**

**There is a crack in everything, that's
how the light gets in.**
—Leonard Cohen

I lost my daughter, but isn't it a beautiful day?

...continued from front

natural that everything about our day will be filtered through this state of blaring emotion. When you feel as though you are in complete darkness and just trying to survive, almost anything can hurt. Even an innocuous

comment regarding the weather can cause pain, as the knee-jerk reaction might be to wonder how the weather could possibly be beautiful when you feel so lost.

Though I think most people would agree, that there's a unique kind of tragedy in losing a child, any loss is painful. There is no way to measure the depth of someone else's hurt. After my mother died, my father said he simply didn't want to take another breath or face another day without her by his side. He had spent almost his entire adult life loving this woman and couldn't imagine his life without her. He carried her picture around in his pocket and even held onto her ashes. While it isn't healthy to become paralyzed by our loss, it sometimes happens as a result of excruciating pain. For my friend who lost her daughter it took some time to get back on track. She said the time finally came when things turned around and she thought, I lost my daughter, but isn't it a beautiful day?

Don't despair in the darkness. Just know that it may take some time to recapture the light in your life. After the death of both of my parents, I was told to go and be with people whenever I had the opportunity, and to leave when I had had enough. That was very wise advice. No one can tell you the right combination of reaching outward and curling inward. No one can make the darkness disappear, but life has a way of re-emerging and breaking through the winter snow. Remember to be kind to yourself in this time of grieving.

CLICK... Grief Online

There are hundreds of online resources for griever of all ages and ideologies. Below is a sample of some that may be helpful for you or to someone you care about.

Grief support for suicide loss survivors:
save.org/what-we-do/grief-support

Helping you cope with life after loss using meditation for grief, yoga and journaling:
mindfulnessandgrief.com

Modern Loss is a place to share the unspeakably taboo, unbelievably hilarious, and unexpectedly beautiful terrain of navigating your life after a death.
modernloss.com

Will CarryOn is about sharing miscarriage, stillbirth and loss resources, and about sharing hope:
willcarryon.wordpress.com

The National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children makes the difference through on-going emotional support, education, prevention, advocacy, and awareness.
pomc.com/index.html

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Sometimes the best advice is a break from advice. Enjoy your favorite beverage and these tidbits of this & that.



- Those born in December are lucky enough to have two different birth flowers!

The first of those flowers is **holly, ever-present during the holiday season**. The second is the **paperwhite narcissus**, a cousin of the common daffodil that flowers in winter. This pure-looking flower is said to symbolize sweetness.

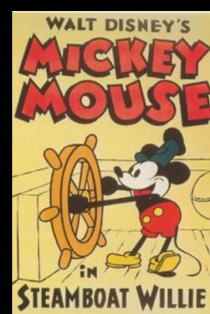
- **Turquoise is the traditional birthstone for December** and is viewed as a symbol of good luck and achievement.

- The US has a number of Christmas-related month-long observances, including **National Egg Nog Month, and National Fruit Cake Month**.



- The custom of **burning a Yule log** during this month is still celebrated in various parts of the world today. Yule is a noun

meaning "Christmas, or the Christmas season," however, yule can also refer to the celebration of the winter solstice.



- **On December 5, 1901**, a little magic came into the world along with the birth of Walt Disney. Disney released his first cartoon at the age of 27, featuring Mickey Mouse, called Steamboat Willie.

- Look skyward on the night of **December 13** after 9 p.m. for a chance to catch a glimpse of the Geminid meteors. The Geminid meteor shower is the most active shower of the year.

