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The Importance Of Touch

Dr Lindsay, a Scottish GP, writes of the simple yet moving way that people in his small country town expressed their grief and sympathy at the loss of his son.

They came to us, hugged us and wept for us. Most could not speak, and indeed there were no words. We all knew that. But in those momentary acts of hugging, of human contact, we understood that their hearts and bodies were trying to express things that words could not. We cherish those gestures in our hours and days of inexpressible despair and pain.

Our 12 year old son was killed in a car crash on a cold April morning in 1987, not far from home. I, as the nearest doctor, attended the accident about 2 miles from my Health Centre, unaware that my son was involved. Two other injured occupants in the car had already been taken to the hospital and another little boy was shaken up but unhurt. Only my son remained in the car trapped by his ankles, but already unconscious; he took one last breath in my arms.

The bewilderment, the disbelief, the feeling of dread, the appalling guilt and the dawning realisation that our child had lost his chance of life, all this consumed us.

We felt the tug of genuine sympathy from those who really meant it, but we also recognised those who had difficulty in crossing the bridge towards us in our grief.

The touching continued: in the street, in a shop, anywhere a hand briefly on my arm, a look into my eyes, and I knew they were with me. The touching was overwhelmingly important. It says volumes more than words. It transmits love and sympathy and instills a spark of hope from a world that seems arbitrarily to have drowned out any hope and faith that we may have had in the future.

Some months back I had to break the news to a mother that her son had taken his own life. I said nothing but just hugged her and wept with her. A few weeks later she came to see me - we touched and, hard though it was for her to find the words, she thanked me. I knew, and she does know, that it was the right thing to do.

Dr. Lindsay, TCF. U.K.



Days Like This

I cry for you tonight my precious baby girl. I don't know why it is happening at this time but I miss you so very much. All day the tears have flowed. I've tried working and music and TV to think about something other than how much I am missing you. I painted a picture of you but even that made me feel so very sad.

I don't know why today has been so hard to get through and can only hope and pray that tomorrow will be a better day.

I wish you were here with me now so that I could hold you just for a moment and tell you how much I miss you and how much I love you. I love you more and more every day even though you are gone. What am I supposed to do without you, my precious Puds?

The memories are good ones but it hurts that memories are all I have of you now. You would be a beautiful young woman now had you lived, but you died and I am left to wonder what you would look like now, how you would have grown, if we still would have the same loving relationship we had when you left me at ten years of age. I think you would still be the loving, caring, compassionate, friendly and helpful girl you were back then.

Three years is too long to be missing you baby girl, but it will only get worse as more years pass. What am I supposed to think and feel when I have days like this? Only that I want to be with you. To hold you and kiss you and love you and even to be angry and frustrated with you.

It's so hard to see your friends growing up, turning into beautiful if painful young women trying to find their place in this world. Giving their parents a hard time, just as we gave our parents a hard time when we were going through puberty. I want those hard times so badly Liss, but you are not here to give me the love and heartbreak I so desperately want to feel.

I want to laugh with you and fight with you and help you when you find yourself out of your depth. Celebrate your first love with you and comfort you when your heart gets broken. I want to be there when you find your soul mate, when you know who you are and where you are going; but it's just an impossible dream. You have gone away and I can't get you back no matter how much I want to. And I do want to Baby, more than anything in this world or this dismal life that I have without you.

Goodnight Baby Girl – always remember your Mummy loves you so very much and that you will always be in my heart – forever.

I love you Melissa, Mummy
Written by Deb TCF Vic, Au.