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We are the Misfits: We Belong with Each Other

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I used to think it mattered. I had to find someone who died just like Kevin, suddenly, an accident, by drowning, at the same age.

At 16 months, I now know, it doesn't matter. I feel the pain of all my "loss parents," many of whose circumstances are completely different than mine.

I thought my pain, my loss, was unique. But, I was wrong.

In spite of the differences, there is a SAMENESS that is unmistakable and is a connector to each other like spark plugs that run a car, the loss of an only child. The SAMENESS and the CONNECTIONS, help us to keep on living/existing.

I have learned that regardless of the age of our child when they die, or how our child dies, we feel cheated, robbed. We are left with "missing" them, the next event, and the next event after that.

That milestone may be different for each of us, and will be forever embedded in our minds. It is resurrected by conversation with friends, media, advertisements, and is unavoidable with every holiday.

My friend lost her daughter at age 5, and never saw her attend elementary school, ride a two-wheeler or graduate. Those who lost a high school student never saw them go on to college, become an adult, or marry. They missed the first date, the first kiss, learning to drive, a prom...an endless list of firsts, of what they and we can only imagine. There is no way to satisfy this ongoing quest of lost time, precious events, never to be realized.

Many of us have tried many approaches to this "grief thing," to lessen our pain, that which we carry everyday as a sidecar.

I personally have tested out 5 grief bereavement groups, some peer facilitated, some led by therapists, some with mixed losses (having other children and/or grandchildren).

I moved on from sudden death online groups, drowning groups, loss of an adult child. Finding a grief therapist can also be challenging, especially one that understands loss of an only child.

I finally requested strongly (within a bereavement center), that a group of "only child loss parents be formed," and was able to start with a local group of 5 parents, and a therapist. Sadly, our group is growing.

While we have our differences, it has been acknowledged by parents that specialty groups, such as drug addiction, murder, childhood cancer, suicide, etc., never left them feeling as though they fit. They missed the "OBLITERATION FACTOR." The one that leaves you with nothing. The one no one understands except us.

We need to give tremendous credit to **Alive Alone**. The title never really hit me until today, when speaking with another only loss parent. We are ALIVE and we are ALONE. It is a terrible place to be, but through **Alive Alone**, we are LESS alone.

I just wished we all lived closer. I am still amazed and grateful to those who have reached out to me without ever meeting each other, because of the shared pain.

I do not think the pain will ever leave me. But it helps me to know that others who walk in my shoes truly care and reach out. I am grateful for Alive Alone, even in my pain.

