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Just a Few Things to Know About My Grief: A Father's Perspective

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When I received the survey from Kay, "What do you want others to know about your grief?", many different thoughts came to mind. I asked her if I could put them into an expanded article for *Alive Alone*, rather than returning brief bullet points in an envelope. Kay was kind enough to go along with my request, and I thank her for that, as well as her continuing encouragement and support. Following are some random, personal thoughts of mine about being in the company of other parents lucky enough to still have one or more of their children with them on earth.

It's been almost five and a half years now since my son, Eric, passed. In those early days of my grief, it was actually easier to talk about his drowning than it is now, at church, among neighbors, and friends and relatives, because there was still so much interest. The expressions of sympathy flowed freely, and in a morbid sort of way, I was the reluctant center of attention.

Today, his name is seldom mentioned. To many, I'm afraid, Eric is now part of yesterday, the past, history. In conversations I now hear in my day-to-day life, it's about what their kids are up to today and tomorrow. By now, the people I know have all heard about what happened to my son, and I sense that they think that continuing to talk about it still won't bring him back – so they don't.

And that's part of our unfortunate grief journey now, isn't it? We walk a very fine line: We don't want to appear to be stuck in the past, and our friends and relatives don't want us there, either. But attending weddings, soccer games and just hanging out sometimes magnifies the loss of my son, because the present and future are forever altered.

Some of the folks I know have made an effort to tone down their kids' talk while in my presence. But that bothers me a little, too, knowing that they feel they have to be on guard around me. Maybe I'm still overly sensitive, but one topic gets to me more than others: the excessive grandkids' talk. In most cases, I'm fine. But every now and then, when it gets to be too much, I kind of drift away from the situation. It's more me than them, I suspect, but it's one more adjustment I'm trying to make.