



Dear sweet mom,

I truly wish you weren't in a situation that you had to receive this letter. The moments, hours, and days after experiencing a loss like this are shocking, mind numbing, and deeply heartbreaking. I wish there was something I could say or do to take the pain away from you, but there simply isn't.

All I can do is let you know that you're not alone and that there is healing after loss.

I was full-term with my daughter Campbell in early 2022 when we lost her to stillbirth.

The shock and grief I felt was one of the deepest emotions I have ever experienced.

She was moving and kicking just yesterday! This can't be real. What I wouldn't have done to turn back the clock.

In the weeks that followed, I realized I was not only grieving the loss of my baby, but all the plans and experiences I looked forward to making with her. I would never get to watch her take her first steps, go on her first date, or watch her walk down the aisle at her wedding. All of it was robbed of me in the blink of an eye and it was hard for me to fathom. I hope this letter can be my way of taking your hand and comforting you as a mother who has felt the pain of empty arms.

In the days to come, many people will offer good intentioned advice. Some will be helpful, and some advice will come from a place of well-meaning ignorance. Give grace to those who don't know what to say or who say the wrong thing. Loss can be a ripple effect that starts with you and makes its way out to touch those around you. Some of those people will want to help but may have trouble navigating this path they're on with you.

The next few years, grief may sneak up on you at unexpected times. Whether it's seeing a baby at the grocery store or a milestone your little one isn't here for, the pain crushes you completely and often.

But as time marches on, you may find that you start having days that the pain doesn't overtake you completely and you're able to have a good day. When the raw pain does come rushing back, you notice it's less often and you're able to continue functioning.

You may even feel guilty when you have a day that is filled with joy.

Please know this: experiencing happiness isn't betraying your little one's memory.

It may be hard to believe this now when all you can do at the moment is keep surviving minute by minute. I know how that feels, but I promise that there is life after this loss. A beautiful life that you can create. In fact, I like to think that the best way I can honor Campbell's life is to help other mothers going through a similar situation. To me, it brings peace and purpose to a life that was cut way too short. I know you too will get the opportunity to share your story and one day help other mothers facing the heartbreak you are going through at this very moment.

There is joy and hope on the other side.

Annabelle Poindexter