

## The Myth of 'Closure' in Death

['Closure in death of a child non-existent' – article printed in Lansing State Journal/Towne Courier 8.14.11]

From my own personal experience, the concept of 'closure' after the death of a child is non-existent to most, if not all, bereaved parents – as if there's a way to box up your grief, answer all the questions of "Why did this happen to me and to our child at this moment in time?" and then put it away as if it was completely over is unrealistic and absurd.

Since there are truly no adequate words to describe the anguish a bereaved parent feels when their child dies (ie., gut-wrenching and painful don't even come close), I've created my own word/concept that doesn't occur in our lifetime, but **reflects our continued journey when we have also traveled through to a new and different spiritual dimension**, that many call 'heaven.'

Instead of thinking of 'closure' as coming when you find the body of a missing child (as the media often inaccurately portrays) or when you uncover the medical condition that took your adult child's life, it may actually occur at the moment of your own death. And at that moment it's a matter of being open to **'embrace'** – open to a total mind/body/spirit/heart embrace when you see your child again in 'heaven.' All will be known, all unfinished business will be completed, and all questions will be answered without a word being uttered...divine synchronicity at work.

When a child dies, parents often yearn to be with them, yet they know that most likely won't happen for some time. In fact, family members get very nervous when parents even mention they want to be with their child. Yes, there may be circumstances that require professional help, but overall, parents know it will be some time before they see their child – even though they just want their child back and want them NOW!

Grieving a child's death is a life-long journey, and the challenges of living/coping over the years and in your own way often moves one to a reconciliation and reinvestment in life keeping their child's memory alive in various ways. And it's by doing that, that one is able to face the world again and thrive, drawing strength from their child's spirit.

Instead of focusing on 'closure' as the goal/outcome of your grief process, allow yourself to have faith or a hopeful belief that a loving 'embrace' will occur when you see your child again. And all the facets of your entire process will come together as a healing balm that completes the mending or closure of those 'fractured heart' fissures forever.

Deb Lee Gould, MEd  
Bereaved Parent & Grief Consultant Okemos, MI  
August 2011