

Second Sunday of May

Many happy memories
Linger in our hearts this day
As we each remember our child
Who has left this earthly plane.
The day is bittersweet for us,
The mothers who have lost so much,
For to remove all pain could well
Erase the precious life we touched.
Tears will trace the memories of
Happier Mother's Days,
As we dwell in a quiet reverie
This Second Sunday of May.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen
May 2006
TCF, Katy, TX*



Thoughts On Mother's Day
Following the Death of a Child

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen*

*There are things that we don't want to happen but
have to accept, things we don't want to know but
have to learn, and people we can't live without but
have to let go.*

~ Author Unknown



**A New Paradigm
For Mother's Day**

**Thoughts On
Mother's Day
Following the
Death of a Child**

Mother's Day Is Different Now

Mother's Day will never be the same when we have lost a child to death. But Mother's Day can be what we want it to be. It is up to us to state our preferences, to decide how we want to spend the day, to acknowledge or to ignore this poignant holiday. The choice is ours.

One element of Mother's Day that is surprisingly overwhelming is the anxiety build up before the holiday. This is due in great part to Madison Avenue's slick advertising as well as in-store promotions that seem much more prevalent now that our child is gone. It is also due to our own expectations: often we dredge up the worst case



scenarios of sadness in anticipation of this day. Our pain is compounded by this anxiety which must be moderated each time it claims us.

When anxiety begins, picture yourself in a serene place, surrounded by elements of nature, beautiful colors, the gentle sounds of deep wind chimes intoning their soothing message, breezes wafting over you, sun shining gently on your face. Picture peace each time you experience this anxiety. Take deep breaths and slowly exhale.

Make a Plan

Contemplate what you want to do for Mother's Day. Consider the needs of others, of course, but know in your heart that this is a day that has tremendous meaning for you.

If you prefer to spend Mother's Day alone, thinking, reading, watching a movie, let your family know this. Suggest that solitude would be a much appreciated gift.

If you would like to change the traditions of Mother's Day, do it. There are no rules. This is a day for you.

If you would like to skip Mother's Day, do it. Those who are fresh in their grief often choose to do this. Plan to do something with friends or spend it as an ordinary Sunday.

Honoring Your Child

If you decide that you want to honor your child on Mother's Day, there are many ways you can do this.

Many bereaved mothers have saved cards from their deceased child and display these as if they were all given on this day. There will be tears, but the memories come alive in our child's cards.

Some mothers choose to take flowers to the cemetery, plant a bush or special flower in memory of their child, or make a donation to a charitable organization in their child's name. Whatever you choose to do, it will be right for you. Some mothers choose no planned activities; others let the day take them where it will.

Take Care of Yourself

Your child will always be a part of your life, and on Mother's Day this is especially true. There is no turning back the clock, but we have our memories of happier times, of our children's smiles and laughter. We have memories of other Mother's Days spent with our child; these are our real treasures.

Don't let others pressure you into participating in a gathering or event that will trigger tears and deep emotional responses. Instead, try to keep the day light and simple. We each know our own vulnerabilities and it is good for the first year or two to avoid circumstances which bring on more pain.

The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new. ~Rajneesh