



# The Mourning News



## Grief Notes:

### The Switch Stays On

How we start out in life has consequences for the rest of our lives. The connections we make, or don't make, to whoever parents us sets the stage for all of our future relationships. The more our parents are dependable, nurturing and sensitive to our needs, the more we are set up to be part of dependable, nurturing and sensitive relationships throughout life. If our parenting is erratic, lacking in nurture, or insensitive to our needs, our future relationships can be filled with anxiety, expecting or fearing to be let down again, or we may avoid closeness in relationships as we mistrust the dependability of others. While no one way of looking at people can explain everything about us, as each of us is complicated with a great variety of influences, it seems fair to say that how we attach, or don't attach, in our early relationships can have ripple effects throughout our lives.

I recently heard a speaker, Dr. Guy Diamond, talk about this attachment way of looking at ourselves and our relationships. He talked about how we can be so attached, so wired, to our parents that even when we are living independently, grown and out of the home, we can feel a deep need to connect to them, especially in times of change or when we feel vulnerable. When we are sick, we want the tender care a sick child receives (or should receive). When we have important things happen, good or bad, we want to call and tell our parents. When we have big decisions to make, we feel the need to talk it over with mom or dad or both. The speaker said that "the switch stays on" and we feel the pull of attachment to our parents even if they have died and are no longer physically here with us. Even after death, the switch stays on.

How true this is and not just for children toward their parents. For parents whose children have died, the switch



## Upcoming Events

Spring and summer are times for grief camps and many educational opportunities—conferences and online.

May 2017 [View Events](#)



## In the Spotlight

When grieving, poets write, bakers cook, artists paint or sculpt, children play, gardeners plant, hunters head to the woods...and singers and songwriters make music. Olivia Newton-John, Amy Sky and Beth Nielsen-Chapman have channeled their individual griefs into a collaborative project called *Liv On*. It's an album of shared music and a website with helpful blogs on a variety of grief topics. Music is a matter of personal tastes, and this collection of songs and website will be a light to many who grieve.

[More Information](#)



## For Your Library

Kindness and humility are the pervasive themes in this beautiful collection of stories and reflections shared by hospice chaplain Kerry Egan.

[Read more About \*On Living\*](#)



## Taking Questions

stays on. For lovers, spouses and partners who are now alone. For bereaved brothers, sisters, and best of friends. We get connected and make deep attachments. Our lives are wired together in ways that cannot be severed. Even when a part of us has been cut off, amputated, it still feels like it's there, and we yearn for it.

Because the switch never turns off, longing has been found to be one of the most common feelings experienced by grieving people. We long for many things—the sound of a voice, the sight of a smile, the feel of a hand in ours or a body next to us. In the absence of these things and persons, we seek out substitutes in relationships to other people and things, yet the longing doesn't ever completely go away, because...you know...the switch stays on.

There are some things in life that we don't have to live with and accept because we can change them. It is in our nature to resist things which cause us pain and to fight to eliminate the source of the pain, and that's a generally a good thing. We make human errors when we give up too soon, give in to fatalism and say, "well, what can you do" when there are things we can do. We sometimes settle for too little in life when it could be better. This switch stuck in the "on" position, however, is not one of those things which we can change by will or strength of effort.

Because we are wired this way, our challenge is to learn to live with it instead of trying over and over to change it--to turn the switch off. Not going to happen, can't be done. We are connected, and what a terrible loss it would be if the switch were actually turned off—if the feelings of connection and presence left behind were lost, too. It would be too much darkness. Unnecessary darkness as our grief is dark enough already, and we need the light provided by those stubborn "on" switches, important comfort like a night-light for a small child when all the other light has gone away.

Thank goodness the switch is always on to remind us that what we had and feels totally lost still exists in our memories and hearts. It assures us that we will always be connected by an attachment which is strong enough to survive even when it feels like all the power has gone out. Even then, the switch stays on.

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/goodmourning>

Send comments and questions to [goodmourning@archildrens.org](mailto:goodmourning@archildrens.org)

Can exercise make a difference for someone suffering with grief?

[Click here to read full article](#)



## Particularly for Parents

Children can be so young when a parent dies that they have few, if any, memories of the deceased mother or father. Here are some helpful suggestions for supporting children in the context of father-loss when a child is very young that could also be used for mother-loss.

[Click here to read full article](#)



## Other Voices

There are times we're not interested in feeling better and the need is to just "go with the resistance" and sulk. If you ever have (or need) one of those days, this essay is for you.

[Learn more from the full essay](#)



## Living All the Way

Sometimes when approaching the end of life, one writes a letter as legacy for family and friends. One need not wait, however, until the last days to write a "last letter." We could do it today.

[Learn More](#)

**Lessons from Lions:** Using children's media to teach about grief and mourning is a creative resource for helping children understand ways to cope with a death in their lives. It is available only from the **Center for Good Mourning** for \$3.00 per copy, plus shipping and handling. Please click the following link to receive your copy. [Lessons from Lions](#)

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