

# The Long Term

Written by Sue Wilkinson

I have had some time away from writing about grief. I wonder why. Is it because I became overloaded with grief and the stories of others? Was it because I just needed to get out of the space where every time I got an email or a phone call it was someone new to the whole horrific process? I wonder whether it was because I had put enough energy into distracting my grief by helping others it was time to deal with my own. I think it was a bit of everything.

It has been six years now since we lost our little boy. It's certainly not six years since the pain has subsided or it has become easier to just 'be', but time has passed and my life has changed, my memories have altered slightly and my compassion level has gone through the roof. Strangely enough I sometimes feel like the grief 'guru' when someone close has lost someone dear to him or her, but I no longer have this need to be completely immersed in grief and grieving. I still do howl, did very well the other night in quite possibly scaring the neighbours with a rather large and loud cry, but it is less often now, and sometimes (like the other night) it is intense, and others times it is easier to work with.

A friend who lost her Nan recently asked me when the strong feelings would subside. Although her grief is very different to mine I do think the emotional grief path can be similar for many people. Anyway, how can you answer that honestly? I actually said "never". Seemed harsh, and a little too heartbreaking, but how many times were you told, "Time will heal"? What an absolute lot of rubbish. It is different for us all, and although we can compare stories, and relate to the pain and anger we can't put a time limit when we get to the point we can cope with it a little easier. But it is quite possible the one questions I think all of us have asked at some point in time.

What I can say, and have done, is that for me I find it comes in waves and peaks. In the early hours, days and weeks it was intense, unrelenting and excruciating. Over time the intensity of grief has reduced. It isn't as often and it certainly is easier to deal with. In a strange way I am managing my grief and it's not managing me.

I think it's so important along the road to stop and do what you need to do to get by. Helping out others was a life saver for me, and a fabulous distracter, and I guess, by still being involved in Cherubs all these years later it is something I need to do to maintain some level of control over the sometimes unexpected peaks, and perhaps not frighten the neighbours so much.