

Chapter 06

The Fear That Came After Loss

Before Anthony died, I knew that life was precious.

After Anthony died, I understood it in a completely different way.

Losing a child changes the way you see the world. It changes the way you look at a phone call, a late text message, a moment when someone doesn't answer. Things that once felt ordinary can suddenly feel frightening.

Because once you experience the unthinkable, a part of your heart wonders:

“Could it happen again?”

After losing Anthony, I found myself worrying about my other children in a way I never had before. Jonathon, Gina, and Sabrina were still my children, no matter how old they were. A mother never stops being a mother.

I wanted to protect them from every hurt. I wanted to make sure they were safe. I wanted to somehow prevent ever having to feel that kind of pain again.

But I had to learn something very difficult:

Fear can become another kind of loss.

When we live every moment expecting something terrible to happen, we miss the beautiful moments happening right in front of us.

Fear can make us hold back instead of hold on.

Fear can make us worry instead of enjoy.

Fear can make us spend today grieving a tomorrow that may never come.

I had to remind myself that my children were not given to me to control every moment of their lives. They were given to me to love.

And love is not meant to be lived in fear.

Of course, I still worry. I am a mother. That will always be part of me. But I have learned that I cannot let the loss of one child steal the joy of loving the children who are still here.

Anthony's life taught me to cherish my family more deeply, not to spend my life afraid of losing them.

I want my children to feel my love, not my fear.

I want them to remember their mom as someone who laughed with them, celebrated them, listened to them, and treasured the time they had together.

Because the truth is, none of us are promised tomorrow.

But we are given today.

And today is where love lives.

So I choose to hug a little longer.

I choose to say “I love you” more often.

I choose to be grateful for the voices I can still hear and the hands I can still hold.

Anthony’s death taught me that life is fragile.

But it also taught me that life is beautiful.

And I do not want fear to keep me from seeing the beauty that remains.

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