

# DO I EVER STOP BEING A BEREAVED PARENT?

*Parenthood and Love Do Not End*

Parenthood | Identity | Love | Grief

When a child dies, many parents wonder what becomes of their identity as a parent. The truth is that parenthood does not end. Your child remains your child, and you remain their parent, even as the world may not always recognize that bond. The way you carry parenthood may change through the years, but love, memory, and the relationship you hold in your heart remain part of who you are. There is no need to leave that identity behind.

*You do not stop being a parent because your child is no longer here.*

## 1 YOUR PARENTHOOD IS REAL

- Your relationship with your child did not end.
- You remain their parent in every meaningful sense.
- Love and responsibility do not disappear with death.
- Your parenthood is part of your story.

## 2 WHEN OTHERS DO NOT SEE IT

- Forms, conversations, and assumptions can leave you feeling invisible.
- You may have to decide when to share your child's place in your family.
- It is okay to name yourself as their parent.
- You do not need others' permission to claim that bond.

## 3 A CHANGING IDENTITY

- Parenthood may look different than you expected.
- You may wonder where you fit in family life or the wider world.
- It is okay if your identity feels complex or tender.
- You can let it change without letting it disappear.

## 4 MAKING SPACE FOR THEIR NAME

- Speak your child's name when you want to.
- Share stories, photos, and memories with safe people.
- Include them in family conversations and traditions.
- Their place in your family remains.

## 5 THE QUESTIONS THAT COME

- You may face questions about children, family, or the future.
- You can prepare a simple answer or choose not to respond.
- Protecting your heart is allowed.
- You do not owe everyone your story.

## 6 PARENTING THROUGH LOVE

- You may parent through memory, ritual, advocacy, or the way you love others.
- There is no single way to carry this role forward.
- The care you feel is a reflection of the bond.
- Let your love guide what feels meaningful.

## 7 LIVING WITH BOTH TRUTHS

- You can be a bereaved parent and still experience joy, purpose, and growth.
- Living fully does not leave your child behind.
- Sorrow and hope can share the same heart.
- Both truths can be real.

## 8 A LIFELONG BOND

- There is no finish line for being your child's parent.
- The bond may change shape, but it remains.
- You get to decide how their place lives in your life.
- Love continues to name you both.

### A GENTLE REMINDER

*Your child remains your child, and you remain their parent—always.*

