

Reconnecting With Your God-Given Identity After Pregnancy Loss

Pregnancy loss is hard. It's life-altering, grief stricken and you wonder if you'll ever be your old self again. It can affect our relationships with our husbands, children and friends. Even though it can be challenging, we must plod through our grief and slowly begin working on reconnecting with ourselves.

Right now, you might be at a place where your entire mind is fixated on your loss. Getting out of bed is difficult. You are mourning the loss of a precious child. You are also mourning the loss of your intended role as a mother. Taking time to grieve is valid and needed, but eventually, you must start thinking about ways to reconnect with you.

Moving forward and mending our souls does not mean we are saying we never loved the child in our womb. Oh, no. Oh how we love that child who is dancing on streets of gold. But taking steps to march through the grief, not over it and not sitting in it forever, means we are honoring the life we have been gifted, honoring the life of our heavenly child and honoring the life of all of those around us. We must cherish ourselves and refresh our spirits by seeking out ways to recognize who we are as God's creation—beloved, set apart for Him and made for a great number of purposes. Here are four suggestions for reconnecting with yourself:

Change your internal dialogue.

Many of us feel like a complete failure after our loss. Some of us had planned since we were children that our greatest goal in life was to be a mother—as many times as we wished. When this goal fails, we wander in a state of unease.

I knew I'd never have my baby back, but I desperately wanted to have the "old me" back. I wanted to smile, laugh and feel comfortable in my own skin. Not like I was walking through a murky fog.

I finally realized that the first step toward reconnecting with myself was to brush aside the negative self-talk that was consuming my soul. The Bible states: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Since life can be shaped by our thoughts, we need to carefully choose what we are telling ourselves. I started telling myself the words Kathryn Stockett writes in her best-selling book *The Help*, "You is kind. You is smart. You is important."

We are more than mothers. We are more than wives. Our biggest role is that we are daughters of God. We are not failures but beloved creations of God, and our worth is not in how many or if we can have children. He has equipped us all with specific gifts and purposes. For the time being, mothering this child who was just born into heaven is not the plan he arranged. We must devise a way to march forward. To seek contentment in the day.

Work through your grief.

Sharron, who experienced an ectopic pregnancy, a late-term loss and a stillbirth, found that she literally had to sweat out her grief. She says, "As crazy as this seems, my family has a motto for grief and loss: 'Work through it.' My daddy taught me this by example. When I am physically exhausted, the heartache doesn't seem as great. Six weeks after the loss of our stillborn son, I bought a house to renovate as a rental. I ripped up floors, tore down walls, hung and finished new sheetrock and laid hardwood floors. It was exhausting, but working through it actually helps. I'm not sure I would recommend it to everyone, but it was good for me."

Sharron explains that finding something to divert her mind

aided in her personal recovery. It helped her to take control of a project when the rest of her life was beyond her control.

We can all work through our grief and reconnect with ourselves in different ways. Whether this comes in the extreme form of home renovation, sports, or the quieter task of handiwork, we must each choose to engage in a few enjoyable tasks that help divert our minds from the replay that is constant.

Try new experiences.

Some women find renewal by engaging in new experiences. A common theme among women is literally that a change of view helped their spirit. If finances allow, consider getting away for a few days. Tara—who experienced three losses in addition to other family tragedies—cites that going away on a cruise with her mother was healing. My best friend swept me away for a weekend girls' trip a month after my second loss. The anticipation of a trip, forcing myself to get dressed up and just laughing helped me reconnect with myself.

Set goals.

We also need to set realistic goals. Make a list of tasks you can accomplish each day. It might begin with just a few things such as: get out of bed, make coffee, shower, put on makeup, call a friend, read for 20 minutes and so forth. Put a few items on the list that help your soul breathe. If cooking is your jam, go grocery shopping and stir up a favorite recipe. If you are a runner, put on your shoes, blast that playlist and go for a jog.

Just do something that refreshes your spirit and makes you feel like yourself. Making a list and following through can give you a small semblance of normalcy.

Darling, we can't delete the pain, but we can take healthy precautions to distance ourselves from the searing voices and memories our minds want to constantly relive.

What are some things you can do to reconnect with yourself?
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