

My Journey to Choose Love By: Carolyn H.

As I sit and reflect on my 20 years with Cody, the first thought that comes to mind is gratitude. Now, don't get me wrong, it has been taken a lot of time and a lot of work to get to this point. My grief journey, like everyone else, has been and is, an emotional rollercoaster consisting of unbearable pain. Every grief stage has been visited time and again...denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

As time has gone on and the realization hit home that no matter what I did, Cody would not be coming to back to me, I knew I needed to make a choice: a choice to stay in misery and pain and dwell on my loss, or a choice to honor both my son and myself by living this life the best that I can. I decided to choose the latter. There are days and there will continue to be days where this choice is difficult, and I would rather just lie in bed and live in that state of pain and misery. On those days, I allow myself time to do that, but I also don't allow myself to stay there too long. As soon as I am able, I put my focus back to being grateful for my time with Cody and what I learned on this journey.

I am grateful:

- Cody gave me the title of mom.
- Cody showed me how to appreciate history.
- Cody reminded me to always take time to play.
- Cody showed me how to live with passion.
- Cody taught me how to be patient.
- Cody gave me the appreciation of winter.
- Cody taught me how to show compassion.
- Cody reminded me how important it is to serve others.
- Cody gave me my love of the sound of laughter.
- Cody allowed me to be myself.
- Cody showed me that a sense of humor is important in life.

What I learned:

- I learned that when we love big, we lose big, but the risk to love is so worth it.
- I learned that I am stronger than I ever thought possible.
- I learned there are people in my life that will be there for me in the good times and the bad.
- I learned that there are people in my life that will not, and that is okay.
- I learned that everyone has a story, and everyone deserves a listening ear.
- I learned that bad things can happen to good people, and I am one of those people.
- I learned how important forgiveness is in my life, for Cody, and for me.

- I learned that the guilt I feel, the should have's and would have's, really don't help me to live my best life.
- I learned that asking WHY over and over again is still not going to get me the answer I am looking for.
- I learned that I can still laugh and smile, and that Cody would want me to.
- I learned that faith and hope are two things I need in my life.
- I learned that Cody's story will still carry on through all the lives he touched.
- I learned that my love for Cody will never end nor will my sorrow of missing him so deeply.
- So, I choose LOVE...Love for Cody, Love for my friends and family, Love for others, Love for me, and Love for Life!