

Grief Around Every Corner

Category: Parenting

written by Astra Chang-Ramsden | August 22, 2025

I've started asking women about their grief. Today, I was taking a medical history from a colleague, and she told me she had lost twin girls. They were stillborn. I asked her to tell me how it happened.

It was one sad accident after another. She couldn't feel her babies moving at 38 weeks and then went into labor. She'd been told that she would have an elective C-section at 36 weeks, but for some reason her caregivers changed their minds. By the time she was in the labor and delivery ward, the babies didn't have a heartbeat.

In the end, she pushed out twin girls who were born dead, with their umbilical cords around their necks. Each one weighed 5 lbs. and change. The nurse held up the babies in the delivery room and said to her, "Look, lady, this is what killed your babies," pointing to the cords wrapped around their necks.

After they'd put her in the postdelivery ward—with all the other mothers who'd delivered live babies—the matron came up to her and asked, "Where is your child?" It was the patient in the adjacent bed who replied, "That is the lady who lost her child." There was no sensitivity at all from people who should have known better.

She told me she regrets never holding her daughters. Her mother was there in the delivery room with her and had the sense to take a picture of the girls. She says she sometimes looks at it and cries. She feels guilty even now. She wishes she had made more noise, had demanded a C-section when she felt the time had come. Her daughters would have turned 21 years old this year. She told me their birthdate and their rhyming names, both starting with "B." She said she'd had therapy to help her cope with her grief.

I told her I saw her as a woman who is strong as hell, who fought the system and got no answers. I told her she's someone I've admired because of her ability to put others at ease. I never knew the grief she carries to this day. Or the lack of answers.

My son has lain next to me, coughing all night with a chest cold, for the last three nights. I am happy I have him, even though the nights are miserable. Perspective is a wondrous thing.

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