

## FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE

On September 1, 1989, I lost my baby. She died two hours and nine minutes after birth. We named her Aubrie Marie.

During my pregnancy we'd been told that there might be a problem, but everything could be fixed. Although we anticipated a crisis, we never expected our baby to die.

The year prior, in December 1988, my mother died from a sudden heart attack. She was just fifty-three years old. Six months later I lost a dear friend who had been a mother figure to me. I was no stranger to loss, even then.

My grandmother, who raised me, died when I was fifteen following complications of surgery for brain cancer.

### **When my baby died, I had no idea where I was to go from there.**

After five long days in the hospital, I remember waiting in the doorway for my husband to pull the car around. I wondered, how do I step foot outside without my baby in my arms?

The pain and sorrow were excruciating.

I spent five days physically recuperating after the birth of my first baby following a cesarean section. It happened to be Labor Day weekend that year. The hospital staff was scarce. We were left pretty much alone to deal with our loss.

We weren't told much. As a matter of fact, we weren't even told what the sex of our baby was. We didn't find out that she was a girl until my discharge, when a vital statistics lady came to my room to ask why we hadn't checked the box indicating the sex of the baby on the birth certificate form.

### **She couldn't believe nobody had told us whether our baby was a boy or girl.**

She left our room, went down to the morgue to speak with the pathologist who performed the autopsy, and returned twenty minutes later to tell us that we had had a baby girl.



During the five days that followed the birth and death of our baby, we were told the following:

- You are young, you can have another baby.
- God must have wanted an angel in heaven.
- God wanted a grandchild to give to your mother in heaven.
- These things are meant to be.
- Why do you have to name it?
- It's suggested you get pregnant right away.
- This usually happens to boy babies.
- You have to call a funeral home.

Overcome with shock, I couldn't imagine why we had to call a funeral home. Some of these things were told to us by well-meaning friends and family. We were devastated, in shock.

There were no answers, only lots of painful questions coupled with confusion and great sorrow.

The following months were terrible. I didn't have the support I needed. But not because nobody cared—it was because nobody understood.

Because of my loss and the short life of my first baby, Aubrie Marie, it has become my life mission to provide that understanding and support to other people who are grieving. As a result, I founded Mourning Discoveries Grief Support Services.

**I wanted to provide a place where people can receive the support and understanding they need following death of a loved one.**

I've since partnered with over three hundred funeral firms in twenty-five states and Canada, and have mailed thousands of publications to grieving families. I have talked to thousands of grieving individuals, and spent countless hours listening to their stories of loss.

Mourning Discoveries is now part of the International Grief Institute.

We continue to have the honor of providing bereavement support services, facilitate grief support groups, and make a difference in the lives of those who walk the road of grief.

**Because of my own loss, I've helped many navigate through grief towards healing.**

Most importantly, I have been a witness to the power of God's love and the miracle of healing and human resilience.

If it hadn't been for the loss of my precious baby, Aubrie Marie, none of this would've been possible. I am grateful.

LINDA FINDLAY