

# NO LONGER HERE TO RESPOND

Mary's mother died in 2010,  
Mary's 60-year-old husband David died in 2012,  
and Mary's 8-year-old grandson died in 2013.

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## Self care articles for the bereaved

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I've always taken given names very seriously, even as a child. Never satisfied with my own plain moniker, I used to make lists of names I would have liked for myself, or that I was determined to bestow on my future children, even during my babysitting years when I was convinced I didn't want any.

The regal Katherine, the lovely Sarah, the sweet Beth, and of course, the Emily who was an aspiring writer from one of my favorite books.

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My creative spirit balked at the  
commonness of my name.

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"You could have at least chosen a better middle name for me," I'd lament. "At least Teresa or Terese, and not the version that is spelled with an 'h.' It looks like it should be pronounced The-Rese. The-Rese. I hate it."

My mother would explain that Mary was the mother of Jesus and Therese was one of her favorite saints, but I would hear none of it. As far as I was concerned, my first name was plain and my middle name was spelled incorrectly.

A few months after my mother's death I unearthed my birth certificate for some needed paperwork. For the first time, I took a good look at it, and gasped out loud. There, clear as day, was my middle name, spelled without the 'h.'

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How could my mother not have noticed,  
when she'd been so insistent of the  
honor she bestowed on me?

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This would be only one of the many moments I would reach to pick up the phone to ask my mother a pressing question, only to realize, with a start that the beloved mother who'd gifted me with her favorite names, was no longer here to respond.