

## "We Used To Share A Room..." *Myths Surrounding Grieving Siblings*

1. When a sibling is dying, children have no problem with "sitting on the sidelines" of the family circle.

*Children become jealous of situations that keep their parents occupied, a dying sibling is no different.*

2. Parents have no problem determining where to put their energies when their child is dying.

*Most parents are torn between the dying child and their surviving children. This dilemma is one of the most difficult at the time of a serious illness.*

3. Children are lethargic and sad all the time when experiencing the illness and death of a sibling.

*Children's grief is often expressed through energy and activity; we call it "grief bursts".*

4. It is normal for a child to be a "Super- Perfect Kid" during the illness of a sibling.

*Some children strive to be super heroes when the family is coming apart but most children act out negatively while expressing their grief.*

5. Children's fears are often addressed during and after the death of their sibling.

*Surviving siblings can have irrational fears that they keep to themselves, as a way of protecting their grieving parents.*

6. Most children "move on" soon after the death of their sibling, since there is not a relationship anymore.

*Children heal and process bereavement when encouraged to "redefine the relationship" with their sibling.*

7. Most teens are oblivious to their parents and could care less if they see them smile.

*Teens are very protective of their parents and tend to assume the role of a parent while nurturing them through their grief. They feel most secure when the family returns to a routine and parents set boundaries again.*

8. New siblings born after the death create harmony in the family because they fill that empty void.

*No child ever fills the void of a deceased child. The sibling born after the death will create their own relationship with the deceased.*

9. Teens have no desire to have a social life or be involved in outside activities because they feel the need to stay close to home during and after the death of a sibling.

*The "Independence vs. Dependence" struggle is very real part of the developmental work a teen must do as they process loss.*

10. Children experience relief when their sibling dies and they feel very little guilt at all.

*All children feel a sense of relief when the house is no longer observing a "death vigil" but it brings along an enormous amount of guilt.*

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