



My Son Todd and My Guardian Angels: How I Learned to Cope With the Death of My Only Child

Tom Santos

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It was 11:00 pm when the news just came on TV - tomorrow is the Fourth of July and I was thinking about a cookout in the back yard. My son Todd was at a picnic, and should be home soon. My wife was in bed sleeping.

I heard the sirens of emergency vehicles in the distance, and then as the vehicles got closer to my home, the sirens got louder and louder, I looked out the window and saw emergency vehicles - police, ambulances, and a fire truck rush past my home.

I felt a strong knot in my stomach. Little did I know that they were rushing to the scene of an accident that took my only child's life. In a split second our lives would change forever.

Within a five-year period, I lost my son, my job, my mother, my father, my house, and my wife.

A child represents your future, your spouse connects with your past. When you lose them both, you have no future, no connection to the past, only the present, and the present is dark and filled with dismay and uncertainty.

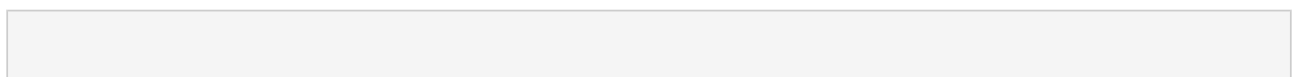
It took ten years to write this book. I wrote the first part after three years, because I wanted to remember my son, but all I could write was about his death. Three years later, I wrote the second part, because I felt well enough, I thought, to be able to finish the book. Another three years would pass before I could write part three, and another year to complete the book.

My life has taken pretty much the same course, in three parts. The normal years before Todd dies, the grieving years of uncertainty and healing, and part three, a new life has emerged.

This book describes what I went through when I lost my only child. It describes a period of time I call the "Five Years of Hell", and how I coped with it. I also explain my recovery period.

Fortunately not everyone takes it as hard as I did, or may not show it, and not every one goes through every thing I did. But I believe there are a lot of things that happened to me, that you will be able to recognize and understand. I hope the book finds its way into the hands of people who want to understand what it's like to lose a child, or help someone who has lost a son or daughter to cope with the loss.

The Guardian Angels I speak of are people and spirits that helped me back to an existence that I never thought I could achieve again. It is nice to be back. And I often wonder if Todd is up there watching me, and saying "Atta boy, Dad!"



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