

After the loss of my son, I found that on my darkest days, writing helped me. Through my journey, there were days I thought I could not go on without my son, but eventually the clouds started to lift and the sun did shine again... This is our story.

March of 1999 I found out I was pregnant – my due date was November 20, 1999. We of course were trying and very excited by the news. I had a picture perfect pregnancy – no morning sickness – no heartburn. Three baby showers. We were ready! Everything was going great – on Monday, November 15th Peter and I went to my mid wife and we listened to the baby's heartbeat. I felt contractions here and there the next couple of days, but nothing consistent. On Wednesday, November 17th I didn't feel him move – I didn't think anything about it because I was told the baby slows down right before delivery.

I woke up Thursday, November 18, 1999 and still no movement and I felt like there was something wrong. We went to the hospital and as soon as I got there they tried to find the baby's heartbeat and they could not. A doctor came in and did an ultrasound and said he was sorry but our baby had died. All I was screaming in my head was, how could this be we just heard the heartbeat on Monday?!

At 4 p.m. I gave birth to my stillborn son. He was beautiful, he weighed 8 pounds, 21 inches long, had jet-black hair and little rose bud lips. He looked like he was sleeping when I held him. We named him John Paul.

I learned is that there is no right or wrong way to get through the death of your child/children. But you have to allow yourself to grieve and do things that may help you get through the dark times such as journaling, sewing, reading, etc.

We did go on to have two subsequent children Jakob 11/22/2000 and Jackson 3/28/2003. Getting through those two subsequent pregnancies were the most stressful times in my life. I was journaling during both pregnancies and meeting with other bereaved moms. That did really help me. The Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network not only provided support after our loss, it allowed me to attend beautiful events in memory of our John, allowed me to create this healing journal and most important, I met friends who will be my friends forever because our angel babies brought us together...

I have been a volunteer for the Western New York Perinatal Bereavement Network (wnypbn.org) since 2000 reaching out to families to try to help them through the tragedy of losing a baby and keeping our sons memory alive.

Lisa M. Jerebko, mother of John Paul 11/18/99