



where brothers and sisters are heard

THE SIBLING

VOICE

july - september 2013

two heartbeats become one

by brea behn

Listen closely. Can you hear your heart beating? It is your own. It is only one. Mine too is alone, but it wasn't always so. You see, I began my life hearing my own, but also that of another—my twin's.

On November 9, 1983, I was born with my twin brother, Brad. We were Brad and Brea. On May 19, 1999, when we were fifteen years old, an accident with a handgun ended our bond. I became just Brea. I became a twin without my twin.

I have learned that to heal from a loss like mine is a journey that will take a lifetime. There is no one in my life that I will ever be capable of getting closer to. Whose loss could

possibly affect me more?

Despite the tremendous weight of my grief, I have also learned that grief is not the end of my story—that there is such a thing as life with grief. I now have a husband I love and two beautiful children. I have goals and dreams and things that I love and look forward to. I have happy moments and days of pure peace and happiness. Most importantly, I have joy.

How does one get from grief to happiness? For me, before I could go high, I had to go low. In fact, I had to hit bottom. I suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression for eight years after my twin's death. It took that long before I was able to dig myself

Welcome to Brea Behn who wrote the feature article "Two Heartbeats Become One" and the book *Death Sucks, Life Doesn't Have To*. We know this book will help siblings of all ages who are looking for someone who understands their grief journey.

Catherine Lamberton has written a beautiful poem honoring her sister, which we are sharing with you.

Be sure to tune to www.W4WN.com online radio and hear my interview on August 6, 2013 at 11 AM PST.

Finally, PLEASE share this and all of our newsletters with anyone and everyone. It will not only help them, but it will help you receive the type of love and support you need and want.

And remember...we need your articles, stories, or ideas for future Sibling Voice newsletters.



~ Susan Whitmore
founder & president

out using one simple tool: Hope.

Hope is different for every person, but generally what I mean by hope is the one thing that kept me going—the sense that happiness would be possible again one day. Some days it was as simple as my reason to get up that day. For me, my biggest source of hope was my children, who at the time were only three and one. They needed me. So I knew I needed to start my journey of healing.

My journey was two years of finally facing my loss and learning how to grieve properly. It was also healing physically, because not grieving properly led to many physical problems that I was having to endure.

It has now been fourteen years since losing my twin. This January, after waiting for so long to finally face my grief, I let my journey of grief and healing pour out of me into a book entitled *Death Sucks, Life Doesn't Have To*.

Like a cork bursting out of a just-opened bottle, I wrote it in only three days.

Nothing I have ever written has felt so right.

My goal with *Death Sucks, Life Doesn't Have To* is not only to share my story of losing my twin, but also to show others that grieving is not only okay, it is both

essential and completely

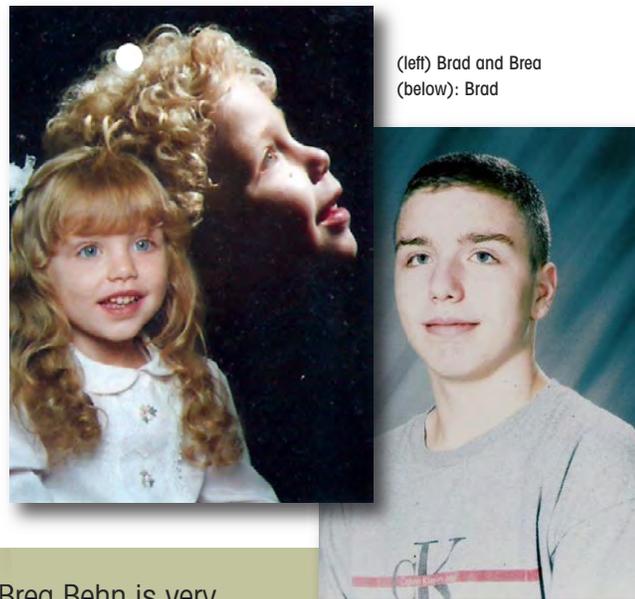
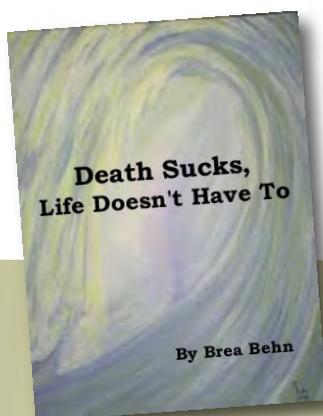
natural. I also wanted to impart to others that not grieving can result in many psychological and physical problems down the road. A final and important goal is to show people that happiness with grief is possible. That like lifting a weight (grieving), and then resting (finding joy), it is very possible to build our “grief muscle” to a point that, although the grief is still there and always will be, we can and do get stronger. Furthermore, I have begun to pursue motivational speaking at churches, schools, and grief groups where I share my story and help others start their own journey of grieving.

Although my twin is not with me physically—the day that two heartbeats became only one—and I miss him every single day, I have healed. I have healed for me. I have healed for my family. I have healed to help others. I have also healed for my twin. Now I get the honor of telling his story and sharing him with the world. That is my privilege. That is my true joy.



Brea Behn

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(left) Brad and Brea
(below): Brad

Brea Behn is very passionate about reading and writing in all genres. She started writing at the age of fifteen when she started a memoir for her twin brother. Currently, she writes young adult fiction, nonfiction, and is building her career as an author and public speaker. You may preorder Brea’s book at www.breasbooks.com.

griefHaven and the military

For years griefHaven has attempted to provide its resources to military families. We have had limited success so far. Recently, through Didi Reuben, we found a potential lead to get our foot in the door. As our first project, we have designed a military grief pin. As you can see from the drawing below and alongside our original grief pin currently given to people around the world, it is similar in symbolism and beauty, yet it has its own identity. We can't wait to start sending these to military families everywhere. If you know of a military family who would benefit from one of our packets and a special grief pin, please email us at hope@griefHaven.org.



(original grief pin)



(drawing of military grief pin)

I wrote this poem six days after my sister passed away suddenly. She had survived two heart transplants and was in great health when she was taken from us. This poem explains everything I was going through at the time and am still going through three months later. My sister was an incredible wife, mother, sister, daughter, and friend. She will always be missed.

if only you did stay

by catherine lamberton

Constantly thinking,
never to be the same,
my tears fall quickly
just hearing your name.

Silence is golden,
yet not anymore,
silence brings thoughts
I just can't ignore.

Surrounded by family,
I still feel alone.
My heart is so empty,
this pain I must own.

Nights are sleepless,
dreams out of reach,
crying in my pillow
it's you I beseech.

I yearn to hug you,
to just see your face,
but now mere memories
must stand in your place.

Gone but not forgotten,
that's what they say,
of course that is true,
but...if only you did stay.

griefHaven on the radio

Susan Whitmore, Founder and President of griefHaven, is being interviewed on live online radio August 6, 2013 at 11 a.m. pst at www.W4WN.com. Anyone may tune in to hear the show. We will also have the show available to hear on the griefHaven website once the show is over.

The show was started by Joni Aldrich who lost her husband to cancer. Joni has published six books, and her shows include: Cancer S.O.S., Caregiving S.O.S., Ladies Who Inspired, Diagnosis S.O.S. and Treatment S.O.S. Mark your calendars!



did you know...?

That anyone may make a donation to griefHaven throughout the year for any event, celebration, or just because, and griefHaven will put up a beautiful memory tile in honor or memory of the person, as well as send a personalized card to the person of your choosing with the wording exactly as you write it. For instance, people send donations in honor of a friend's anniversary who lost their child several years ago or in memory of someone's child or on a person's birthday or as a graduation tribute or... You get the idea. The list goes on and on. It makes a wonderful gift and is a way to let people know you remember or are commemorating them or someone they love.

search the web and make \$ for griefHaven just make **goodsearch** your search engine and name griefHaven as your foundation of choice!

We make money just by your searching!
Look below and see how much we have made since January!
\$219.47



It's SO easy. All you need to do is go to www.goodsearch.com, name griefHaven as your charity of choice, and the website will walk you through the rest!

SIBLINGS: We would love to receive your articles, photos, stories, poetry, school papers, etc. about your sibling or something you did in memory of your sibling. Send all items to hope@griefHaven.org