

For 29 and a half years I had the privilege of being Calvin's mom.

May 2, 2023 was the worst night of my life. It was the night I was informed my son was forever gone. It was the night I learned that I would never get to hug my son, to hold his hand, to hear his voice, to breathe the same air, to hear his heartbeat, to run my hands through his hair, to laugh with him, to cry with him, to whisper to him that it will be ok. That I could no longer be his mother on this earth.

There really are not enough words to describe the impact the death of my son has on me. Each day is a struggle to find meaning without him, and the pain of his absence is unbearable. If I had to describe it though, it would be something like this: a huge bomb went off in the middle of my life, the dust and debris touched or covered every single corner of my home, my heart, my life. The effects permeated and changed every single relationship, every interaction, every hobby, my career, my personality, my beliefs, my body, my health, and how my brain processed big things all the way down to the small things, like how I felt walking down the street. There are days when I barely recognize myself in the mirror anymore.

There is not a particle of my life that has not been negatively affected by the traumatic death of my child. Every cell in my body aches and longs to be with my beloved child. I can't smile as often as my old self. Smiling hurts now. Most everything hurts some days, even breathing.

There are days when I still feel paralyzed. My chest feels the sinking weight of my child's absence and, sometimes, I feel as if I will explode from the grief.

If you ever meet someone else who has lost a child, remember that most days it is a miracle they are standing.

In addition to losing Calvin, I have lost my daughter. To see how much she has lost of herself after Calvin died has only made losing Calvin more tragic. Mari was outgoing, on her way to making her mark, an incredibly talented artist, a college graduate, a tattoo artist. I have watched her wither into a sad, reclusive girl. She struggles daily. She avoids her friends. And worst of all, Mari blames herself. How? How could she be at fault? I watch my living children suffer. And I can't fix this for me or for them. As a mother this makes me feel so helpless. It is devastating to watch how grief defines itself so differently in us all.

The person who provided my son with fentanyl not only robbed Calvin of his life, but me of my future. I will never see my son become the father he so often talked of wanting to be. I believed that I would one day hold his children, and that he would outlive me. I have had to find new purpose, new hope, and new reasons to keep putting one foot in front of the other in a world where I no longer feel I have to live a long life, but for my other children. You robbed his brother and sister, you robbed their future children of an uncle. You robbed his aunts and uncles of a nephew. You robbed the world of a beautiful soul.

There is a special bond between a mother and son. Calvin is and was the light of my life. Calvin was kind, thoughtful, sincere, genuine, affectionate, hardworking, If Calvin could help another, he would. He made everyone he met feel special and important. Calvin as a person was the embodiment of all that is good and right in this world.