



where brothers and sisters are heard
THE SIBLING

Choice

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etan patz and lessons that loss can teach

by rabbi steven carr reuben, ph.d.

I was living in New York in 1979 when Etan Patz disappeared. It changed my life forever. I knew his uncle, a fellow rabbi, and I remember how the shock of his disappearance reverberated throughout the Jewish community and then all of New York as photos of his beautiful, smiling face suddenly appeared on walls and telephone poles and milk cartons everywhere.

It was as if we all were confronted with just how fragile, unpredictable, and unjust life could be for any one of us, at any time. An innocent child, a parent who did what all of us had done—simply allowed her child to walk to the bus stop for the first time—had her very life ripped from her heart and soul. Someone

once said having a child is choosing to have your heart run around outside your body for the rest of your life.

So Etan Patz disappeared, and it changed my life. As I struggled to fathom even a shadow of the pain that the Patz family was forced to live with, I was brought face to face with my own private, unresolved nightmare of the death of my father when I was only four years old. The pain of my childhood loss suddenly became something I could no longer deny, and I made a vow to turn my own lifelong struggle to learn how to live with grief and loss into lessons that would guide the rest of my life. And these are the five life principles I chose:



didid and steven reuben

live now, not later

Rabbi Steven Reuben's article poignantly reminds us that every choice we make about life now—today—is what matters. And it was through the death of Etan Patz that he was profoundly moved to change his life and make his everyday life matter. That reminds us as grieving parents, siblings, and other family members that the lives of our children DO impact the lives of tens of thousands of people every day, all over the world. We will never know all of the lives impacted because our child, brother or sister lived and died. Knowing this reminds us that their lives continue to matter, even though we aren't aware of it. Rabbi Reuben's article was written 34 years later! So remember that, regardless of your child's or sibling's age, his or her life will always make a difference in many ways we will never see or know.

HERE COMES TROUBLE. Now THAT is one of the cutest dogs I've ever seen. Read the wonderful article about how Trouble came to life. Recently Trouble visited Newtown, and Trouble has given smiles, giggles, and comfort to children everywhere. After all, as the book shows, "Where there is Trouble, there is hope!" We recommend this book for children, and now Trouble even has his own new house.



~ Susan Whitmore
founder & president

1. Measure time not in minutes, or hours, or years. Measure time in lessons learned and lives touched. What matters in your life is not how long it is, but what you do everyday, every hour, every breath of your life.

2. The most important challenge is not learning how to live after death, it's learning how to live after birth. This life is the workshop of our souls.

3. Be like the character from the Broadway hit "Rent" who sings, "There is no future, there is no past, I live each moment as my last." Focus on who you are, on what you say, on how you act, and the values that you cherish. Be still in the morning when you wake and find your meaning and your purpose before you start every day.

4. Live each day as if this is the question you will be asked when you die, "You were given life; what did you do with it?"

5. Choose to embrace the challenge of living every moment with the awareness of just how precious the gift of this day truly is. Then every day of your life will be a day worth living, and life itself will be the blessing it was meant to be.

Learning to live with loss is perhaps the fundamental challenge that every human being must face. It is a challenge to not only live life in the face of loss, but to find the strength to fully embrace life again in spite of our grief, in spite of our tragedies, in spite of our sorrows. It is to know that being human is to triumph over despair and believe that the meaning of life is to live each day in such a way so that what we do matters and who we are matters in the lives of others.

“It is a challenge to not only live life in the face of loss, but to find the strength to fully embrace life again in spite of our grief, in spite of our tragedies, in spite of our sorrows.”



here comes trouble

by sheila duncan

Trouble the dog was created by my then 12-year-old niece, Kendra, after losing her dad, grandmother, and her then best friend—her Golden Retriever—all to cancer within a short period of time.

One night at my home while watching television, the St. Jude Telethon came on and Kendra immediately jumped up and said, “I’ve got to help those kids.” She then sat down and drew a little stray grey dog, and promptly named him Trouble.

Together we then came up with three slogans for Trouble:

“Where There’s Trouble...There’s Hope”

“Trouble Says...Be Tough”

“When Trouble Comes...You’re Never Alone”

Since that winter’s night, I have picked up the ball and turned Trouble into a huggable plush dog, as well as a children’s book *Here’s Trouble*.

Trouble is just a simple plush dog with a spirit of his own; he has a magical energy that attracts children like a magnet. Children hug Trouble, communicate with him and are comforted by his soft presence. Trouble’s mission is one of hope and resilience. He has soothed children all over the world going through tough times, from hospitals to post earthquake Haiti.

Trouble is also involved in dog rescue, saving dogs in need—who literally have no hope—through the SPCA of Tennessee.

This little character comes to life in the imagination of kids and has an inexplicable power to calm children and animals in times of trouble.

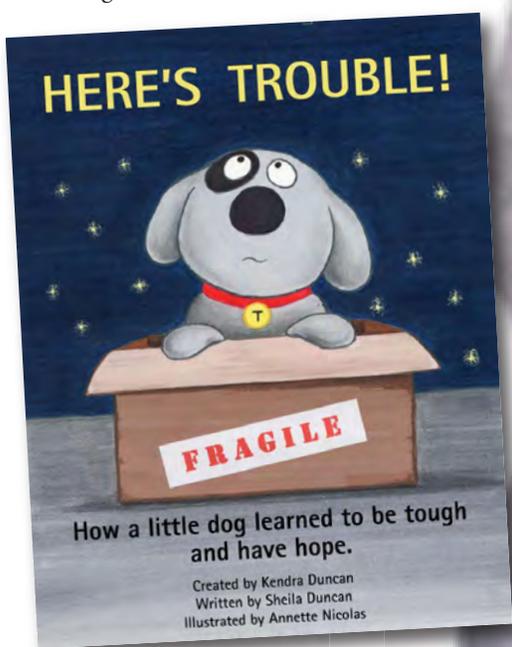
Trouble is the “star” of his own eight-minute film, and will eventually have his own television series to help children globally...one smile at a time.

Trouble recently traveled to Newtown, Connecticut and miraculously is now in the hands of many of the families who need him most. He arrived with his brand new house, designed by local architect Robert Zarelli. Trouble’s house is designed so children may color it however they choose as a way of expressing their emotions and creativity. Therapists in Newtown are now requesting Trouble to use as a coping mechanism.

Trouble is a little dog with a big mission, and we feel in today’s world he is needed more than ever before. And that is what keeps us moving forward.



Sheila and Kendra



www.troublethedog.net

if tomorrow never comes

norma cornett marek ©1989

If I knew it would be the last time that I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in more tightly, and pray the Lord your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time that I'd see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss, and call you back for just one more.

If I knew it would be the last time I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise,
I would tape each word and action, and play them back throughout my days.

If I knew it would be the last time, I would spare an extra minute or two,
To stop and say, "I love you," instead of assuming you know I do.

So just in case tomorrow never comes, and today is all I get,
I'd like to say how much I love you, and I hope we never forget,
That tomorrow is not promised to anyone, young or old alike,
And today may be the last chance we get to hold our loved ones tight.

So if you're waiting for tomorrow, why not do it now—today?
For if tomorrow doesn't make it, you'll surely regret the way
That you didn't take that extra time for a smile, a hug, or a kiss,
That in your rush of living life you made that one final miss.

So hold your loved ones close today, and whisper in their ear,
That you love them very much, and you'll always hold them dear.

Take time to say, "I love you," "I'm sorry," or "It's okay,"
And if tomorrow never comes, you'll have no regrets from today.



Siblings of all ages...

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
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