

“Father’s Day – Grieving Dads Emotions” by Kelly Farley

This is for the dads out there on Father’s Day who have ever had the unfortunate task of burying a child. I see all of you and your pain because I am one of you. I am a member of this brotherhood of guys just trying to survive the loss of our child. Some of you will experience Father’s Day without your child for the first time and others know this day all too well.

It’s a day that can create all sorts of emotions depending on the person. Here some of the emotions I feel on this day:

- **Sadness:** I miss Katie and Noah every day and Father’s Day is no different. Although most days people wouldn’t recognize the great sadness I carry with me, but it is still there I just disguise it better than I did early in my grief. Mainly because it doesn’t consume me like it used to. But there is no doubt, it’s still there.
- **Loneliness:** I often feel this way because I have no living children. I have two bronze urns and that just doesn’t cut it for me. My wife and I are fortunate enough to live a life that provides all the necessities we need to feel safe and comfortable. However, it often feels empty and lonely. The thought of losing my wife as we get older scares me since we’ve come to rely on each other so much. We “*get*” each other because we helped each other “survive” the aftermath of losing Katie and Noah. “Survive” is relative since we both still struggle with the fallout of such losses from time to time.
- **Happiness:** To some, this may sound odd, but it’s true. I am so happy to be their dad. So happy to have known them if only for a moment in time. As painful as their deaths have been, I wouldn’t change the fact that I am their dad.
- **Pride:** I am very proud to be their dad. Thinking about them puts a smile on my face. A smile filled with pride and warmth for them. A smile that hides a lot of pain but holds on to the hope of holding Katie and Noah in my arms someday.

I am sure I could write on and on about the different emotions I feel, but I picked the words that are most prevalent in my life right now. That doesn’t mean it won’t change at some point as the years have over the years.

I know many of you will feel alone on Father’s Day, but you are not. There are 100’s of thousands of grieving dads out there that are fighting to regain some sort of normalcy in their

life again. As I've said many times before, there is no going back to the old you, it's a futile attempt. One's energy is better served finding the new you. Energy filled with love for your child and one consumed with doing everything they can to honor that child. I strive every day to make my kids proud of their dad. Some days I'm successful and some days I am not. But I keep trying, it's what keeps me from throwing in the towel.

I want all of the grieving dads out there to know that regardless of the child's age when they died, you are still their dad and you LOVE them. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding their death, you are still their dad and you LOVE them. Regardless of when their death occurred, you are still their dad and you LOVE them. Unconditionally. You love them. Find a way to celebrate that love and your child this Father's Day.