

Child of mourning . . .

You should not know this kind of grief. Life is new for you, a beginning that should not be marred by the pain of death.

Yet here you are, wounded and bleeding in my classroom! I can see clearly in your eyes the sadness and fear that overwhelms you.

You look to me for something, and all I want to say is that I am overwhelmed too. I cannot take away the pain that consumes you, or the terror that panics your sense of well being. I cannot take away the aloneness that separates you from your classmates.

I want to give you back your innocence and your trust in all of us who seek to lead you into the world of adulthood. Yet I know that is impossible. You have been terribly cheated but, somehow, I need to reach beyond the great abyss of your shattered spirit, and touch that part of you that will survive.

You may not know this yet, but you will survive – scarred perhaps, and changed, but somehow stronger for the journey you will have traveled. . . . if only we can all give you the time and the room you need to work through your grief.

I look into your lost eyes, your sad and angry eyes, and know that I do have the power to make a difference. I cannot make it all better. I cannot erase the truth of your sorrow . . . but I can see a new child before me this day – wounded, needy, and searching for some glimpse of hope in a world that has let you down.

I will not smother you with my need to console you, but I will let you know I am here for you if you choose to confide in me.

I will not pretend that you can put your grief aside when you walk into my classroom, but I will give you every opportunity to be “just another kid” if that is what you need today.

I will not lose sight of the fact that this is a long journey on which you have embarked, not one of your choosing, but one of necessity, if you are to heal the wound of your grief. You are not the only one who needs patience, you know.

I will not let go of you – hold fast to the life line, child of mourning – there are a lot of us out here holding on to you. And if each one of us who cares does our part, you will find your path to healing.

From “Death and the Classroom” – reprinted with permission from Griefwork of Cincinnati.