

I am not a writer. I am not a journalist. I don't even have a blog.

I don't have a platform. I don't have a fan-base of loyal followers ready to protect me from the trolls, real or imagined.

The only place I have written since I gave up my Open University degree is on various internet forums. All parenting; some more specialist than others.

I am that scary thing, that alien thing: I am a bereaved parent. And often it's just easier to use the internet to write about the loss of my beloved child than it is to speak out in the Real World. There are rules there. Rules about how I can behave.

On the internet, though, I get to say 'beloved child'. I can even get away with 'angel' or 'precious daughter' if I want. I can be sad. I can be emotional. I can reminisce and use mawkish language. These things are all allowed, even expected.

But one thing I can't do: I can't complain if someone compares their loss, their sadness, to mine. If I do that, I am no longer a figure to be pitied; I become a troll. A vicious, bitter troll, spitting out bile.

Please don't think I am the sort of person who doesn't care about the troubles of others. I do. I really do. I will listen and commiserate, and I will genuinely give a toss if someone is struggling with one of life's many challenges. But surely I get to draw the line when someone makes a comparison so insulting, so inappropriate, that it makes me think "oh no they didn't..." They did and they do - frequently. When that happens I don't need to be a troll, and no bile needs to be spat or any other body fluids spilled. I just need to raise my head above the parapet and say "No. That is not ok."

Every September I sit on my hands as the Facebook statuses proclaim the grief of mums seeing their children off to university. "It's like they've died!" they say, and below this anguished cry a hundred comments agree and sympathise. "I am sat here in tears. My baby has gone to big school today. It's like bereavement. I don't know what to do with myself" - followed by several of those particularly annoying emoticons with squirting eyes. "Oh hun I know! Xoxoxox." "Stay strong babe, sending hugs x."

You are allowed to be sad when your children grow up. But do you really think you are allowed to compare your carefully crafted wistfulness to the pain of the mother or father who will never see their child again?

These people are feeling something, but they sure as hell are not feeling the grief of a bereaved parent. Nor is the journalist who is mourning the loss of her children's early years. Because the children of those Facebook mums and the children of that journalist are NOT dead. And if your child is not dead you do not know what it is like to grieve for them.

You are allowed to be sad when your children grow up. You can spend time in quiet reflection. You can go up to their bedroom and feel wistful for days past. But do you really think you are allowed to compare your carefully crafted wistfulness to the pain of the mother or father who will never see their child again? You, who will be driving up at the end of term to pick up your son, or popping out at 3.15pm to meet your daughter at the school gates?

My daughter is not at university or sitting in a classroom. She is a small mound of ash in a pretty pink urn sitting in an alcove in my dining room. An alcove specially built by startled builders who asked me, "Do you want to do something with this space, love?" when they were finishing off our kitchen extension. Imagine their surprise when I said "yes!" and rushed off to fetch my daughter's remains, so they could measure her up a second time for a snug wooden box. Because she is actually dead. The sort of dead that means that she is gone forever. Her little life came to an end on 27 April 2006. She was 14 years old.

I know what it's like to look at baby photos and feel that pang. How we miss their chubby cheeks and toddler tantrums; their funny little ways and mispronounced words. The difference for me, and for other bereaved parents, is that we don't have any new memories to add to the old. Those Facebook mums and that journalist will hopefully be able to fill their albums, memory cards or iClouds with hundreds of photos of their children. They can share the blurry, printed snaps at family gatherings and even get to laugh with their grandchildren about how silly daddy was when he was little.

I have some lovely memories of my beautiful girl, but even 10 years later those memories are obscured by a wall of horrific flashbacks. I can't seem to get through them, back to a time when my life was ridiculously perfect. So perfect that I might well have been stupid and smug enough to say something like "it's just like losing a child!"

Instead of a head full of pictures of that beautiful, lithe girl with masses of the thickest hair and the biggest blue eyes you've ever seen, I am trying to keep at bay the horrors of her last months; the memory of waiting till she had died so I could hold her one last time without causing her pain.

I am proud of her dignity and bravery, and awed by the extraordinary way she faced her own death.

I just wish she were still here. I wish that I was not a member of that troublesome, quibbling group who dares to say "No! That is not ok". The club that no one wants to belong to, but strangely so many people want to borrow from.

No. That is not ok.

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