

Just A Thought...A Clean House

By: Traci Cooley
Bereaved Mother, Tampa, Florida

Since my daughter died almost three years ago, my house is not as clean as it once was. I used to clean constantly; even the baseboards were dusted on a regular basis. When Malena died I just did not have the energy to do as much housework, so I did what I could and hoped that no one would notice the baseboards.

I also realize that my surviving children did not care how clean the house was, but they really seemed to enjoy that mommy spent more time with them, reading, talking, snuggling and playing. Before Malena died I felt that a clean house and dinner on the table were what made me a good mom. After she died, I wished for more time to read and play with her. I changed my priorities very quickly, the house will be clean when the children go to college or get married. I will never live in a Martha Stewart or Better Homes and Gardens house.

A few weeks ago I was cleaning the house because guests were coming that night. I cleaned the common areas of the house, only what the guests would see, the rest would be hidden behind a closed door and a hope that no one would notice that I haven't dusted or mopped for a while. As I cleaned, I realized that this house is now a reflection of my life. My life fell apart when Malena died; I have worked to put it back together. The end result is a life that seems "normal" on the outside to the casual observer but if you look real close the hurt and pain are still there. What the world sees is a person who has triumphed over the death of her child, because they only glance. Those who look closely, in the cracks and crevices where the dust settles, see that there is forever a changed person, who will never be complete again until she is reunited with her child.