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The Tenth Anniversary of September 11th: Round Numbers Don't Mean Anything

Every magazine and paper and news show seems to want to define the post-9/11 decade, but for those of

us who lost our spouses, children, parents, and siblings, there is no defining or encapsulating.

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Sep 10, 2011, 11:45 PM EDT

Updated Nov 10, 2011

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We like to mark anniversaries, don't we? We like round numbers, and summaries, and retrospectives. But for many of us who lost someone on September 11th, the 10th anniversary is meaningless. Or perhaps not meaningless, but no more meaningful than any other anniversary we've endured.

Come late August or early September, there's always the sudden drop in weather and clearing of the skies

that ignites a horror so visceral all I want to do is close my eyes and wake up in winter.

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The media blitz during these weeks is always a real treat, too. I find the only solution is to turn the television off and keep my distance from newspapers and magazines. A few weeks ago, not yet firmly ensconced by my media shield, I stumbled onto a story in a magazine about someone who was at the base of the towers on September 11th. When he mentioned the

bodies falling from the top of the building, my breath stopped and my insides dissolved, as if I was hearing about this for the first time. I was gripped by the questions I will never know the answers to: Was Blake, my late husband, one of the jumpers? His body was found in November 2001. His skull was crushed, the bottom halves of his legs were missing. What does that say about he died? How he suffered? What he knew?

Ironic, isn't it, that the same media that purports to care so much about all of us who were directly affected by 9/11 is the one that stirs this horror and dread? There are more egregious offenders, of course: I hear the spicy crab in the [9/11 Remembrance Roll](#) tastes uncannily like somber reflection, and the [9/11 Memorial Wine](#) has a flavor profile that can only be described as subtly sorrowful.

Shameful exploitation aside, every magazine and paper and news show seems to want to define the post-9/11 decade, but for those of us who lost our spouses, children, parents, and siblings, there is no defining or encapsulating. There is only grief, and the

effort to move on, and hope. None of this moves in a straight line.

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To me, the most striking aspect of this anniversary is that this is the year -- ten years later -- that Osama Bin Laden was finally killed and the September 11 Memorial was opened at the World Trade Center site.

In my personal life, change has also been slow yet absolute. Next month, I am getting remarried. To a

wonderful man, a man I am head over heels in love with, a man I know Blake would've loved.

I met Mike eight years after Blake died and looking back, it wasn't until a couple of years prior that I was truly ready to meet someone. I was dating much earlier. Friends, family and acquaintances were quick to set me up once the one year anniversary passed, quietly nudging me forward, promising me I would meet someone again.

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I know why they said it. They wanted hope for me, and for themselves. I wanted it too. I went on those dates, often feeling like I was trudging through mud, or half asleep. Sometimes the dates were a much-needed escape from the constant misery: a temporary lightness, a plunge into feeling alive again, a glimpse into the possibilities of hope. I learned that this is the magical thing about life. You can always have hope. But you need patience, too.

Our culture's need to wrap everything in a bow and deliver meaning -- especially when it comes to grief and loss -- ignores the depths of experiences, the intensity and the fullness, and the fact that certain events have no meaning or if they do, they can't be summed up in a tweet.

Ten years after Blake was killed I am once again wake-up happy. I feel unbelievably lucky to have met my fiancé, and I look forward to our future together, and to seeing his two young sons grow. Life is rich and vast and complicated and beautiful.

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And I would do anything to see Blake again.

Ten years later, nothing has changed, and everything has.

There's your soundbite.

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