

Edgar Garcia – This I Believe

About a year ago, around Christmas, my nephew Daniel died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, **or SIDS**. He was only four months old. I had gotten really close to him in his too-short life. As his primary babysitter, I would watch him while my sister would work or go to class. Daniel was really quiet, rarely ever cried, and would smile and giggle at whatever I would say or do.

The day I was told about his death was a confusing one. Confusing, because I didn't know how to react or what to say. I arrived home to find cars parked everywhere. When I entered the house, people were crying. I looked around bewildered. When finally I found my sister and she told me about Daniel, I just stood there silent with no emotion on my face, just numb. I was just waiting.

I'm not sure what I was waiting for, but it felt weird being the only one in the room not crying. They all kept looking at me anxiously, but I had mixed feelings -- many different emotions coming at me all at once. I just didn't know how to react to the news.

Soon the funeral was held, and a lot of my sister's friends and many relatives attended. It was the saddest thing I had ever experienced. Watching everyone crying, seeing tears running down their faces, hearing the whimpering and sniffing all around was so surreal. I heard those noises come out of everyone. Everyone, but me.

A friend of my sister's noticed.

"You disgust me," she said. "Your nephew has just died, and you don't show any type of emotion that you care. You're pathetic." She walked away. For a moment I stood there -- blank.

Soon I began to feel even worse because I wasn't crying. Was there something wrong with me? What she said made me miserable.

Then, at the end of the day, the funeral home director came up to me and said, "You were the only one who wasn't crying, yet you looked the saddest. I'm sorry for your loss. You must have been real close."

Her understanding words made me realize that everyone expresses emotions, such as sadness, in different ways. Producing tears isn't the only way to show you care; not crying doesn't make me a cold person.

Now I believe that grief can be shown and expressed in many ways. No two people experience it the same way.

And in the end, my silence expressed much more than any one tear could. After all, the tragedy was that Daniel was silent now too, and we all would miss forever his cooing and laughing and what he might have become.