



When
my daughter was
diagnosed with a terminal illness,
I found it almost impossible to live in the
present because I was so worried about her
death. How would it happen? Would I be there?
Would it be peaceful or traumatic? But I began to
realize that the anxiety of living in the future was
robbing me of the precious time I had with my
daughter. She was diagnosed with the illness
at two months of age, and we'd be lucky to
see her 1st birthday. I was forced to
surrender control.

MEMORABLE FOOTSTEPS

BY **ASHLEY JONES**

SURRENDER



PAINFUL ARE GOODBYES SAID SO SOON, BUT MEMORIES SHARED WHILE LIVING WILL NEVER FADE AWAY.





To help fight the anxiety and fear of the future, I found engaging as many senses as possible helped bring me back to the present. I started listening to her breathing, feeling her butter-soft skin, her peach-fuzz head of hair, and smelling her sweet skin with the Burts Bees smell we grew to love. Looking into her deep blue eyes and engaging my senses brought me back into my body, into the present moment with everything in my presence.

Skylar made it to twenty one months of age with the help of a researcher leading her care. But when it was time to say goodbye, the depression hit hard. I then found myself wanting to escape the present and wishing I could go back. Longing for all of those sensory experiences I had with her. I knew it wasn't possible to live in the past, but I found myself wondering why in the world my heart kept beating when hers stopped.

What brought me into the present was my own breath. I survived the worst moments of my life, breath by breath. One heartbeat. One inhale. One exhale. There were times I couldn't even take it a day at a time. Twenty four hours was too much. But I knew I still had life in my body, and I surrendered to the process of healing. ■■

Ashley Jones is the founder and executive director of Love Not Lost. A nonprofit 501c3 organization she created during her healing process to help others in grief to heal.

