

# Losing my sister encouraged me to write a book for children dealing with grief.

*A ground breaking book for children to help them deal with the death of a parent, relative or friend has been welcomed by bereavement charities and schools.*

READING, UNITED KINGDOM, February 23, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A ground breaking book for children to help them deal with the death of a parent, relative or friend has been welcomed by leading bereavement charities, schools and organisations.

Mel Maxwell is 45, and married for the second time with two sons (19 and 17) and a stepson (17). She is a director of the company Sandbag who work with major recording artists to provide merchandising, marketing and ticketing services.

When her beloved sister Julie Courage died of ovarian cancer in August 2011, the lives of Mel and all her family were to



Mel Maxwell with The Coat I Wear

change forever. Julie was ill for 18 months and had an aggressive form of cancer.

Mel particularly wanted to support Julie's two children who were very young when they lost their mother. That led Mel to research books regarding grieving for children across the age ranges and found that while there are some really great books out there it is a subject that is not being spoken about as much as it should be, particularly for younger children. She then set about writing a book for children and The Coat I Wear was born.

Mel said that the drive to write the book was threefold. "I've spent three years dealing with grief since my sister died of cancer and it's been a very tough time to get through. I'd already dealt with death before but how on earth do children who don't have that life experience deal with death?

"That focused my thoughts to my niece, nephew and how they were getting through and what I could do to help them. I didn't physically live close by to see them regularly but was around them throughout Julie's illness. After my sister's death I didn't feel best placed to help with their deeper grief while struggling myself (both for them or my own kids) and not knowing what was ok to say to a child. Death is a tough topic to broach and so I think we tend to protect kids rather than explain it, simply because we don't know how."

Mel has never written a book before and didn't plan to write one but felt compelled to following her sister's death.

"It took about a year to write on and off. I wanted to write something that started a conversation between an adult and a child which could be a tool, in words the child would understand, or grow to understand over time, and not scare them in any way but also not fluff over it. I researched it and couldn't find a book out there like this about grief. Teacher friends of mine said the same and that they needed more tools to help start and guide conversations with children going through something they may simply not understand at all. The book has also been cathartic for me and I hope it can help adults too. The response so far has been very positive."

It is rare to find a book that truly captures how a young person feels following the death of someone special. This story combined with the illustrations does just that. Mel's metaphor of a coat perfectly illustrates the grieving process in a way that will appeal to a bereaved child, helping to normalise their grief. It is already on our essential reading list.

Dr Shelley Gilbert, MBE. Founder and CEO Grief Encounter, working with bereaved children.

What a beautiful and vulnerable story. In its simplicity and with the use of metaphor I think that it allows the reader to sit alongside loss. It is still sad, yet there is the hope that memories can become less painful.

Julie Reilly, senior psychotherapist, (Msc,Bsc,(Hons).PG Dip. Cert. M.B.A.C.P. (Reg) AFT. UKCP.)

Over the years in my clinic, working with people suffering all types of loss, I have never seen a book so touching and close to the heart, highly recommended.

Chris Boardman, Reg Acupuncturist, The Rosedale Clinic

Mel is a great believer in having honest conversations with children to help them understand changes that happen in life every day.

She added: "The more people I showed this to, the more positive feedback I was getting and I would like to write about other issues that really do affect children but are often not openly aired such as divorce and eating disorders. I think it is so important to write about what you know about when tackling very sensitive and emotional topics such as these and I really hope The Coat I Wear helps children cope with loss and starts conversations between them and the adults in their lives."

ENDS

For more information, review copies and photography please contact [mel@thecoatiwear.com](mailto:mel@thecoatiwear.com) or visit the site [www.thecoatiwear.com](http://www.thecoatiwear.com)

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