

A TRAGIC EVENT propelled me to write about loss this month.

Over this year I've accompanied many clients who have had to experience loss of some description. Loss of identity, loss of their jobs, loss of financial independence, some have lost their marriages, and some have suffered the unimaginable pain of the death of a close relative or friend.

We have all lost our way of life as we knew it and have had to adapt to so many different and ever-changing rules. Lots of families have fallen out with each other through the strain of being forced into lockdown together. Some families have found it to be a time of great healing, reconnecting and strengthening of family bonds.

What happened seven weeks ago to my best friend was a loss of unimaginable proportions. It is slightly surreal. It's true and it has happened, but it hasn't happened to me and therefore I've been unable to even begin to imagine the pain she is going through as I stand by helplessly witnessing her ricocheting through a long dark tunnel of grief, despair and disbelief.

The tragic event was not a death through COVID-19 or the death of an elderly relative. It was a terrible and devastating accident which took the life of her beautiful 17-year-old daughter Millie, weeks before her 18th birthday.

The devastation cannot be accurately described. I have tussled with writing this in a sensitive way and I have talked to my friend about what the message is here. I've no wish to be a grief hijacker or take up your time talking about my own experiences when her and so many of you are coping with your own issues. But for me what I've taken from it so far has been a massive leveler. A message as bright and blinding as a sunrise.

Time with each other is precious and will at some point end. It may end sooner than you think. It may end suddenly and without warning. That is what makes it so precious. We are all guilty of taking our loved ones for granted sometimes.

As I watched my friend and her family and friends try to come to terms with the devastating loss of a beloved sparkly, fun-filled teenager with her life ahead of her, I saw nothing but love. Millie was loved every day of her life.

During the lockdown my friend shared her appreciation for the precious time she had with her family.

She said: "I know COVID and lockdown has been harsh for so many people especially those who have lost loved ones. For us, however, it was a gift to have so much family time. Cooking together, laughing together,

Every moment with a loved one is **A PRECIOUS GIFT**

Let's Talk's west Norfolk-based psychotherapist and counsellor

Amanda Jayne talks poignantly about love and loss after her best friend suffered her own loss of unimaginable proportions.



binge-watching Netflix together, dog walking, getting back in touch with nature and having life generally slow down enough to fully appreciate what we had as a family.

"I am thankful beyond belief we had this special time as a family. A gift which has made our loss of Mills that bit easier to cope with. I hope other families had some positives from lockdown. I just wish for us that it had lasted a big longer and things would have been different but I will always treasure the time we did have."

She also said: "Hold them tight and hug them every day".

Because every moment with them is a precious gift. ■

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sophie-greenway



Ask Amanda Jayne

I would love to hear from you and will reply to letters which, if we print them, will remain anonymous. For information on Walking Talking Therapy, email me at harleysttherapy@gmail.com or ring me on 07760 669246. harleystpsychotherapy.com

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