

Lessons Learned: A Parent's Perspective

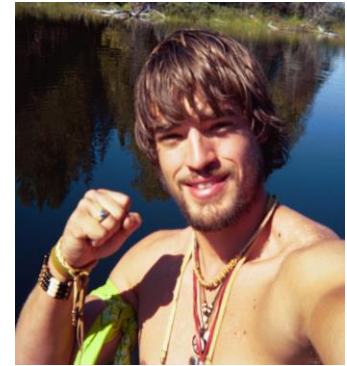
Written By: Maureen Trask, May 2012



Maureen's son, [Daniel Robert Trask](#) was missing since Nov. 3rd, 2011. After 3.5 years of searching, her journey of uncertainty [Ambiguous Loss](#), was over.

She wrote the following to share her lessons learned, after attending a workshop for families with missing loved ones in April 2012.

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Maintain balance in your life.

- This is easier said than done, but do lean on those around you; do stay connected; do share your feelings with your partner; do nurture your relationships; stay healthy (reduce stress, eat well, get sleep), and do something nice just for you.

Involve others.

- We are not alone. Start with the investigation; establish a relationship with the investigator assigned. Understanding family members need to take the initiative to ask for the case file number; a copy of the police report; status of the investigation, and we may need to do this on a regular basis. Try to connect with other families who have a missing person. Seek out community support groups for the missing or start one if none exist.

Someone somewhere knows something.

- Be persistent, leave no stone unturned, as every contact leaves a trace. Working with the media can be a helpful tool in our search, check what resources may be available to you through your supports. Working with the Police is also key, maintain positive relations.

Stay focused on the facts; trust your gut instincts.

- You are the best source of your approach and search plans. Lots of well-intentioned people will want to direct you, but you need to filter this by deciding what is best for your loved one and you. If it becomes political, go back to the facts.

Increase awareness of your missing loved one.

- Utilize friends and others who are willing to help. Use flyers, posters, vigils, news updates, BBQs, events - continually keeping your message out there, special dates are important. Social media can be helpful, but be cautious.

Never give up Hope, keep the Faith, stay Positive.

- Hope carries us through the emotional rollercoaster ride we are on to find our missing loved ones. It's okay to have down time, what I call my mini meltdowns.

Give yourself the right to grieve.

- I've personally learned that grieving a missing loved one is not the same as grieving the death of a loved one. We don't know what we are grieving and are on a never-ending emotional rollercoaster ride. Learn more by seeking out information.