

## Rebecca Mutz Part One Transcript

Thanks for tuning in to the Newborn Promise Podcast, a production of Graham Blanchard Inc. You are listening to an interview with Rebecca Mutz on dealing infant loss and grief. For today's show notes, transcript, and more information about Your Newborn Promise Project, please visit [GrahamBlanchard.com](http://GrahamBlanchard.com)

Hello, I am Audra Haney and today's topic is tender and yet very hard. Rebecca Mutz and her husband Jake were so excited to meet their daughter, Molly, after a healthy and happy pregnancy. However, on the day she was born, Molly was life-flighted to the nearest Children's hospital where doctor's found an inoperable brain aneurysm. After searching high and low for additional opinions and medical help, Rebecca and Jake were only left with the option to enjoy Molly for one week and then remove her from life-support. We have Rebecca's full testimony of walking through the emotions of that decision and saying goodbye to Molly in Part 2 of this interview, which will air next week. It is so powerful so please join us again for that.

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For today, we've kept our discussion a little more broad and talk about the weeks and months that followed. We also asked Rebecca to really hone in and give us more applicable and immediately practical advice for those mourning the loss of an infant and advice for those supporting loved ones who are grieving.

Audra: Rebecca, you had just walked through this unimaginable and painful experience of losing Molly. Just talk to me about the weeks and months that followed. What were some things that helped you grieve her loss?

Rebecca: In those, I would say those days and weeks after we came home from the hospital, really one of the things that I enjoyed the most was all of the cards I got in the mail, all the letters, all the heart-felt that words people sent us. We got so many cards, some from people we didn't even know. And, we got thoughtful, sweet little gifts and things with her name on them. We just got so many, so many sweet things from people who cared and were just grieving with us. You know, I would take any letters we got and I'd go up to (you know, we came home from the hospital with a whole nursery that was setup. We had sheets. We had diapers. We had wipes, clothes. We had all this stuff.) I would sit in her room and that is where I would read all the letters that we got. I would read book. I would read other people's stories and I just ate up other people's experiences and I connected with lots of other bloggers, lots of other women who had gone through losses similar to mine and just made lots of connections that way. And, I think that's what kind of kept me going, just connecting with other believers who had walked through similar loss and also hearing people's kind words too.

Audra: You know, men and women, they process things so differently. How did you and Jake really even grieve differently and what did that look like in marriage?

Rebecca: We know that men and women are different but it is so interesting to go through different life experiences and see how different you are. You know, grief is no different. We had a counselor tell us that in grief, you guys are going to grieve, you are going to grieve together, you are going to grieve--Rebecca is going to grieve a different way and Jacob is going to grieve a different way and you guys will grieve a different way together. So we

were three different entities of grief, essentially, which was really, really helpful because it gave us permission to grieve separately and then to grieve together in different ways.

So, you know, I think I grieved by connecting with people online who had gone through what we had gone through. You know, talking to people on the phone, talking to my mom, talking to my friends, my sisters, my family and people like that. Jacob grieved, he grieved differently. He was really angry that he could not find a way to fix her. He said this in an interview before that he felt like he had failed her because he didn't fix her. So, he really had a hard time. Even though we had come to a peace about the decision, taking her off of life-support, he just still felt unresolved like he could have done more and, so he was dealing with some of that in those days after she died. But then together, I think one thing we tried to do together is that we tried to go on walks. Molly was born in June so it was gorgeous outside, it was summer, so we would try to go on a walk every night down the road and just you talk for 5 minutes and I'll talk for 5 minutes and just 'How are you doing?' We would go on drives together. We would go up to the mountains. We tried to make sure that we were making time with each other to connect and not just grieving separately because I think that is how you end up drifting apart is that you are not grieving together. So, it was definitely difficult to have those 3 ways of grieving, but then at the same time it was helpful to come back together and talk about how you are doing. And, we still have to do that, even now. It has been almost 9 years but we still grieve Molly in different ways. It will pop up randomly. But yeah, our marriage, it is definitely far from perfect but when you walk through something like that, it really does draw you closer, in a way that you just can't fathom otherwise.

Audra: You mentioned cards and all of this loving support that you received, but talk to me more about the importance of a faith community in a time like this.

Rebecca: Yeah, you know, I think the importance of having a community around you is just so, you just can't replace it with anything else. We had friends at the time, we were in a small group when Molly was born, and so we were able to walk through our grief with that small group which was really helpful. No one in that group had gone through something like we had, so I'm sure they were completely clueless and felt ill-equipped to walk us through that but it was neat to still have those friendships and we stayed close to all those people in those weeks and months after. It was really, really helpful to have those people to come back to and share how Jacob and I were handling things differently. We actually went through a grief workshop deal through the hospital. They offered this bereavement program but it did not have the hope of Christ woven through it, obviously because it is a hospital. And, so it was neat because we went through the bereavement program at children's. After that, Jacob and I looked at each other several times thinking, 'Why don't we have this at our church. We need to be having this at our church.' Then, we went to our church and found out that there was a grief workshop but it was very minimal. It was very small. We just jumped in and we attended and also led at the same time, which was really healing to do. It was very therapeutic to have something to do with our grief instead of just feeling sad. It was good to do through our pain. So we ended up becoming, not leaders in our grief workshop at church, but we ended up helping out in a lot of ways through the grief workshop which was neat, because then we got to meet even more people who were walking through infant loss and different things like that. It was so important to have our church around us at that time. We go to a very big church, so it was as intimate feeling as you would have if you were going to a small church, but our church still surrounded us and

it was really neat to jump into the grief workshop, because I think we were able to really do something with our pain.

Audra: I know it's true on small things, and even big things in life like this--but there is this constant conflict that suffering does bring us closer to God. Would you say that's been true for you guys on this journey?

Rebecca: Absolutely. I think the pain and suffering just brought us closer to the Lord. I feel like that time period in my life with Molly, that very first year especially, I felt so close to the Lord, so close to Him. I depended on him far more than I had in recent years because I was so desperate. It was so tangible what we were going through that I just so desperately needed Him. And, I desperately need Jesus every day now with the daily mundane of kids and you know, messes and life. However, walking through grief, it is just so different than your normal everyday tasks. But, I felt so drawn to cling to Him because I just couldn't do it without Him. There is no way I could have done it without the Lord.

Audra: And, with drawing closer to God during this season of grief, what were some of the biggest spiritual lessons that you and Jake learned?

Rebecca: You know, I feel like some of the biggest lessons about grief is just how you do it as a couple, frankly, which I know I've already talked about. I think how you handle grief. Everyone is going to handle grief differently. However, we have seen lots of people deal with grief in the years that we've done the grief workshop at our church and we've seen people just not deal with it, just stuff it and you know, there is no perfect way to walk through death. However, there are some ways that are not healthy. So we have really seen the benefit of walking through grief in a healthy way and talking about it and dealing with it rather than stuffing it or hiding it or not talking about it. And, that's been a huge life lesson, you know, working through grief as a couple, because if you don't talk about it together you are really driven apart. And, keeping God as number one has been another big lesson because He is in the midst of it all and He knows everything. So, to keep him front and center was truly helpful because you just don't know what you are doing so, if you can keep going back to the Lord and asking Him for help and asking Him for wisdom and guidance it really is, it is just a big lesson.

Audra: And Rebecca, you decided to tell Molly's story in a book called "A Symphony In the Dark: Hearing God's Voice in Seasons of Grief." Tell me about that decision and what the process looked like, and how writing that even helped you heal.

Rebecca: You know, we decided to tell Molly's story in a book and it was really, really therapeutic. My parents have written lots of books so they already have the publishing side and all those details already worked out because they have done so many books, so that piece wasn't a big, 'Well, who is going to publish our book? Or who is going to help us whatever?' That part had already been done so we were able to write it and have it printed within a year. I had a copy in my hand before her first birthday, which was so so fast because I don't think we started writing it until she was born in June. And, I don't think we started writing it before that fall or winter. So, to have it really done in 6-9 months is really pretty quick. But, writing that book was so therapeutic because I think it helped me especially really process through my grief and it was also neat because I was able to get it all written down, like a timeline for what happened, and when it happened, and what it looked like. And, it was neat to see things from my parents' perspective and not just our

perspective. So, she wrote it with me, my mom did and she was able to write pieces from her perspective as the parent and then there is a piece from me as the mom. It was really neat to write it with my mom because we were able to share that experience together and we were able to get it on paper. Now, I have like this complete timeline and I'm not thinking, 'wait, now what day did that happen?' It's already written down and I can go back and look at it. My kids can read it one day. How cool is that? They can read her story and not that we would not have already told them about it, because our kids do know about Molly, but it will just be neat for them to be able to read the whole thing and just for them to know because they weren't there.

Audra: And, Rebecca, through the book and through your willingness to share so openly and honestly about your grief, and your journey, how have you seen God use Molly's brief but very big life?

Rebecca: I've been able to see God use her life through the book of course. I flew to Texas, late 2010 or 2011 and I spoke for this large group of people who every year to this walk to remember for people who have lost babies. They go on this short little walk and they remember their babies and they release balloons. They asked me to come be their speaker, which I was just so honored by. So, I was able to speak for that group and I've been able to share it with several mom groups--called MOPS--and you know, being able to connect. My family, because my family obviously walked through this with us, they will run across someone who is going through something different or similar and they will share our email address, so they'll share our phone number with our permission of course and then we are connected with this other couple who has walk through something difficult. We've met so many people that we wouldn't have otherwise gotten to meet and God has really used her story with lots of other people. It has also been neat to see God use it in our kids' lives. We tell our kids about Molly. They know about her and she is buried in a cemetery, like less than 10 minutes from where we live right now, which was not always the case when we had Molly. It was more like a 20 minute drive, but now we live pretty close by which was not on purpose. It just kind of worked out that way. Our kids will blow her kisses when we drive by her cemetery and we will go visit her on her birthday and we will sing happy birthday to her and play at her "doorway" is what we call it, not her gravestone. We call it her "doorway", like her "doorway" to heaven. And, we take our kids there and talk to our kids about death and what happens when we die. We get to talk to them about Jesus and about faith and all that. It has been neat and I know lots of parents don't talk to their kids about death. Our kids are 6, 6, 4 and 2. So, that may seem like a really young age to talk to your kids about death, but you know, our kids know about it and they know that people die and that is just a fact of life and we are not always going to be around and it is neat to see how God has allowed us to use her story, not only to use her to minister to other people but also to our kids and to tell our kids about it and teach our kids about death and about life and heaven and all of that.

Audra: And how has walking through Molly's death and this beautiful restoration of seeing God use it, down the road, how has that changed your relationship with God?

Rebecca: I would say my relationship with the Lord looks differently, I just feel. I don't feel like I have to go searching for God, I just know He is there. He is there, He is always there and He is an ever-present help in times of trouble, the verse in the Bible. I know that He is there anytime I need Him, so I think it really deepened my relationship with Him during her life and death. You know, the first few years following her death were really special, but I

think now that it has been a few years, I think my relationship with the Lord is just so constant. I know He is there, I know He is able to help me. I know I can call on Him. I know that He has a reason for why we go through things.

When I go through really difficult times in my marriage, or my kids, or a friend, I know that even though this is difficult, I know that God has a plan and a purpose and we may not see it this side of Heaven. You know, we may not see why God does what he does until we get to Heaven with Him. And, I also know that we live in a fallen world. We don't live in a perfect world and we are imperfect people that relate to other imperfect people. So, things are going to happen and relationships are going to fail and fall apart, but I know that God is there and God is God and I am not. He knows far better than I do, but I can trust Him that He knows what He is doing and there is a plan that He has for us. One day we will see it. Maybe we will see it here when we are still walking around earth, but maybe we won't.

I've got to trust that He knows what He is doing and if He wanted me to know, He would tell me. I think God reveals things to us that He wants us to know all the time. God in His wisdoms knows what we can handle and what we can't handle I'm just glad He knows better than me.

Audra: Rebecca, you and Jake have gone on to have 5 beautiful children--one of which is just a couple of months old now. But tell me, how has walking through the grief of Molly and her life and testimony, how has that changed her experience with motherhood.

Rebecca: You know, I am so grateful that we had Molly first, that we walked through grief before having any other kids. I think she, experiencing her life and death paved the way for me to have a different perspective and view on parenting. Now, I still yell at my children. I still get upset with them and I still mess it up all the time. I am far from perfect and I'll never be, but I do think it has given me a perspective on parenting and mothering that you just don't have unless you have walked through the death of a child or a miscarriage, even. If you've walked through a miscarriage, you probably still hold life so differently after that because you know it is so precious and you just know it is not guaranteed. So, I go, and I don't know if other moms do this who have not lost children, but I love to go and kiss my kids every night before bed before I go to bed, when they are asleep. Like, I will go check on them after they are in bed and asleep and I'll kiss their sweet faces and I look at them and I just can not believe that God has given me 5 kids, that He has given me this honor of being a mom to these 5 kids. He is so gracious and so kind to give me more kids. And, So, I think it definitely changes my perspective on parenting. I still mess up, and I do it wrong and I wish that they would leave me alone so I can have some time to myself. I still wish those things. I remember when Molly was alive, I remember sitting in the hospital thinking, I will be such a better mom because of this. In some ways, yes. And, in other ways, no. I still mess up. I still have to ask my kids to forgive me for getting upset with them about something silly and I still have to tell them sorry for various different things. So, it has sweetened my mothering experience and made it different.

Audra: Rebecca, what would you say to those listeners who are watching a friend or a family member walk through the death of a child? What practical encouragement or advice would you have for them?

Rebecca: Some advice I have for friends who are watching your own family go through infant loss or you are watching a friend go through infant loss, I would just say, don't walk

away from them. Don't leave them hanging. You know, everyone is going to go through grief differently. I would say that, they may tell you to give them more space, and if they do then give them that space, respect peoples' wishes. But, I would say definitely keep loving them. Keep asking how they are doing. Say their child's name even. That is one thing that we learned early on in grief. We loved it when people say her name. Any time now that someone brings her up, you said it a minute ago that you are impressed that I had time for a phone call. I will tell you that, I will do whatever I can, anytime anyone asks me about Molly, I will always share it. I know that we will not always be sharing her story, because eventually we are going to keep growing and life is going to go, pass and other things are going to happen and her story won't be as relevant as it is now. I know that any time I get to share her story is just such a gift. I would definitely say to families, say that child's name.

One thing I would definitely say to family and friends who are watching others go through something like this, just sit with them, cry with them. Just listen. I had a friend come over once and she helped me look through photos and pick photos for a little photo album. You know, I couldn't have done that by myself because it was too hard to know which ones do I pick? It seemed like a silly task, like which pictures do I put in? But, she sat and walked through that with me which was really sweet and I just had people sit with me. Just coming and sitting with me was just really all you need sometimes is just someone to just be there with you and just not say something.

And, you didn't ask this, but I'll go ahead and say is, the one thing I would recommend that people not say is don't fix it, don't fix their pain because you can't fix it, you can't fix the fact that their baby is gone. No one can do that. Only Jesus can fix our pain. So, don't try to fix it by offering that they'll get pregnant again, that they'll have another baby, or that it will work out, or it's going to be fine because you know what, it is not going to be fine. They are forever changed now. They are forever different. They will never be the same. I look back at pictures of myself before Molly was born and I just see a totally different person. I see a completely different person and I'm glad I'm not that person anymore. But, I am different. I am changed. So, don't fix it. I had a lot of people tell me that God would give me more babies and He did. But, I didn't know that at the time. You just don't know what God will do. You just don't. I would caution people against giving that kind of advice. 'Oh, you'll have more.' Because you just don't know. And then, I just think, coming around people in their grief. One thing too that people would ask is, they would ask me what they could do to help. When you are in grief, you don't really know what you need. So, really what you need people to do is say, "Hey, I want you bring you a dinner. When can I do that?" or "Hey, I really just want to come sit with you. When can I do that? or "Hey, can we go on a walk? When would that work for you?" And offer specific things that you want to help with that person, rather than asking them to tell you what to do, because they don't know what they need. When you are in grief, you have no clue.

Audra: Rebecca, What advice or encouragement would you have for those who are personally walking through the death of a child?

Rebecca: I feel like it is so important to cling to the Lord even when there are so many unknowns. Even when you have just lost a baby and you are like, 'What am I going to do tomorrow?' One really important that my mom told me in the days after Molly died, there is a great quote from Elizabeth Elliot who lost three of her husbands in tragic ways, but the quote from Elizabeth Elliot is to 'Just do the next thing.' So, my mom was like, if you need to do the laundry, just do the laundry. Don't worry about what is going to happen in two hours

after that. Just do the next thing. If you need to eat, go eat. If you need to take a nap, go take a nap. If you need to do the laundry, do the laundry. So, it was just do the next thing, which was really helpful to not feel overwhelmed by this big, what do I do next? Or how do I handle the next few months of this? It can feel so insurmountable to have this big task in front of you, of I've got to get through grief and how am I going to get through it and the days feels so dark.

And the waves come so fast. That is one of the things that Jacob and I always called it was these waves of grief, because they would come on you like a wave, like you don't know it is coming and all of the sudden you are overcome with sadness and tears and you are falling apart. It is fine, fall apart. In those moments, feel it and allow that wave to wash over you. Feel the pain acutely. Feel that pain and let it enter your soul. If you fight it, it is just going to come back sooner. It has got to come through because we have got to walk through these painful moments. Those moments they are hard, but they are so good if we let them come through because we are able to work through our feelings. We are able to think through how this made me feel and how I am processing this and what grief is doing to me right now. If you are just walking through a loss, I would say, to just, if you feel grief come upon you, let it come upon you. Sit down where you are and let it wash over you. Cry if you need to cry. Shut the door and yell if you need to yell. Journal. Write. Call a friend. Whatever. I think it is just so important to work through grief instead of fighting it. If you are pregnant and have a diagnosis that your baby is not going to make it or you aren't sure of the pregnancy, you've had other losses before and you are pregnant again, there are so many unknowns when you are pregnant, there is no guarantee that you are going to have these baby.

My advice is to just enjoy each day that you are pregnant. Enjoy each moment with that baby and ask the Lord to help you with that fear and worry. I had to do this with each, each one of my pregnancies after Molly. Again, my first pregnancy with her was so sweet. It was so innocent and just wonderful. All my pregnancies after have been wrought with fear and worry and what-if and oh-no. I have learned to let those moments of fear wash over me the same as grief and let it come over me. Feel the fear. Ask the Lord to help me give it to him and trust Him that He knows what He is doing and if we have to go through loss again, that He'll be right there with us, just like He was with Molly. You know, it's so unknown to be pregnant and be wondering if you are going to have this baby or not. I was just in that position like 2 months ago, wondering if I was going to give birth to a live baby or not. You just don't know. Anything can change in a moment. It is so helpful to seek the Lord in that and it is another opportunity to trust Him.

Audra: And, I can't think of a better way to close this podcast other than having you pray. Pray for those who are walking through what you walked through 9 years ago. Would you mind, just praying for those families who are experiencing the loss of a child and just lift them up to the Father today.

Rebecca: Lord, I thank you so much for the opportunity to get to share Molly's story again. Thank you so much for the gift of being able to talk about my sweet girl and talk about her life and talk about the way that you showed up in so many cool ways. God, I just pray that her story meets some hearts right now who are walking through grief. I know there are so many women and men out there who are walking through the grief of losing a baby. Lord, I want to lift them up right now and ask that you would be so near. That you would draw near to their hurting hearts, to their swirling minds that have so many questions, regrets, or

wishes for more time. Lord, I know that you are with them. I ask that you would be near and that you would show up in really, really neat ways. That you would show yourself to them and show up in sweet ways so that they know you are there and you are present with them. You are sovereign, even when their world is falling apart and that they have so many questions and what-ifs. I pray that they would be able to take their questions, take their fears, worries, take their anger and pain and be able to offer it to you as a sacrifice and give to you each day, each moment that they are overcome with all these feelings, and not to stuff their feelings, but they would offer those things to you Lord and they would feel safe to offer their pain, anger, sadness to you, knowing that you can handle their pain and anger and their hard moments and their sad moments and their grief and their wishes for more time with their child. I just know that you are there, just as you were there for me when Molly died, I know that you are there for these people, these hurting hearts. I wish that I could just hug each one of them, because I would. I would come to them in a heartbeat. I know that I can't, but you can. You can wrap your arms around these hurting souls and just bring them the promises that you have for them, that you are with them, that their baby is with you. Their baby is whole and made new and is looking at your face and being held by the God of the universe and what a cool picture that is Lord. You have Molly, she is sitting in your lap and you are telling her story and she is with you in this moment. And, each of these babies that have gone on ahead of us Lord, it is so heartbreaking to think about them leaving our sides and not being with our families, but they get to be in glory. They get to be with you. What a treasure, what a treat Lord and I can not wait to be with you too Lord.

And, I know that these precious moms and dads that are so, so aching to be with their child, I know that they long to be with you as well and they long to be with their child again. I pray that you would be with them in these moments, you would be ever-present in times of trouble, times of need. You would be with them, just so obvious in their lives and they would be able to see you and cling to you for what they need Lord. I thank you for each of these precious, precious people that they desire to lean on you in these dark times. We thank you that you have a plan and purpose, you waste nothing, there is no waste in your economy...you have a plan for each of our lives and babies lives and I thank you for that one day it will all be made clear. One day we will see your plan and purpose for us. We love you. We thank you for this pain, even though that no one would ever ask for this pain, Lord we do thank you for it. It does give us an opportunity to draw ourselves closer to you and to trust you with so much unknown. We thank you for this pain, even though that can be so hard to say. We thank you for it and we just ask that you'd just help us. In Jesus name, Amen.

Audra: We want to thank Rebecca for sharing in such a wise, transparent, and God-honoring way. Please join us again next week to learn more about Molly's life and more about her story. It is an episode that is certainly rich and you don't want to miss it. We pray that the God of all comfort will be near you in your grief. Remember, you can get today's show notes, transcript, and more information about Your Newborn Promise Project at [Graham Blanchard.com](http://GrahamBlanchard.com)