

Christmas and Putting the Children First

A True Story

Janey's three children brought her a gift and excitedly watched as she unwrapped it on Christmas morning. Her children knew how much she loved them and gave her a framed collage of pictures of themselves. In each picture, the children were happily celebrating things and playing. After Janey unwrapped it, she briefly glanced at the pictures, then placed it behind the couch, noting to her children that she did not want it to get broken amid all the other excitement. She had immediately recognized her children and their joy in the pictures, but she did not recognize any of the events. She did not recognize the birthday cake, the pile of leaves, or the place the children were sledding. She instantly felt great sorrow at having missed so many joyous occasions with her children.

Janey went to view the picture again that night after the children had gone to bed. The children's father was not in any of the pictures. He was the photographer, and was sharing a wonderful time with the kids. After a good, long cry, Janey realized that the children, who were almost always happy while with her, could also be happy while with their dad. She found a prominent place to hang the photographs in her home -- because it was the children's home and she sometimes needed the reminder that she could help the children be happy, and their father could too.