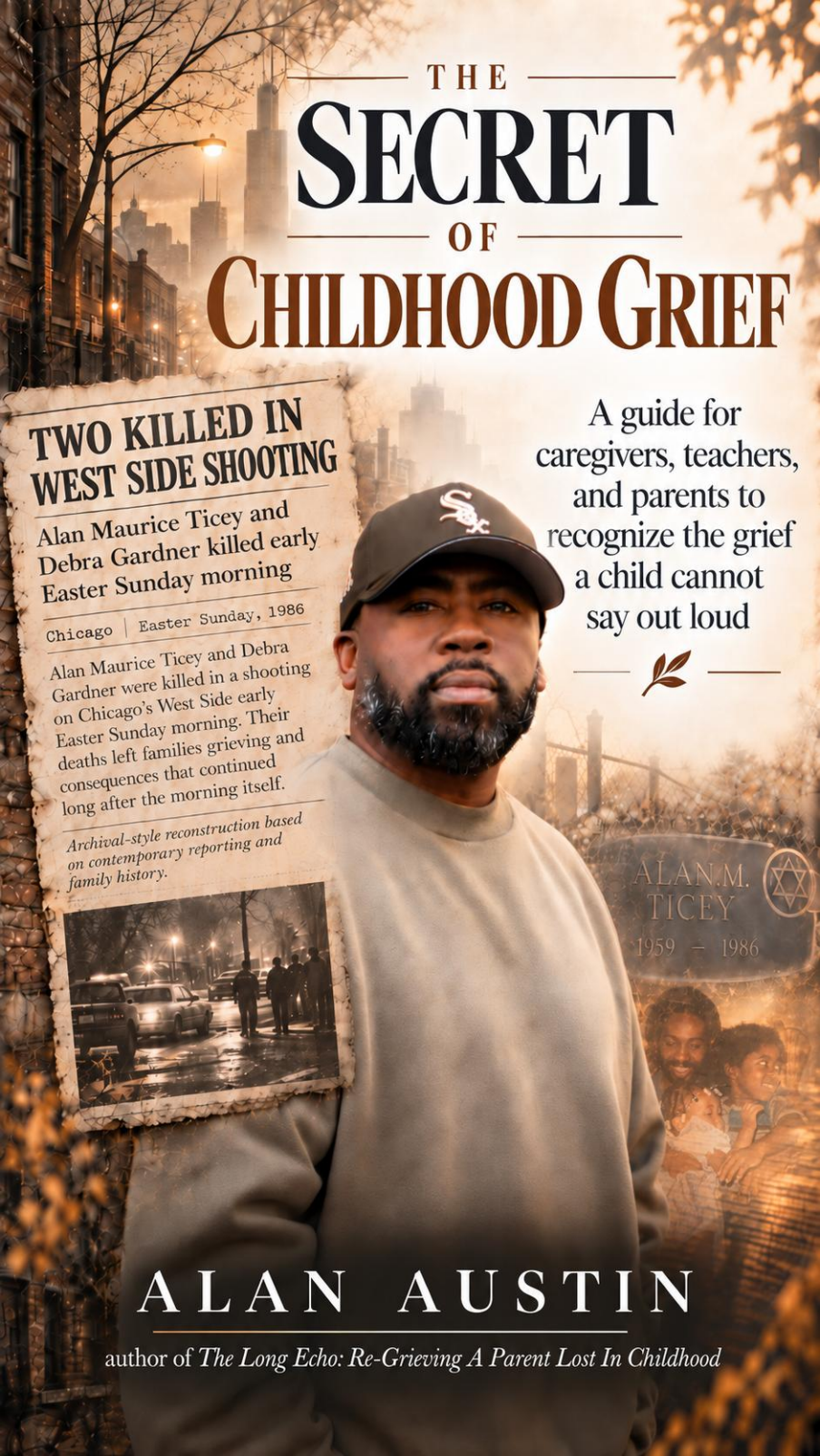
THE SECRET OF CHILDHOOD GRIEF



A guide for caregivers, teachers, and parents to recognize the grief a child cannot say out loud

ALAN AUSTIN

author of *The Long Echo: Re-Grieving A Parent Lost In Childhood*

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

THE TRUTH A CHILD CAN BEAR

A child needs the fact before they can receive the comfort.

This sample chapter is from The Secret of Childhood Grief, a practical guide for caregivers, parents, teachers, and trusted adults supporting a child after loss.

IN THIS SAMPLE

- Why concrete language matters when explaining death to a child
- How common euphemisms can create confusion
- How faith and factual truth can exist in the same conversation

THE TRUTH A CHILD CAN BEAR

A child needs the fact before they can receive the comfort.

SCENE

I was five when my mother told me my father had died and was never coming back. She did not give me a speech. She gave me something plain enough for a child to hold. When I asked if he was in heaven, if he was with God, she told me yes.

The words did not become fully real to me that night. They would not become fully real to me for years. What my mother gave me was not full comprehension. It was a foundation. Language I could grow into. Something true to hold onto in the years ahead when the weight of it finally arrived.

MECHANISM

Young children can hear comforting language more literally than adults intend. 'Gone away' can sound temporary. 'Gone to sleep' can leave a child waiting for the person to wake up. 'In a better place' can offer comfort without answering the child's most basic question: are they coming back?

Tell the truth in words the child can actually hold. The person died. Their body stopped working. They are not coming back. Then give the child the spiritual meaning your family believes.

WORDS THAT CAN CONFUSE

'Gone to sleep'

'Gone to sleep' can leave a child waiting for the person to wake up.

'Gone away'

'Gone away' can sound temporary.

'In a better place'

'In a better place' can offer comfort without answering the child's most basic question: are they coming back?

FAITH AND FACT

In a Christian home, honesty and faith do not have to compete. You can say: Your father died. That means his body cannot come back. I believe he is with God. You can still love him, remember him, and ask me anything about him.

God can hold the comfort. The child still needs the concrete truth.



God can hold the comfort. The child still needs the concrete truth.

CONTINUE READING

CHILDREN DO NOT ALWAYS GRIEVE OUT LOUD.

The full ebook helps adults recognize what childhood grief may look like when a child cannot explain it clearly, and respond with greater understanding, truth, and practical support.

INSIDE THE COMPLETE GUIDE

- The child who seems fine
- When grief looks like anger
- When grief looks like fear
- When the question comes back
- Milestones and re-grieving
- When the loss was violent
- The surviving parent is grieving too

GET THE COMPLETE EBOOK

THE-LONG-ECHO.COM

hello@the-long-echo.com