



Video Story Transcript

Loss and Acceptance

By: Storyteller Karin Amano

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Link to YouTube Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyUpAa0woZE>

Note: The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

Hi, my name is Karin Amano. Well, I had been a very practical Asian woman who plans out every aspect of her life, such as going to America by age of 24, and being a professional actor by age 31, finding a partner from Match.com from age 37. And getting married and pregnant with a baby girl by the age of 40, and keep my full-time job, saving money and purchasing a house by age of 43.

So, in order to find my Mr. Right, uh, I had to write down 12 criteria that I was looking for my future partner. And after being on Match.com for three years, I finally found my partner who met all my requirements in my list. He was a college professor so we exchanged, uh, term paper-like emails for two weeks and two-hour telephone interview. And, finally, we decided to meet at the fancy Japanese restaurant. And we immediately fell in love with each other and we decided to marry. Yes.

Well, actually, eh, it took, you know... we, uh, dated for a year and then move in together the next year. And the test period has done, so 40 years old, we had a wedding. Ah, we did, uh, the Japanese traditional style wedding wearing kimonos and also a Jewish style wedding under chuppah, uh, wedding canopy.

And now, so we get married at age 40, and so I plan that, okay, we're gonna have a baby, okay. In 10 months, I'll give, uh, birth to a baby girl and then two months later, I will go back to work. Yes. And there right after

our, uh, traditional Jewish wedding, I got pregnant, yes. And, yes, 20 week, weekth of pregnancy, I found that, uh, the baby was not a girl, so I was disappointed because it was not my plan. But anyway w... my husband and I decided to name the baby Kentaro, uh, which means the first healthy boy, in Japanese. And, uh, 28 week of my pregnancy, I was ready to go to, uh, take my very first maternity swimming class but I noticed that I hadn't felt any baby kick. So, well, I al... you know, I's... I called the doctor's office and the nurse told me to come to the office immediately, so I did. And my doctor, who was moving the ultrasound probe, she said, "I, I cannot find a heartbeat!"

And I couldn't figure out what she meant and she said, "I'm so sorry." She continued, "Um, six days ago, your baby's heartbeat was perfect. I don't know what happened, uh, since then. I'm so sorry. Your baby didn't make it but you have to deliver the baby tonight."

So, I was put in a wheelchair although I was super healthy, um, carried into a beautiful hospital room with a great view of green trees and, uh, hills. And I was gonna have very happy delivery in less than a couple months. And a few hours later, my husband arrived. He looked very sad. And then, uh, the nurse started inducing me, and soon I started having a fever and shivering. I felt very, very cold and, uh, also pain whole my body and hallucinations for nine hours. And, finally, at 3:13 a.m., my baby boy Kentaro came into the world. He looked very beautiful. Of course, he was smaller than the full-term baby but cute face, fuzzy hair, long legs and arms, tiny fingers and tiny toes. He just looked like, as if he was just sleeping. And our nurse, who also had experience of stillbirth, was very sweet to us. And, uh, she dressed Kentaro in a cotton onesie and a hat. She took our, uh, family photo and got his footprint, wrote his name, birth weight and birthday on the card. And (s)he let us spend, uh, family time for several hours until she came to pick him up. And, um, that was the last chance say goodbye to Kentaro forever.

And then the next day, we came, uh, back to our home and when we saw the baby shower gifts on the table, we cried. When I looked at myself in the mirror with a flat belly, I cried. My husband and I sat together on the couch and just kept crying. And later that night, I got, uh, lots of phone calls from my friends and co-workers. And, um, I thanked them for their phone calls but I was troubled by what they said. And I played out in my mind what I really wanted to respond. It's like this:

"Karin, you always wanted a baby girl, right, so you think about it, it's just a rehearsal. Next one's gonna be okay."

"Well, you mean that the... Kentaro was just a rehearsal? Nobody can be, uh... replace Kentaro.

"Yeah, Karin, everything happens for a reason."

"Then please give me the reason."

“Are you coming back to work in a, a few days?”

“Well, it takes the same amount of time as the regular, uh, recovery time for the regular delivery.”

“You know, my friends and I were talking about you. I, we think that, yo... your eggs are too old. You know, you're 40 years old, you know.”

“When did you become a medical researcher?”

“You know, uh, what are you going to do if the baby was worn... born with a big health problem. It's gonna be so hard for you to raise him like that so it was a good thing that it happened, uh, now before he was born.”

“So, you mean that it was a good thing that he died now.”

“You know, I know that, you know, they meant well and tried to cheer me up. And I could have been one of them, you know, try to cheer up and saying the way wrong word. Uh, who could imagine, uh, you know, have to deliver the baby with very short notice knowing that the baby is coming into world without crying, without opening his eyes, uh, you know. And all the future, which was made around the baby, disappears. You know, holidays, next year, in five years, in ten years, the future suddenly disappears. So, I try to keep myself busy - next month and two months. And I remember my Japanese mother. When I called her, you know, I needed some nice words from her. She was very negative.

And she said, “Oh, I cannot believe you named the baby before he was born. You shouldn't have done that. Ah, I, I think you worked too hard. I cannot believe you spent some time with a dead baby.”

And I said to her, calmly, “Mom, uh, could you please, um, uh, try not to say you shouldn't have done that, something like that. You know, I was so glad that I named him. I can always talk to him in the heaven and he will like that.”

And there was a silence and then my mother said, “I, I told you this before, long time ago, I lost my baby boy right before the due date and I, I didn't get to see him. Your dad and your grandma saw him but they was... they're worried that if I could be devastated and in shock. But I was always wondering how he would look. Maybe I should have seen him.” Well, since then, she stopped giving me, uh, negative comments.

And, meanwhile, I started attending... my husband and I started attending a support group and the facilitator also lost a baby 30 years ago. And each of us, very diverse group, uh, Asian Jewish, Hispanic couples, British couples, American couples (there are five of us) started telling the story of our loss. And, uh, we really were helped telling our story, feeling each other. And, also, I wrote my blog and so many people gave me the comment that they are really helped to go through the grief process.