

Compassion is the only answer

On the morning of March 23 the parents of Yorba Linda teenager Logan Wells woke to the news that a car had hit their son. He later died at the hospital at 9:37 a.m. Logan was hit at 4 a.m. by a van as he rode his skateboard in the street.

He wasn't wearing a helmet.

My heart sank when I read the news. I didn't know Logan or his family, but as a parent, my natural reaction was to feel overwhelming sadness for the young man whose life was cut short, for the family and especially for the mom and dad who received the worst news a parent could ever receive.

Soon after the news, questions and pointed criticism started on social media, my Facebook feed was filling up with the story and was lit up with speculation, and in the wilderness that is the comment section of news sites the cries were loud and pierced the thin veil of human decency: "Why was a boy out so late at night?" "Where were his parents?" "We want answers!"

The new age of journalism and the way in which people consume news online has created a mob mentality that has made the once news consumer feel like they are now tasked with being judge and jury to any news event that occurs. They feel they MUST know things that are, well, frankly, private. That's right there are things that are still private. Not news.

Do we really deserve to know? Do we have a right to know every detail of the events of that night? No. We don't.

It's a natural reaction to want to know more about tragedy. You only had to turn on the TV and find non-stop coverage of the missing Malaysian Airplane to understand that people want to know (even when there was absolutely nothing to report). It's instinctual to want to pick apart a tragedy like Logan's to find some factor that would exclude it from ever happening

to us, to our kids. I understand that when news is so horrific we want to cushion ourselves from it. In this case, parents judging other parents.

But the wave of criticism didn't stop there; it turned to judging a 16-year-old boy's poor choice. People were shocked. SHOCKED. Absolutely amazed that a teenager was, well, acting like a teenager. As if WE, as teenagers, never made a bad decision. That was the most hurtful and the most bizarre of the feedback I saw online and I hope never passed the path of anyone from his family.

I had two older brothers and could happily provide a list of the stupid stunts they pulled. These stories are now told over family dinners with eye-rolls from my mom as she exclaims, "I didn't know you did that!" Even me. The little sister who spent most Friday and Saturday nights as a teenager at Calvary Chapel had my share of poor choices. Like the time my friends and I piled in the back of my friend Rick's '57 Chevy truck and drove to Mexico. (That's another country.) We slept in the back of the truck in a parking lot in Tijuana and then drove home the next morning. Brilliant.

The thought of my mom being condemned for my dumb decision if something would have happened to me is a sobering and saddening thought. And so I think of the family of Logan Wells and my heart breaks for them.

My mom taught me that when someone had a loss in their family you simply said you were sorry for them. That you pray for them. It's no surprise to anyone who reads their news online that the rules of etiquette usually get applied, but as parents I'm asking that we model some good behavior and join together and extend our deepest condolences to the Wells family. Compassion is the only answer we need.