



Quad City Chapter



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To those who are receiving our newsletter for the first time, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that your family and you have many friends. We who have received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help.

You are not alone in your grief.

The Quad City Chapter



July-August 2009, Volume XXII, Number 7

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

On a recent radio broadcast of the program, "Joni and Friends," Joni Eareckson Tada told the following story about world-renowned violinist Yitzhak Perlman.

"Jack Reimer, a syndicated columnist, recently wrote a story about this great violinist Yitzhak Perlman. It seems Perlman had polio as a child and of course you know he walks with crutches and braces on both legs. Instead of arranging to be seated on stage at the beginning of his performance, he chooses to walk across the stage methodically and slowly until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, bends down and picks up the violin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play. As Reimer describes it, there is a certain majesty in this ritual.

"Well, immediately after beginning a concert - I think it was back in 1995 - everyone could hear a string snap on his violin. Perlman stopped and gazed at the broken string as the audience wondered what he would do. Then Yitzhak Perlman closed his eyes and after a moment he signaled the conductor to begin again.

"Though anyone who knows music knows that it's impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings, Perlman was undaunted. Apparently, you could

see this great artist recomposing the piece in his head and inventing new fingering positions to coax never before heard sounds from his three-string violin. The sophisticated New York audience watched and listened in awe knowing they were witnessing a truly extraordinary virtuoso performance. When the piece was over they exploded into appreciative applause. Mr. Perlman smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow and said in a soft, reverent tone, 'You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left.'"

Joni goes on to make the point that "whatever strings are broken in our lives, if we concentrate, if we apply what we know, we can still play beautiful music on what we have left." Our lives can become "a recomposition, a series of new chords." Would we have chosen this? Never! Is it going to be easy? Will there be a lot of tears and heartache and false steps along the way? Sadly, without a doubt. But God can and will grant us the grace to still make beautiful music in our lives. In spite of loss, pain, sorrow, grief, we can learn to do as much as we can do with what we have left. And when we do that we honor the memory of our child.

Sincerely, Jerry and Carol Webb

And can it be that in a world so full and busy, the loss of one weak creature makes a void in any heart so wide and deep that nothing but the width of vast eternity can fill it up.

Charles Dickens

Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry, or sneezing when your nose itches! It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

Rabbi Earl Grollman

**Memories are a legacy
Of hope and courage,
Left to help us go on
When the giver is gone.**
Sascha
From her book, *Wintersun*

**Journey one day at a time!
Don't try to solve all
the problems of your
life at once.
Each day's survival
is a triumph.**
Rabbi Earl Grollman
from *Living When A
Loved One Has Died*

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents, please share them with us, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242.

If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, please send us your new address. Because we send the newsletter bulk rate, the post office will not forward it.

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter, we would appreciate you letting us know. Thanks. Jerry and Carol Webb (Editors), Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242, (309)654-2727.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meetings: July 23, 2009 and August 27, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL
From John Deere Road, turn right at 38th St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38th Ave. The church will be on your right. We meet in the downstairs fellowship hall. (Or you can turn into the church driveway off of 38th St.; the church is on the west side of the road.) Call Sharon and Dave Ulseth (309.792.0529) for directions or information.

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine	Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at (563)263-2737 for directions or information.
Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group	Meets the second Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm in the office of Family Resources located in Building 9 of the Annie Wittenmeyer Complex off Eastern Avenue in Davenport. For more information, contact Dave Happ at (563)785-6133.
Mom's Group meets in Aledo	A group of moms who have had children die meet once a month in Aledo to support and encourage one another as they go through the grief process. You are invited to join them at 12:30 on the third Saturday of the month at the Happy Joe's in Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309)582-7789.
Rick's House of Hope	Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf is a community resource is for children and adolescents dealing with grief. "Children and adolescents experiencing grief and trauma often need a safe place to express their feelings. They need companions for the journey of grief who are outside their family and not themselves grieving." The volunteer mentors at Rick's House of Hope provide this for young people and their families during painful and confusing times of grief. There is no fee for services. For more information, call 563 324-9580 or (563)421-7970. Find Rick's House of Hope on the web: www.genesishealth.com — keywords "children and grief."
Quad City SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, still-birth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday of each month at Grace Lutheran Church, 1140 East High Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information, call Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)496-2568.
Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Fulton	Location: Second Reformed Church, 703 14th Ave., Fulton, Illinois. This support group meets the second Monday of each month and is open to anyone who has lost a loved one through suicide. It's a safe place where survivors share their experiences and support each other. The group is completely free and light refreshments are served. For more information, call 589-3425.
Survivors of a Suicide Loss Support Group, Moline	For those who have lost someone to suicide, this group, facilitated by a peer survivor and a professional, meets the third Monday of the month in the Moline Library, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore (309)235-7174 or qcsos@yahoo.com

Be Patient

Be patient.

My child has died.
A light in my life has been snuffed out! A piece of me is gone forever!
It is said the depth of love signifies the depth of grief.
This must be true for my love is deeper than I can say.
My grief is so intense that sometimes moment-to-moment is unbearable.

Be patient.

Today I may smile and laugh;
But tomorrow I may be cranky.
I am hurting and I am confused.
Sometimes I am angry that I am in this nightmare.
Other times I feel totally and completely at peace
Because I sense my child is free and no longer suffers.

Be patient.

I know I must move on with my life.
I must because others need me and I need them.
The road to recovery is difficult because it has its peaks and valleys.
I know my child would want me to move on as well.
I am afraid. Will I forget my child's gentle voice? Will I forget that tender touch?
No! I will take all the beautiful memories for I was blessed to have this child.

Be patient.

I am told and I read that grieving parents learn from their child's death and teach others.
What am I to learn? What am I to teach?
If I am to teach it should be positive.
Whatever can I learn and teach from this journey that is positive?
With your compassion and support I can make it.
Along the way I will try very hard to learn the positive messages to teach others.
More than anything I want my child, my family and friends to be proud of me.

Be patient.

I may cry; I may laugh; I may be angry; I may be at peace
At any given time today and today's tomorrow.
But tomorrow's tomorrow will bring happiness.
I am trying to seek that happiness now but I am tired and fragile.
I see other bereaved parents who have gone before me.
They have made it down this long hard road.
I will as well.

Be patient.

Susan Taylor, TCF/Winnipeg, Canada

September 14, 1999

How much I have learned since that horrendous day.
I've learned that I'm not alone in my grief,
That others have suffered, are suffering and will suffer
The tremendous loss of losing someone they love to suicide.
Two years later I also learned how grief can destroy
When your father, who couldn't deal with his grief,
Decided to end his pain and suffering too.
I've learned I wasn't as guilty as I had thought at first.
That your decision was yours alone,
That once made nobody could change it.
And I've learned to stop asking the "Why?" question –
That question to which only you have the answer.
Some people said that I'd get over losing you in a year.
After that first round of holidays, birthdays, etc., I'd be fine.
Guess what? I've learned just how wrong they were.
It's now the 10th year – the 10th year of holidays, birthday, etc.
Certainly it's not as heart wrenching as the 1st year or even the 5th
But I'm still not over losing you and I'm still not "fine."
And I doubt that I'll ever get over losing you, that I'll ever be "fine."
I'm certainly not the same person I was before this all began.
I guess I've reached a new "normal" though and I'm going on with life.
Even though it's been the most difficult thing I've ever had to endure,
At least now I'm strong enough to help those who follow on this path.
But, oh, how I'd give up all I've learned for just another hour with you.

Karen C. Kimball, TCF/Hingham, MA



New Grief

The first months and years after bereavement can be terrifying. It seems as if the pain stays at a monotonous peak; it seems as if one's mind will be lost at any moment. And although most of us "get better" after the first terror, we usually do not realize that until we look back years later.

When we think about it: This state of affairs is almost "reasonable." After such an overwhelmingly traumatic experience we can fall – as it were – to the end of the world. Coming back from there is bound to be slow beyond our imagination and fraught with reversals. So far, no one has found a method to avoid this painful journey back. Perhaps it will help to hear that you have already begun to travel – you will find it is a long journey, and desperately hard – and you may often almost want to stay where you are. But you will realize, later, that the wind of tomorrow is even now stretching your sails, and life waits for you across the sea if you only knew.

from *The Sorrow and the Light*, by Sascha Wagner



TCF Bulletin Board

Contact www.preciousparents.org which publishes a newsletter titled HEARTLINE for parents whose infants have died.

GRIEF MATERIALS

Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than the Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief-related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for – or they'll be able to tell you where to find it. Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at (402) 553-1200 or visit their Web site at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter
One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families that contact the national office.

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
(877)969-0010

Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Web site: www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit the [sibling resource](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) page at

www.compassionatefriends.org

The next monthly meetings of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends are on July 23rd and August 27th at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island.

Our Newsletter

For parents who have experienced the death or deaths of multiple birth children during pregnancy, at birth, in infancy, or in childhood, contact Jean Kollantai at P.O. Box 91377, Anchorage, AK 99509.

Amazon. Com

When making a purchase from Amazon.com, enter through the link on the home page of The Compassionate Friends national Web site, and a portion of the purchase price will be donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases, not just books, made from the Amazon.com site.

Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to www.Bethany-qc.org for copies of the last four years of The Quad City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends Newsletter. They are download-able in Adobe Acrobat format.

Thank you to **Bethany for Children & Families** and **Maggie's Fund** for printing this month's newsletter. If you are able to assist in the final preparation for mailing of the newsletter in any given month, please contact Jerry and Carol Webb at (309)654-2727.

Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to TCF. As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from the newsletter, they often wish to make a Love Gift to help with the work of our chapter. This is a meaningful way to remember a beloved child.

Love gifts are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue. If you would like to send a love gift, please send it to our treasurers, Larry and Joyce Molitor, P.O. Box 191, Cordova, Illinois 61242. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.



What's it all about?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information and education to help others be supportive.

Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987.

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696
Toll Free (877)969-0010
TCF National Web site —
www.compassionatefriends.org

Mission Statement

The mission of the Compassionate Friends (TCF) is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child at any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

The Quad City Area Chapter of The

Compassionate Friends meets on the fourth Thursday of the month in Rock Island, Illinois. See the newsletter for schedule.

Quad City Chapter Newsletter Editors

Jerry and Carol Webb
Box 71, Cordova, IL 61242

e-newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-newsletter will contain notes and happening of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit the TCF National Web site home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.

Especially for Brothers and Sisters

What do I say? What do you say when you're asked, "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" Or maybe you've picked up the phone and the caller wants to speak to the person that has died. What can you say? You might be meeting someone for the first time, and they don't know about the death in the family, and you aren't sure you want to tell them, and you don't know what to say.

These are tough questions for lots of young people who grieve the death of someone close. These situations bring up all sorts of emotions – like sadness, anger, fear, loneliness, embarrassment – and it's hard to think of a good answer. Some kids at Fernside talked about this and had some good ideas.

You can think about these questions in advance, before they come up and you can be prepared with an answer. For instance, when you get one of these phone calls, and the caller is obviously just selling something and not a friend, you could say: "she's deceased. Please don't call back."

Answer in a way that will help you feel comfortable and in control. For instance, you could say that you have two brothers; one died a year ago at the age of 13 and the other is now 9. If your tone of voice shows that you feel comfortable with your answer, then the other person will, too. You can even practice how you would answer.

You can say as much or as little as you like. You can always add more details later, if you want. For instance, you could say, "My brother/sister died last year, but right now is not a good time to talk about it." Later, when you become better friends with the person, you might feel like telling them about the person who died and telling them how it is for you now. Good friends don't have to worry about what to say.

Barb Coe, Editor, *Inside Fernside Newsletter*, Cincinnati, OH

Love - Gratitude

The agony is so great . . .
And yet I will stand it.
Had I not loved so very much
I would not hurt so much.
But goodness knows
I would not
Want to diminish
That precious love
By one fraction of an ounce.

I will hurt,
And I will be grateful to the
hurt
For it bares witness to
The depth of our meanings,
And for that I will be
Eternally grateful.

Shirley Holzer Jeffery

Writing Your Child's Story

The possibility of forgetting even the smallest detail of our child's life is a fear most of us have. In truth, over the months and years many of these details do dim. Writing them down is a way to keep from losing these memories. This way we will not only have a permanent remembrance of our child ourselves, but this will be a legacy for the other brothers and sisters. Here are some suggestions.

1. Write in a spiral notebook. (This way nothing you write will be lost.)
2. Begin at the beginning. Write all the details of your child's life from his/her birth through the death day.
3. Use your child's pictures to help remind you of occasions and happenings over the years. Ask friends and relatives to tell you anything they remember about your child. (This may make them uncomfortable at first but let them know how important it is to you.) Also write any thoughts or feelings you remember having at that time.
4. Record the bad things your child did and said in his/her life as well as the good things. (It is important to write both the child's good and bad sides so we can remember them as a real person.)
5. Write about your child's death. Record as many details surrounding it as you care to retell. Write about the days before the burial, the funeral, the days after, two weeks, a month or so on. Record how others helped.

Write a letter to your child. Include:

What I wish I had said to you.	What I wish I hadn't said to you.
What I wish I had done.	What I wish I hadn't done.
What I wish you would've done.	What I wish you had not done.
What I wish I could ask you.	What I would love to tell you.

Pour out your feelings to your child. Tell him/her of your anger, your guilt. Tell your child how you love him/her. Tell your child GOODBYE.

Don't worry about how well you write. Don't worry about form or grammar. Just write.

Keep your notebook handy. Write any time you feel you want to say something to your child, or when you remember some detail that suddenly comes into your mind. The many times you have trouble sleeping, write down the things that keep coming into your mind.

Writing about your child or to your child will be emotional. It will probably make you cry. Don't let this stop you. Crying can be extremely helpful in releasing your tensions and will help you with your grief work. Remember writing is just talking written down.

TCF/ST. Louis, MO



Shared Thoughts on Teaching Grief with Love

Sometimes society sets an unacceptable length of time for our grief. It is very difficult for those who have not experienced the death of a child or sibling to know the depth of despair we must go through. They don't want our pain to become their pain, so they try to get us to concentrate on happier thoughts to ease their uncomfortable feelings. Frequently they are being all they can be to us, they are not capable of knowing our needs. We don't know how to help ourselves, so it is unfair to expect friends and families to know the right thing to say and do. Perhaps we should review our responses prior to our loss. Did we know what was appropriate or did we too try to do things to make them "get on with their life?"

Perhaps it is our responsibility to teach the world about grief. But it must be done in a very positive manner, to be properly received. It is very important to thank those who listen for "allowing us to grieve," and for us to express the needs we have. Many times friends and families are very frustrated because they don't know how to help us.

The Compassionate Friends has taught me to be honest, to express my feelings, taking as much time as needed to grieve, speak of my deceased child without apologizing, knowing it is all right to be mad, sad, or glad. Just knowing all feelings are normal, in this very abnormal situation, has contributed much to my healing.

After 16 years, I have built a new world that is tolerable and livable. This world includes all the memories of Doug; there is never a day that passes that I don't remember him. The memories are fresh, but most times these are pleasant memories of his life that last for moments or minutes and bring pleasure. I don't have the all-consuming raw grief I once knew and which dominated my life. For me, the healing has come through the freedom of grieving, which I have learned from those before me.

We have learned much about grief, and it needs to be taught to others outside of TCF. We are the experts; we have been there. Teach it with love and not anger, and it will be much better received. It is much more effective to say what you need rather than condemn others for what you did not receive. We at TCF treat one another with much love, and we know it works. We should extend that treatment to those we meet outside our group. God bless.

Marie Hofmockel, TCF/Valley Forge

TEARS ARE THE PROOF OF LIFE

"How long will the pain last?" a broken-hearted mourner asked me. "All the rest of your life." I had to answer truthfully. We never quite forget. No matter how many years pass, we remember. The loss of a loved one is like a major operation: part of us is removed, and we have a scar for the rest of our lives.

This does not mean that the pain continues at the same intensity. There is a short while, at first, when we hardly believe it; it is rather like when we have cut our hand. We see the blood flowing, but the pain has not set in yet. So, when we are bereaved, there is a short while before the pain hits us. But when it does, it is massive in its effect. Grief is shattering.

Then the wound begins to heal. It is like going through a dark tunnel. Occasionally, we glimpse a bit of light up ahead, then lose sight of it awhile, then we see it again, and one day we merge into the light. We are able to laugh, to care, to live. The wound is healed, so to speak. Stitches are taken out, and we are whole again. But not quite! The scar is still there, and the scar tissue, too.

As the years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, tasks that call for full attention. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface. We see a face that looks familiar, hear a voice that has echoes, see a photograph in someone's album. See a landscape that once we saw together, and it is as though the knife were in the wound again. But, not so painfully. And mixed with joy too. Because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow; it brings back happiness with it. As a matter of fact, we even seek such moments of bittersweet remembrance. We have our religious memory services and our visit to the cemetery. And, though these bring back the pain, they bring back memories of joy as well.

HOW LONG WILL THE PAIN LAST? All the rest of your life. But the thing to remember is that, not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are the proof of life. The more love, the more tears. If this be true, then how could we ever ask that the pain cease altogether? For then the memory of love would go with it. The pain of grief is the price we pay for living.

Rabbi Kuhn

*From A Journey Together - Newsletter of the
Bereaved Parents of the USA, Winter 2000*

