



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS



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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



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

February 2010, Volume XXIII, Number 2

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Dear Compassionate Friends,



Our son was not quite 3 ½ years old when his sister died. As we began to realize that Anna's death might be imminent I told Mike one night as I was preparing him for bed that the doctors thought his sister would die. He looked me in the eye and said, "I don't like that idea." I reassured him that we did not like that idea either. His response, "God can't have her. She's ours." We continued to talk about God's love and heaven but he interrupted me with the vehement statement, "If God takes Anna I will get on my rocket ship and go up to heaven and get her back." In his childlike way his responses were similar to ours as we faced the realization our precious child was dying – rejecting the notion as not possible or something he could control.

Children are sometimes called the forgotten mourners. When parents' lives are spinning out of control after the death of a sibling sometimes the other children get lost in the shuffle. Children's books are an important tool to help parents help surviving siblings deal with the difficult issues related to loss and grief. Using children's literature as a springboard for conversation gives children the chance to express their feelings and tell their own stories. After Anna died we often read the children's book *Where's Jess* – a simple story written from the perspective of a child whose infant sibling has died. In this month's newsletter, we have included a bibliography from the organization **Bobby's Books** created by a mom who lost two children to a neuro-muscular disease. While the list we include is specific to children facing sibling illness and death the website lists resources for children facing a variety of painful or stressful situations. We pray your family will be able to draw together as you begin or continue to work through your grief.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb

When Will I Be Able to Accept It?

People keep telling me to “accept it.” What does this really mean? And will I be able to do it?

People have different, personal interpretations of the word acceptance.

If acceptance means “to receive gratefully,” then it’s doubtful that we will ever accept the death of our children.

But if acceptance means to believe that our child is gone from us in this life and nothing that we do can alter that fact. If acceptance means that we can believe this yet still reach out to receive our own future gratefully, then yes, it is possible to accept our child’s death.

Acceptance is not one big spoonful of bitter medicine for which we shut our eyes, hold our nose, and swallow in one bitter gulp. Acceptance is more like something we sip gradually over the years.

Acceptance moves in stages. The first step in acceptance is usually when we stop denial and acknowledge that, in this life, our child is lost to us. We may have to look at the hopes and plans we had cherished for this child before we can lay them aside. It certainly facilitates our progress if we believe that we do not need to say “good-bye,” but “until we meet again.” Though we will never forget our child, when we have passed through denial, anger, depression, the whole gamut of emotions we call grief, we will eventually be able to laugh again, love again, and live again.

This is acceptance.

TCF/Birmingham, AL

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 242, (309)654-2727.

“A lot of people think that the first year of grieving is the hardest. I'm sure that is true for so many....But for me personally, it's been the second year that has been by far.....the hardest. It's as if I am thawing out...waking from a deep freeze, coming back from some out of body experience. I am literally missing HUGE chunks of time, and this year, 2009, has me feeling as though I am experiencing some of the "firsts" without Maria...when in reality, they are the second. It just hurts a little more realistic without the numbing effects of adrenalin and denial....Those places where our minds take us in those unpredictable panicked moments when all of a sudden we think we can actually go back and change something to make the outcome different.....and then we realize...."Wait...it's been a year and a half....she is not coming back." We will see her again, and we will spend more time with her than we did without her, but, man o' man, has this been the journey that NO ONE would have signed up for. Good thing for me that Hope is also in the letter H today. Without that simple word, it would all be a crock! But I have this Hope in Heaven, in Christ, in the Cross, that we will win this battle before us. I tell my sweet Shaoey all the time when she gets sad and in a hard place...."We can do hard....God hasn't given us more than we can handle....we didn't want it, but we can get through it....not ever over it...through it...." "WE CAN DO HARD because we have the winning warrior on our side! And HE promised! “

From the blog of Mary Beth Chapman,
Wife of singer/songwriter Steven Curtis Chapman

SORROW

It hurts deep down inside.
One feels diminished.
Less than he has been.
Empty.
Bereft...
Forlorn and incomplete.
Sorrow is a painful word
To share the feeling
It becomes endurable.
And in the scheme of things
A time of being
that includes great
emotion
And thus a time of
closeness,
Growing and becoming
someone more
Than we have been
before...

“Final Stage”

by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross



Bobby's Books is a program that uses books to help children and adults deal with difficult issues. Using children's literature as a springboard for conversations will give kids the chance to express their feelings and tell their own stories. You can access the website for Bobby's books at http://associationdatabase.com/aws/BB/pt/sp/home_page The following is a bibliography from the Bobby's Books website.

Bibliography: Illness and/or Death of a Sibling

Boulden, Jim & Joan, *When Sickness Happens*
Shows proper behavior and attitudes around very sick people.

Breebaart, Joeri and Piet, *When I Die, Will I Get Better?*
Written by a five year old boy (with the help of his father) after his brother dies.

Bunting, Eve, *A Sudden Silence*
Two brothers are walking home and one is killed by a hit and run driver.

Coburn, John, *Anne and the Sand Dobbies*
Death of a sister and of a pet.

Cohn, Janice, *Molly's Rosebush*
A book about miscarriage.

Greene, Constance, *Beat the Turtle Drum*
A young girl learns to cope with her feelings about her sister's accidental death.

Greenfield, Eloise *Sister*
A young girl's memory is explored when she finds an old notebook of events.

Gryte, Marilyn, *No New Baby: For Siblings Who Have a Brother or Sister Die Before Birth*
For siblings who have a brother or sister die before birth.

Gunther, John, *Death, Be Not Proud*
A father's memoir of a brave, intelligent, and spirited boy.

Johnson, Joy and Marv, *Where's Jess?*
For very young children--death of a sibling.

Johnson, Patricia and Donna Williams, *Morgan's Baby Sister: A Read-Aloud Book for Families Who Have Experienced the Death of a Newborn*
Young Morgan is excited about her soon to be baby sister, but the baby is born premature and dies.

Old, Wendie C., *Stacey Had A Little Sister*
A story, for young children, about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Park, Barbara, *Mick Harte Was Here*
Death of a brother in a bicycle accident.

Peterkin, Allan, *What About Me? When Brothers and Sisters Get Sick*
Story of a young girl whose brother becomes seriously ill.

Richter, Elizabeth, *Losing Someone You Love: When A Brother or Sister Dies*
Sixteen young people describe their emotions when a brother or sister died.

Romond, Janis Loomis, *Children Facing Grief*

Rothman, Juliet, *A Birthday Present for Daniel*
A young girl describes how she feels after her brother dies.

Sims, Alicia, *Am I Still A Sister?*
Teenager remembers a baby brother.

Tejima, Keizaburo, *Swan Sky*
A swan gets sick and his family helps him through his illness and death.

Temes, Roberta, *The Empty Place: A Child's Guide Through Grief*
A boy deals with the death of his sister.

Postal Therapy

Recently I wrote a letter to my grandson. He died four years ago but my writing was not a futile effort. I have long preferred to communicate with those I love by handwritten letter; the implied message says that I care enough to make that special effort. There is a sincerity and elegance in the personal letter not conveyed by fax, e-mail, or telephone.

In light of my penchant for personal letter writing, it's not surprising I should turn to that medium to share my thoughts with an inaccessible person I love. I mail those letters to a file for my review on occasions of nostalgia. Time is the great healer, and with its passage, my letters to loved ones who have died become less frequent and more upbeat in content. With time, the ache of grief is tempered by treasured memories of shared experiences that become invaluable with age.

It was good to write of the work projects and fishing trips I shared with Rob. The young man was indeed a

grand son. We held long and diverse conversations when together. It was a comfort to relive our repartee through writing. I could almost hear the comments and questions in his response to my reminiscing.

I started that letter in grief and depression that evolved, as the message progressed, to near-serenity. My grandson will never receive that letter but the void within me has been lessened by having written it. For a brief moment, I felt again the pride I knew as that young man walked at my side.

I know one day the scar within me will break again into an open wound. At that time I will compose another letter to Rob or to another departed loved one. Even though my letter cannot reach the addressee, *I will know I wrote it*. The therapeutic result of this exercise is a diminished heartache. Directions for use of this prescription are easy to follow: "Take as needed for pain."

Bob L. Hatfield
We Need Not Walk Alone
Summer 2001

*What the heart has
once owned and had,
it shall never lose.*

Henry Ward Beecher

TCF Bulletin Board

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

The next monthly meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on February 25th at 6:30 pm at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island. The March meeting is on the 25th.

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.

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.

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](#) page at

www.compassionatefriends.org

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.

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.

Thank you to:

- Petty Conwell, in memory of her son, Michael Conwell, who died 2 years ago in August.
- Brad and Sheri Hilligoss, in memory of their son, Tyler Bradley, who died at birth in 1987.
- Ken and Sandy Keller, in memory of their son, Adrian who died two years ago in November.
- Bill Steinhauser and Laurie Boyce-Steinhauser, who remember:
 - ♥ Maggie Steinhauser (February)
 - ♥ Anna Webb (March)
 - ♥ Matthew Ronquillo (April)

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.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meeting: February 25, 2010 at 6:30:00 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.) Alan and Rosemary Shoemaker — 309-441-5586, or Michelle Cauwels — 309-755-0783 for directions or information. Next month: March 25, 2010 at 6:30 pm.

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 Kirby White at (563)271-5908.
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

TAKE YOUR TIME



The one phrase we hear more than any other is, "It will take time for you to get over your child's death." We know that this is spoken with care and love. But little do we know at the beginning of our grief just what time means: the first time, the day time, the night time, the last time, all of these times. The one thing we can say is "take it." Take all the time you need. Grief is hard work, and we need to take the time for all of the aspects we talk so much about and really work through it.

Take the time to feel, it is hard but worth it. We can't just push those feelings aside because they are part of who we are, how we have managed, and the life we have had. All of our life experiences combine to affect our feelings.

Take the time to talk. Talk to anyone who seems to care about you. Ask your friends and family if they will take the time to listen. If you need a telephone listener, call the National Office. We have time to listen.

Take the time to read. When you read the experience of others, you will realize that you are not alone. Maybe a special book will help you understand what is happening to you during this time we call bereavement. Take the time to read and re-read the paragraphs or chapters that help.

Take the time to physically take care of yourself. If you like to walk, jog, or run, go out and use that time to help you feel better. Get enough rest, take the time to sleep late some days, or go to bed earlier if you need to. Sleeping may be an escape, but if it helps you, take the time for an extra few hours. Take care of yourself by eating better. Try to understand that food gives you some energy. Food is better for you than drugs or alcohol. A small weight gain or loss is not unusual. Take the time to understand what is happening to your body.

Take the time to be angry or guilty without letting these feelings ruin your life. You may think that your life is ruined anyhow and who cares, but anger and guilt turned inward can destroy your self-esteem faster than anything. Take time to sort through these feelings and acknowledge them, then let them go.

Know that when someone says, "It will take time," we can nod and try to accept that as part of our getting through these days, months, and years.

Remember that someday you will take the time to help someone else and that time will be the most satisfying time of all.

**Terese Goodrich, former Executive Director
The Compassionate Friends**

DEAR SURVIVOR: A LETTER TO YOU

Eleanora "Betsy" Ross, Iowa City, IA

It is said that death is a part of life: that it is the other side of birth. I believe that death can also give meaning to life, a meaning that may escape you now while your grief is fresh and raw, but which may someday bring a special quality of peace to your spirit. As terrible as your loss seems now, you will survive it even though that may seem unbelievable right now. Once that happens you will have touched upon a new and incredible inner strength.

But for now you may be a mixture of thoughts and feelings. Despair, longing, anger, guilt, frustration, questions and even understanding, tumble over each other, striving for but not quite reaching comprehensible sense and shape. You seek relief – you need to heal. It is a journey, and you must work on it.

And so, **CRY**.

The pain is real, but the tears are healing. Often we must struggle through an emotion to find the relief beyond.

And so, **TALK**.

Talk to each other about your loss and pain. Don't hide or deny feelings. Tell others that you need them. The more you deny something or address it in silence, the more destructive power it can claim

over you.

And so, **SEARCH**.

Over and over you will ask, "Why?" It is a question you must ask. Though you may never find an answer, realize that it is still important to wrestle with the "why" question for a time. Eventually, you will be content to give up the search. When you can willingly let go of the need to question "why" it will lose its hold over you, but it will take time.

And so, **SPEAK**.

Speak as often and freely of your loved one as you need to. He or she will always be a part of you. Not to speak of the deceased denies his or her existence. To speak of the deceased affirms his or her life. Believe that, in time, the pain of loss fades and is replaced by precious memories to be shared.

And so, **GRIEVE**.

This time of sorrow can be used to draw a family together – or pull it apart. You may be one who needs to feel and express guilt so that eventually you will gain a more balanced view of your actual degree of responsibility. You may need to give yourself permission to feel and express anger even though you think it is inappropriate.

Continued, next page

And so, **GROW**.

We know we cannot control all that happens to us, but we can control how we choose to respond. We can choose to be destroyed by an experience or we can choose to overcome and survive it. When we choose to grieve constructively and creatively, we come to value life with a new awareness.

And so, **BECOME**.

Become the most you can become. Enter into a new dimension of self-identity and self-dependence as you come to love others more fully and unconditionally. In letting go of love, we give it freedom to return to us. Become all that your loved one's death has freed you to become.

And so, **ACCEPT**.

Accept that, in some strange way, his or her death may enable you to reach out with a new understanding, offering a new dimension of love to others.

I believe in a loving God who is with us, offering strength, guidance and solace as we struggle with our anguish. I believe that, as we regain balance and meaning in our shattered lives, we can come to see that death can, indeed, bring a new meaning to life. This is my prayer for all of us.

BEREAVEMENT Magazine
July/August 2000

There is Birth
And there is
Death.

In between the
two, is Time.

No one knows how
much time.
The time between
is a Gift.

from **BEREAVEMENT Magazine**
July/August 2000



When You Ask...

When you ask about him
leave your fears at the door

Your questions open each
window
Watch the sunlight stream in

I see his infectious grin
the soft hand inside mine

Come, sit, let me tell you
these times are too rare

When you ask about him
you release permission

And I need this sunshine
like daily bread

I can warm these rooms
with the life-giving memories

When you ask about him
you bring the flowers that
never die.

Alice J. Wisler,
author of *Rain Song*,
a novel with a past
<http://www.alicewisler.com>