



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



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Dear Compassionate Friends,

As you read this article this month keep in mind that it is written by someone whose child died many years ago. It will probably be more meaningful to those who have been traveling their grief journey for a while. The perspectives of bereaved parents tend to change a great deal over time as we work through our grief. So if what is shared in these paragraphs does not seem to make sense now, it may in time. I am guessing it would not have made sense to me then early in our grief.

In a sermon this fall our pastor told us, "Be careful to not think you are isolated in your challenging circumstances. People are watching you... You may be the example that allows others to be confident in what they believe." We do watch other people and sometimes marvel at the grace they show in times of great trial – circumstances that we think might easily overwhelm us. We usually don't think too much about how others are watching us as well. Recently the daughter of dear friends experienced a miscarriage. I sent her a message to let her know she was in our thoughts and prayers. This is an excerpt of her response to me.

Thank you so much, Carol. You have been on my heart... I remember even as a young girl the strength and acceptance that you carried about you when it came to your loss. I never understood how you were able to handle that... but now I feel like I have a glimpse of the healing you had... it's all about God and his remarkable way of bringing peace and comfort. I guess I probably "knew" that, but living it brings a whole new way of understanding... so thank you for being a mentor and an example of how to live through and accept my loss... I guess I learned more from you than I even thought... who would have known!?

I don't share this with you because I want you to think that you have to do something to be an example or to place expectations on you as to how you should grieve. I was deeply touched by this young lady's note and glad that the lessons I have been learning across a lifetime had a positive impact on somebody. I share it with you to remind each of you no matter where you are in your grieving process that there is hope and there is healing. Also our lives and the way we live them do have an impact on others. We are not alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

Sincerely, Jerry and Carol Webb

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.

Thank you to **Bethany for Children & Families** for printing this month's newsletter. If you would be willing to prepare the newsletter for the post office, please contact Jerry and Carol Webb (309) 654-2727.



The New Year

Mary Cleckley, BP/USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

The new year offers opportunities for progress, reinvestment, understanding, forgiveness, growth and all things positive. Be kind to yourself and pick one. Better still, choose all.

If you make New Year's Resolutions I hope they include:

- Try to take it one day at a time.
- Forgive yourself for whatever it is you think you did wrong.
- Figure out ways to resolve your anger so you can let go of it.
- Risk reinvestment in life.
- Concentrate on and value what you have left, as much as what you have lost.
- Let those you value know how important they are to you.

These are important steps forward. Try to be good to yourself in the New Year.

For the New Year

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time. Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones. Don't shut out family members from your thoughts and feelings. Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, and other family members and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding? When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. They will come again and multiply. Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take stress-type vitamins, rest (even if you can't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal as well as your mind. Share your feelings with other compassionate friends and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell – a very healthy sign.

I know that following these resolutions won't be easy, but what has been? It is worth a try. There is nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

Mary Ehmann, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

Always

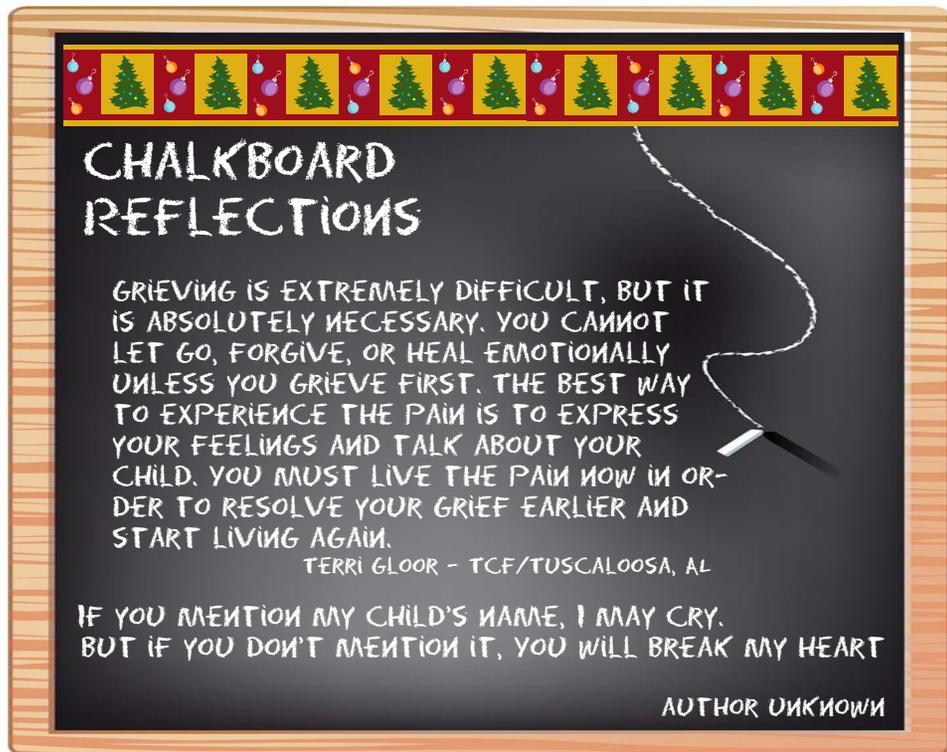
Another year passes and we remember
He would have been two,
She would have been three.
We shed our tears,
And place flowers on their graves,
Even if only in our hearts.

Another year passes and we remember
What seems that the rest of the world has forgot,
And most would think us mad still to suffer,
But we know who's foolish and who is not.

Another year passes and we remember
She would have been nine,
He would have been ten,
And year after year we'll always remember
What was and what might have been.

Judith Perry





I hurt, Lord, O how I hurt!

So many times over the last 24 years

I thought I would be crushed.

But it was never like this.

Never so fearful,
so like a lead ball in my stomach.

I know, Lord, that You came
to give us peace,
to take away fear and pain
because You love us.

I also know that You work
through people
whom You created and put in my life
so that I can both give to
and receive from them.

I thank You, Lord, for the friends
You have given me,
for their love, care,
and prayers for me,
and for the opportunities I have
to help them when they hurt.

I still hurt, Lord, but I realize now

that hurt and pain help me grow
to be more like You,
to be a support to those
who are supporting me.

So thank You, Lord, for the hurt.

I will use it in a way
that will honor You –
by sharing what I learn, from this
time, with those You send my way.

Also, Lord, I give the hurt to You to
carry until the burden becomes lighter
or I become stronger.

Name withheld by request
(from *Living Today* – Fall 1986)



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.

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.

Thanks to:

- William and Cynthia Fender, in memory of her daughter, Rebecca Batey.
- Jeffrey and Karen Hutchinson, in memory of their son, Jesse.
- Pat Mart, in memory of her daughter, Ann, and her niece, Sophia.
- John and Virginia Page, in memory of their granddaughter, Anna Katherine Webb.
- Tammy Saskowski
- Alan and Rosemary Shoemaker, in memory of their son, Bradley.
- Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of their daughter, Maggie, on her 12th birthday.

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.

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.

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.

Amazon.com

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

Different but Good

The other day, a friend, who is suffering from a significant loss three months ago, was telling me how her old “friends” have seemed to drop her. One, in fact, told her that her outlook was terrible, she never has a good and up-beat thing to say and they were tired of her feeling sorry for herself. How well I remember that same conversation at approximately the same time from the leader of my church. He told me I was overly critical, that I whined often, and that my behavior was inappropriate for the position I held in my church. He even told me I acted like a person who was well known for her mental problems. I remember telling him, over the phone no less, that he was upsetting me and making me cry, but it didn’t make a difference. You see, I was supposed to be like I was before my daughter’s death. Why wasn’t I back to my old self by now? Gosh, it had been four months, you know.

Don’t people realize that I will never be like I was before? The old self is gone forever along with my daughter. But now there is ME. I’m still here but I’m different and I shall continue to be different. Why should I be any way else? Tragedy affects us. We have to change in order to accept what has happened to us. If we are lucky, we get through in spite of our “friends.” We find new, more meaningful friendships out of the ashes of some of the old. Good friends stick by you even if they don’t understand. Around each corner we take in our recovery, there are people – good people – who befriend us. Bless them!

When someone thoughtlessly asks you when you’re going to be back to your old self again, you can tell them never. You’re different now and that is the way it is. I’m so thankful that I found people during my ongoing recovery who really care, have time for me, and have helped me develop a peaceful outlook on my life here. When my time here is finished, I will again see my daughter. Until then the days are good and I have lots and lots of things to do. I’m truly blessed!

Carol Moore, TCF/Central CT

One Moment In Time

As bereaved parents, we have a line of demarcation in our lives. This line is like no other. Other people define their lives by that one big career step, move or degree. But in other people’s lives, things are different. We are not like other people. We experienced a clearly defined moment in time when everything changed. Nothing will ever be the same. Life was different before our child died. It was easy; it was filled with promises of tomorrow, accomplishments, setbacks, and happiness that abounds in the natural order of life. But our basic assumptions were shattered and our world turned inside out at that one moment in time when our child died.

Can we ever feel as optimistic about life as we did before that moment in time? We certainly can and most parents certainly do. Many parents describe their experience as coming through the darkest, rockiest valley into a gauzy sort of light which gradually crystallized into a true sunshine as time moved forward. How did they do it? We must do our grief work, face our demons and stand them down. TCF is there to help. With time memories become less painful, the joy does return.

“The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again.” **Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends**

by Annette Mennen Baldwin,
In memory of her son, Todd M. Mennen
TCF/Katy, Texas (Excerpt)



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: Thursday, January 27, 2011 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL
For information and directions, call

Rosemary Shoemaker (309-441-5586) or Michelle Cauwels (309-644-0486).

From John Deere Road – follow the signs to Rock Island, turn right at 38th St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38th Ave. The church is 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.) Next month: February 24, 2011 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)260-3626 for directions or information or contact them at linmac67@machlink.com
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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. Please call ahead to verify the meeting location. Contact Kirby White at (563)271-5908.
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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 403 SW 10th Avenue, Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309)582-7789.
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Rick's House of Hope	Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf, this 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."
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Quad City SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the first Thursday of each month, 6:30 pm, in the Wallen Room at the Larson Center next to Illini Hospital, 855 Illini Drive, Silvis, IL, and the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room # 1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)373-2568 or chalyn@shareqc.com or www.shareqc.com
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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 odd numbered months in the Moline Library, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore (309)235-7174 or gcsos@yahoo.com .
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Had I Known

Had I known that I would hold you for
only one brief moment –
Would I have held you closer,
Or pushed you from me –
So as to lessen the hurt of your leaving?

Had I known you'd leave so soon –
Would I have paced my life so as to fill it
with more of you,
Or would I have visited only occasionally
To help soften the eventual absence of
you in my life?

Had I known we would have to say
goodbye –
Would I have let you leave my sight for
even one precious moment,
Or would I rather we'd never met at all?

I think not –
For the sometimes overwhelming pain
of losing you,
Has been far worth the joy of knowing
you!

jackie deems 1/90

The Still Music of Hope

Now that your life
knows every darkness and
sorrow,

Now that your time trem-
bles with mourning and
pain.

Now that your eyes
see only empty horizons,

Now that your hand
touches the center of grief:

Leave yourself open
to comfort and caring.

Leave yourself open
to softness and friendship.

Leave yourself open
to kindness and blessing.

Try and listen for the still
music of hope.

Sascha



The Grief of a Parent Who Has Lost an Infant

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should that child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for the parents. No parent expects to outlive his child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to the parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

1. **Shame and guilt.** Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.
2. **No memories.** Parents may only have "souvenirs of an occasion" (birth certificate, ID bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.
3. **Loneliness in grief.** It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is a newborn they may give the impression that you are grieving unnecessarily over a non-person. They hope that you can "forget this baby" and "have another one."
4. **Neglected father.** Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby too.
5. **Mothers vs. fathers.** Since the mother has bonded with her child all during pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

Claire McGauhey and Sue Shelley
TCF/St. Louis, Missouri

Recordings of Workshops and Programs Now Available from TCF 33rd National Conference

Recordings of many of the workshops, as well as the Opening, Closing, and Friday and Saturday banquet programs from the 33rd Compassionate Friends National Conference are now available for purchase by our chapter members.

These recordings are perfect 1) if you weren't able to attend the conference, but want to hear keynote speakers or specific workshops you find of interest or 2) if you attended the conference, but want to relive some of the high points or listen to workshops you were not able to attend.

The Opening Program, Friday Afternoon Banquet Program, Saturday Evening Banquet Program including the candle lighting, and the Sunday Closing Program are each available on DVD video for \$20 (\$6 for shipping for entire order of 3 or fewer DVDs). Or you can purchase the entire four program set for \$69 (plus \$10 shipping). Audio version only is available for less.

Each workshop is \$7 on audio CD (or MP3 for download). You can purchase as many single workshops as you wish on CD and pay just \$6 total for shipping or you can purchase the 59 workshops complete on CD at \$299 (plus \$10 shipping), a savings of \$114 off the \$413 regular price. The complete set is also available in MP3 format on three 1GB flash drives. Workshops recorded include a wide variety of grief topics related to the death of a child. Sibling workshops are not available due to privacy concerns.

To learn more and to order, visit www.freshpublishing.com. Then click on "conferences" and "2010" and TCF's Conference logo. Workshops may become available via MP3 download. Watch the order page for updates or TCF's national website conference page.

