



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



October 2011—Volume XXIV, Number 9

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Dear Compassionate Friends,

In September

we attended the wedding of the daughter of one of my closest friends. We have known Amy since her birth and been looking forward to this wedding all year. Despite cloudy skies, it was a beautiful day of gathering and rejoicing. A delicious dinner followed the ceremony and then the dancing music began. First the bride and groom shared a slow, dreamy dance. Then it was time for the bride to dance with her father. The music began, a reminiscence of a little girl grown up. Father and daughter moved slowly together on the dance floor. Suddenly I realized my eyes were brimming and I was fighting to contain the tears beginning to quietly flow down my cheeks. These were not tears generated by the poignancy of a tender moment, but tears of sorrow – an aching for my own little girl, long dead – a reminder that the father/daughter dance will never happen for Jerry. I glanced over at him, then grasped his hand tightly as I realized he was feeling the flashing pain of loss as well.

Grief is a funny thing. Our lives have moved on in so many ways since our daughter died. We laugh; we love; we have long ago moved forward into a healthy new normal. And yet our grief can sneak up on us years later; blindsiding us intensely and unexpectedly (although never for very long). I wondered, “Would we have mourned in that moment had we only been the parents of two sons – had our daughter never been conceived, or breathed, or been cradled in our arms?” I think not. And then the dance was over and the party continued, and we along with it.

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.

Vine and Dine for Iowa SIDS Foundation

Wine Pairing Dinner and Auction
Friday, November 18, 2011
6:00 p.m.

Davenport Country Club

For sponsorship opportunities or additional information, call 563-332-6265 or visit the Iowa SIDS Foundation website at

www.iowasids.org

Alive Alone

provides bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased a self-help network and publications including a bi-monthly newsletter to promote communication and healing.

Email: alivealone@bright.net
Website: www.alivealone.org
Alive Alone, Inc.
11115 Dull Robinson Road
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

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.

“I Know How You Feel.”

At last month's TCF meeting we talked about this remark. People agreed that even those of us in The Compassionate Friends cannot say that to one another. We truly know how hard it is and, in general, know what everyone goes through. But each person is different and each child was different and each death was different, so there are parts of each person's grief that no one, not even a spouse, can understand. The important part of TCF is that we understand a lot without even speaking about it, and we can listen and understand the depth of feelings and the needs so well. This quote by Ann Swann, TCF Valley Forge, PA, taken from the *National Newsletter* says it so well: “We may not be able to make the sun shine for you. But we can hold the umbrella.”

TCF/Greenbrier Valley

But It Hurts Differently

There is no way to predict how you will feel. The reactions of grief are not like recipes, with given ingredients and certain results. Each person mourns in a different way. You may cry hysterically. Or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. You may lash out in anger against your family and friends, or you may express your gratitude for their concern and dedication. You may be calm one moment – in turmoil the next. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Grief is universal. At the same time it is extremely personal.

Earl A. Grollman

Promise

The colors of life change as we go through grief. We begin black and white, then grey settles over us seeping into our pores, surrounding us, smothering us for a long period of time, then slowly the colors change, we may not even be aware of their changing till one day we see a rainbow and know it was meant for us.

Fay Harden



TCF Support Groups News

The Compassionate Friends monthly group meetings will be held on the 17th of November at 6:30 pm due to the Thanksgiving Holiday on November 24th.

Michelle Curtis is seeking assistance with the planning and implementation of the this year's annual remembrance service. A few volunteers are needed! Please call Michelle at 309-644-0486. The Candle-Lighting and Remembrance Service is scheduled for 6:30 pm on December 8, 2011 at the Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois.



CHALKBOARD REFLECTIONS

YOU ASK, "WILL THE WEEPING NEVER CEASE?"
I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, "I DON'T KNOW."
BUT YESTERDAY I LAUGHED!
MAYBE TOMORROW I WILL DO IT AGAIN.
I HAVE HOPE.

FAY HARDEW - SONGS FROM THE EDGE

AT LAST, AT LAST, THIS EXHAUSTING WORK
OF GRIEVING HAS EVER SO GRADUALLY COME
TO A POINT OF ACHIEVING SOME
GOALS....SOME DIRECTIONS. SOME
PEACE....SOME HOPE. MORE PATIENCE WITH
SELF, MORE STRENGTH TO COPE.

MARGIE TURBYFILL
TCF/MERIDIAN, MS



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.



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.

Grieving and Growing

To the uninitiated, the phrase almost seems contradictory, but to those who have spent any time in the purposeful grieving process, it makes perfect sense. I believe that there is a difference between being in the grieving process and being lost in grief.

While one seems full of possibilities, the other seems a blind alley filled with frustration and defeat. Mind you, the road aligned with possibilities has its measure of frustrations; but it has the promise of growth and development.

Taking time to grieve, even making time to grieve, is difficult, but necessary. Holding back tears, holding back anger, holding back hurt – repressing all these things takes an enormous amount of energy. One has to go through grief to get through it!

The unexpected spin-off of the grief process is that, phoenix-like, one emerges from the ashes of the grief

process renewed; changed, but renewed. Values somehow change or clarify.

Grief is not through with me – it may never be completely through with me – it still catches me by surprise from time to time.

I played and sang for a friend's confirmation service recently. During the ensuing Lord's Supper, as observer, I was surprised but unashamed by tears rolling down my cheeks. I was puzzled as to why I wept. Finally, it came to me that an element of regret in my grief scenario is that I did not take Cameron through that spiritual observation.

We can grow in grief, in compassion and caring, in strength of character, and in values clarification. They are not automatic. We get them the old fashioned way – we earn them!!

John Cornutt
TCF/Central Oregon Chapter

Hope is especially important when there is nothing you can do. It's a passive sort of coping. People with a strong faith, whether from religious beliefs or just good experience with trust, are the ones who stick it out in the worst circumstances. They take the attitude, "I don't know how I'm going to get out of this mess, but I've been through trouble before and came out okay."

equation that says to lose control is to lose everything. But the most serious problems – a terrible accident, a major disease, are those in which we are objectively helpless. Then the best way to cope is to find out how to live with it. It's fine to keep fighting when you can change your situation. But when you can't change the facts, accept them. That's the key to health and to wisdom.

Shlomo Breznitz - Director
Center for the Study of Psychological Stress
University of Haifa, Israel

In American culture, there is a powerful

Lessons Learned

What lessons have you learned from your experience with death and loss? Could you summarize what you've learned in a newspaper headline of three words or less?

Last summer, I asked a number of adult education students to respond to these questions, and I received some very thought provoking replies. In this issue, I want to reflect on some of the headlines that people shared.

Life is precious.

Recently, I spoke with a friend who travels on business to many different parts of the world. He sees a lot of poverty in the various countries he visits. When he returns to the United States, he realizes that no other people on earth enjoy the same lifestyle that we do in the U.S.

We often take so much for granted. We take life for granted. We often take relationships for granted. Death and loss can teach us that life is a precious gift from God.

Communicate your love.

At a wedding rehearsal dinner, the father of the groom made a toast to his son and new daughter-in-law. When he began the toast, he admitted that he doesn't tell his family very often how much he loves them. At that moment with tears in his eyes, he wanted to make sure he told them. Thank God it wasn't too late!

When we experience the death of a loved one, we review our lives and our behaviors. We all recognize areas where we can grow and improve. We must see the importance of telling people we love them. Each day presents a wonderful opportunity to communicate our love.

Enjoy today.

Next year, my brother and I have planned a trip to Hawaii. I am very excited about the trip; however, there are nearly 400 days until we depart. There will be many things to enjoy before we go.

Death teaches us to enjoy today. Some trips are never taken. Some hopes are never fulfilled. Some plans go awry.

Control isn't ours.

There are times when it is important to be in control. However, there also are times when it is vital to acknowledge that we are vulnerable, helpless and out of control.

Suffering, loss and death provide us with many vivid reminders that we need to let go of the need to have power and be in control. Support groups teach us what wonderful things can happen when people share their helplessness because they know that control isn't always in our hands.

Bereavement Magazine
October 1990

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meeting: Thursday, October 27, 2011 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL
Call Rosemary Shoemaker (309.441.5586) or Michelle Curtis (309.644.0486)
for information and directions.

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 meeting: Thursday, November 17, 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
Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group	Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm in HomeRidge Inn Suites in Bettendorf east of the Bennigan's Restaurant. Please check at the front desk for room location. Please contact Kirby White ahead of time to verify the meeting location: kombo100@msn.com or (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 403 SW 10th Avenue, Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309)582-7789.
Rick's House of Hope	This is a community resource 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 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
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support	A peer group for suicide grief support that meets on the third Friday of every month, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Frances Banta Waggnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, (563)843-3655, there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org

Encourage the Expression of Feelings of Grief

One way to encourage the expression of feelings of loss within the family is to look through photograph albums together. While this may bring some tears, it may also bring some smiles as we focus on the life of the child who has died and the memories of the life we have shared as a family. Keep the ground rules simple: any and all feelings can be talked about, and both laughter and tears are okay.

Another way to bring the family together in shared grief is to set aside certain special times (during the holidays, the birthday and death anniversary of the child, other special family times) to remember and honor the child who has died. This may be done by giving a book or donation in memory of the child, planting a tree in his/her memory, lighting a special candle to include the absent child in the family circle. All of these actions serve to validate the life of the child and are an expression of the love and importance he/she had within the family. Focusing on the child, remembering and talking, can result in healing.



TCF/Birmingham, Alabama
(March 1989 Newsletter)



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 happenings 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.

When your child dies suddenly or unexpectedly (and even though you had been told that your child was terminally ill, it was still unexpected, wasn't it?) something called shock takes over. I believe shock is nature's way of protecting you from the full impact of the pain of all that you've lost. I don't think a body could physically stand all of that at once, so nature does a kind thing and wraps you in a protective cocoon that keeps out much of the pain. This allows us to continue functioning and do the necessary things involved with the solemn task of making plans for the final rites of someone you love. You may have found yourself

able to be the "hostess or host" and taking care of others during this time. People may have commented on how well you were doing and admired your great strength openly, never understanding that it was your cocoon doing its job. Some parents' protective coating lasts longer than others, but sooner or later this shield starts disintegrating, and it is when the pain starts creeping in that the griever will try to provide his or her own cocoon; they will deny the death by pretending in some way that it didn't really happen, e.g., "He's not dead. He's visiting with Grandmother," or "She's playing with her friends," or "He's at school," or "He's at work," or "She's in bed asleep." They're somewhere, but they're not dead. That's called denial and it's a normal thing for some people. It's an effort to extend the effect of nature's cocoon.

It works for a while for some, but eventually that protective coating also dissolves and slowly but surely you find yourself dealing with a depth of pain you've never known before, and it's frightening. You know you have about all the pain you can

handle and you don't know what you'll do if it gets any worse. You have then reached what could be described as dealing with the real reality of your loss in all its complexity. It doesn't get any worse than that. It won't be better for a time, but you've touched bottom for now.

It's very easy to understand why the newly bereaved see reaching this point as a negative thing. This is when the telephone friends get the most calls (and that time varies from person to person, from a few weeks to some months) and the parent says (s)he thinks (s)he is losing his or her mind. And why not? Here they are getting further away from the actual death, but the pain is getting worse. That surely seems like a negative, but those of us who have had the necessary time from our own experience, or who have had time to observe the experience of others, see this as a positive thing. When people tell me this has now happened to them, it tells me that they've come a long way. They've come through all the shock and denial and now dealing head-on with what must be dealt with before their grief will soften.

You can't start healing until you've allowed yourself to feel the hurt of the loss of someone you loved better than yourself. So, if you've reached this place in your grief, see it as a positive, for it means you have forsaken unproductive things and have made a giant step toward your journey to a place where the pain eases and you learn to live with your loss. We who are further down the road of grief encourage you to reach for a plateau where we are. It's easier here. We can tell you honestly that the pain is now better, not worse.

Mary Cleckley
TCF/Atlanta, GA

But the Pain is Getting Worse

Letter to Our Living Children

Yes, to all you beautiful living children – we are so fortunate to have you. We love you very much.

When fate takes one of you from us, we are so hurt. We have lost a part of us, and you have lost a part of you, too. We haven't forgotten you while we are grieving. It's only natural for us to remember and want to talk about the one who died.

We haven't forgotten all the good things you do – no, we haven't forgotten you, but now in our sorrow, we try to hang on to what we have lost.

Please don't shut us out because you're afraid, by mentioning the death, we'll cry, and you don't want to add to our hurt and sorrow. We all need each other now. Unless we talk to each other and tell each other how we hurt, we will all suffer needlessly. We know you have lost a playmate; someone you told secrets to and grew to love very much, too. Let's tell each other our thoughts, talk them over together, and cry and grieve together.

God never intended that people should be driven apart by death. Let's get all our thoughts and fears out in the open. That's what families are supposed to do – lighten each other's burdens.

Let us bury our dead together, and keep our memories of them and express them often, but we must get on with living now.

Parents, we must live for our living children – show our love for them lest they feel unwanted and lose heart.

May God give us the strength to help each other when our burdens seem heavy.

Margaret Korolewski,
TCF/Fairmont, MN

The Little Things

Often even the simple tasks of everyday living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food – you probably didn't even

taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back tears? Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in worse

shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the laundry could make you cry or getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely. Perhaps this quote from *Celestial Navigation* (by Anne Tyler) puts it in a nutshell:

"One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people will never know about".

Ann Tyler
TCF/Sacramento, CA

