



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Volume XXIX

November 2016

Number 9

Dear Compassionate Friends,

On October 14, my father died, three days after suffering a devastating stroke. One of my greatest encouragers, my father faithfully read this newsletter every month. He often commented on what I wrote and found some of the articles helpful as he grieved for my mother after her death. Yearly he made a love gift in memory of our daughter. In 1998, 14 years after his granddaughter's death, he wrote his own reflection based on the writings of theologian, Paul Tillich, pondering the question as to why she or any child dies. I do not claim to understand Tillich. In fact I find his expressions of theology confusing. But as I reread what my father wrote, I think what he was trying to say is that in our human understanding there is no answer that will satisfy our questions, "Why our child?" "Why this child?" "Why any child?" Tillich writes, "It is the greatness and heart of the Christian message that God, as manifest in the Christ on the Cross, totally participates in the dying of a child, in the condemnation of the criminal, in the disintegration of a mind, in starvation and famine, and even in the human rejection of Himself. There is no human condition into which the divine presence does not penetrate. The certainty of divine participation gives us the courage to endure the riddle of inequality, although our finite minds cannot solve it." I think the answer my father found was that there is no answer, but because of the reality of knowing God is with us and walks beside us in our valley, we can trust even though our questions go unanswered.

In these past two weeks, many have expressed love, support, and sympathy. Others have commented on the fact that he was old (true); lived a long and full life (true); does not have to suffer (also true). I am grateful for the years of unconditional love he lavished on all three of his children. I have benefited from his examples of marital faithfulness, hard work, self-discipline, concern and care for others. I cherish the four hours of companionable time I spent with him just hours before the stroke. But there remains an emptiness in my heart and a wish for people to acknowledge my grief without trying to explain it away.

*Sincerely,
Carol and Jerry Webb*

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Chalkboard reflections

"Even the darkest night will end
and the sun will rise."

Victor Hugo

Grief is not an enemy or a sign of weakness. It is a sign of being human. Grief is the cost of loving someone.

from *Through a Season of Grief*
Bill Dunn and Kathy Leonard

WE ENJOY WARMTH BECAUSE WE
HAVE BEEN COLD.
WE APPRECIATE LIGHT BECAUSE
WE HAVE BEEN IN DARKNESS.
BY THE SAME TOKEN, WE CAN
EXPERIENCE JOY BECAUSE WE
HAVE KNOWN SORROW.

DAVID L. WEATHERFORD
PP/USA MARYLAND

"KNOWING THE LORD AND HIS COMFORT DOES NOT TAKE AWAY THE ACHE; INSTEAD, IT SUPPORTS YOU IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ACHE. UNTIL I GET HOME TO HEAVEN, THERE'S GOING TO BE AN ACHE THAT WON'T QUIT. THE GRIEVING PROCESS FOR ME IS NOT SO MUCH A MATTER OF GETTING RID OF THE PAIN, BUT NOT BEING CONTROLLED BY THE PAIN."

DR. LARRY CRABB

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Because the person who died is no longer there to share the holidays with you, you may feel particularly sad and vulnerable during Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and other holidays.

- ♥ Don't overextend yourself during the holidays.
- ♥ Don't feel you have to shop, bake, entertain, send cards, etc., if you're not up for it.
- ♥ Sometimes old holiday rituals are comforting after a death, and sometimes they're not. Continue them only if they feel good to you. Consider creating new ones, as well.

What's the next major holiday? Make a game plan right now, and let those with whom you usually spend the day know of your plan well in advance.



**Dr. Alan Wolfelt,
Healing Your Grieving Heart**

Hope for the Thanksgiving Holiday

The holidays can be an especially difficult time of year for those who are grieving. When everyone around you seems happy and full of holiday cheer, you may want to just skip the holidays all together. The sights, sounds and smells of the holiday season can be overwhelming and the period of time leading up to the holidays can actually be worse than the day itself.

Before Thanksgiving Day, think about what might be tough and plan ahead, for example the “empty chair,” should you keep it in place or remove it from the table all together? Should the oldest child or another family member sit there now? Should you set a place in honor of your loved one? There’s no right or wrong answer, do what’s best for you and your family.

Be realistic... Don’t over schedule, you know yourself better than anyone. Set realistic goals and always have more than one plan. By having multiple plans – plan A, B and C – you can quickly move to the next plan if the previous one isn’t working or becomes too difficult.

It’s important to remember that you don’t have to do things the way you’ve always done them. It may be a good time to start some new traditions, this doesn’t mean you’re going to lose the old traditions; you can always go back to them or incorporate them again when you’re

ready. Just because you’ve always put on a huge feast doesn’t mean you have to this year, have everyone bring a dish, have another family member host Thanksgiving dinner, or go out to a restaurant this year.



Address the “elephant in the room,” by acknowledging your loved one and including him or her in your gathering by lighting a candle, making a

toast in his or her honor, or sharing favorite memories and funny stories about them. It may be difficult to start these conversations but it will benefit everyone around you and help each of you heal a little bit at a time.

A wonderful new tradition is to cover the table with a plain table cloth, provide permanent markers for family members and guests to write what they’re “thankful” for on the table cloth, a favorite memory or message to your loved one, and children can have fun by drawing pictures. Bring the tablecloth out at each holiday until it’s full and then start a new one!

Remember to give “thanks” for what you had and what you still have... memories, love and feelings in our hearts can never be taken from us unless we let them. This year give thanks that the grief you feel is based on the enormous love you’ve shared!

Patti Cox - <http://www.hellogrief.org>

Love Gifts

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:

Bob and Jo Reade in memory of their daughter, Robin Leslie Reade

Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of their nephew, Patrick Hagerty V and honoring the memory of John Page.

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 treasurer, Michelle Curtis, 18163 241 Avenue, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

National TCF has a new Facebook page, **TCF - Loss to Suicide**. This page is open to parents, grandparents, and siblings who have lost loved ones to suicide. There is no good way to lose a loved one; different causes create specific pain that can be eased by sharing with another experiencing a similar loss. Co-moderators, Cathy Seehuetter and Donna Adams, welcome you to this special closed page.

TCF's Facebook Page is a proven support area for bereaved family members to come and talk about their grief. Stop by and visit with some of our more than 120,000 Facebook members.



Please join our TCF/USA Facebook family. Tell us about your child, sibling, grandchild, or other loved one and find support in the words and concern of others. Check out the Discussion Boards! Every day we also provide thought provoking questions, grief quotes, and links to grief stories, as well as TCF news, such as updates on the National Conference, Worldwide Candle Lighting, and other TCF programs.

Closed Facebook Groups

The Compassionate Friends offers several closed Facebook groups to connect with other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. The groups supply support, encouragement, and friendship.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Loss to Suicide

TCF - Loss to Homicide

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

TCF - Loss to Cancer

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild

Printed Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

TCF Online Support Community	<p>TCF's national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.</p>
TCF's Grief Related Webinars	<p>Held monthly, the webinars are on various grief topics with well-known experts in the field. To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News_Events/Special-Events/Webinars.aspx. Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page.</p>
TCF National Magazine	<p><i>We Need Not Walk Alone</i> is available to read online without charge. Go to www.compassionatefriends.org and review the options at the top of the page. TCF e-newsletter is also available from the National Office -- to subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-newsletter link.</p>
Grief Materials	<p>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 website at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.</p>
Our Newsletter	<p>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.</p>
Amazon.com	<p>When making a purchase from Amazon.com enter through the link on the home page of TCF national website and a portion of the purchase price is donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases made at Amazon.com.</p>
Previous Newsletter Editions	<p>Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to www.bethany-qc.org for copies of the last several years of The Quad City Chapter of TCF-QC Chapter Newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.</p>
Alive Alone	<p>A newsletter for bereaved parents whose only or all children are deceased. A self-help network and publication to promote healing and communication can be reached at www.alivealone.org or alivealone@bright.net.</p>
Bereaved Parents' Magazine	<p>Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatiNews.htm.</p>
Our Newsletter	<p>Published one to three times per year, when there is content to make a balanced issue. It usually contains 30 pages of personal stories and updates, poetry, subsequent birth announcements, and any new topical articles and information. Currently it is being distributed electronically (PDF), but a printout is available to anyone without email access. To request a sample copy, please email Jean Kollantai, climb@climb-support.org. Include</p>

In the Spring

of 2006, Sam and I were

married in a small chapel on a hilltop in West Leederville, Western Australia. As we said our wedding vows, I remembered standing there holding Sam's hands thinking that our life together was going to be so beautiful. Our first born daughter was eight months old, and Christian was a baby wrapped up in my womb. I never imagined that five months later our world would fall apart.

When we were given the news that our unborn son was gravely ill and that it was only a matter of time before he would die, we made a decision to walk this road together. I am blessed beyond words to have walked this road with such a loving, caring man. I know that this is not always the case in others situations.

In the early days after Christian died, Sam and I grieved as one person. Our sadness was so intense and we both really held one another up, but after some time passed, Sam and I came to a fork in the road and took different paths on this walk of grief. Sam stopped talking about Christian. He would speak about him only if I brought Christian up in conversation first. I remember there were times when I wished Sam would start a conversation with me about Christian, but it rarely ever happened. After a while I realized that although at times it can be difficult, we do not have to grieve the same way and that it is okay to grieve differently. Just because I like to talk about Christian and Sam does not doesn't mean that he loves our son any less than I do. We have both accepted the fact that we are different and therefore we will not grieve the same way. We both respect each other's journey of grief. It is all about communicating and being honest with each other. I found it helpful to find other people to talk to about Christian. They became my people.

Be gentle with each other. This is hopefully the most difficult thing you will ever have to live through.

<http://carlymarieprojectheal.com>

But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect.

If you've...

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough
- been sleeping too much or not enough
- noticed a change in appetite
- felt no one understands what you're going through
- felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often
- bought things you didn't need
- considered selling everything and moving
- had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains
- been unbearable, lonely, and depressed
- been crabby
- cried for no apparent reason
- found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased
- been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absentminded
- panicked over little things
- felt guilty about things you have or haven't done
- gone to the store every day
- forgotten why you went somewhere
- called friends and talked for a long time
- called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation
- not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed
- found yourself unable to concentrate on written material
- been unable to remember what you just read...you're normal.

These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died, but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same. Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

Joanne Bonelli
TCF/Greater Boise Area, Idaho

Recognizing Unsuccessful Grief

All of us who have searched for healing following the death of a child, grandchild or sibling know the roller coaster of emotions that are part of our grief process. We know there is no "quick fix" that magically lets us get on with our lives, and grief can be physically exhausting. We cannot go back to what was! And time, in and of itself, does not heal.

Although there is no set schedule for grieving and there will always be a hole in our hearts, many of us in TCF have found that within a year to 18 months, we are beginning to make some progress—granted the progress may seem minute to the bereaved. Grief therapists have learned that if death is from prolonged or serious illness there is grieving during the illness. The second year of grief may be as intense or even more emotionally devastating than the first year. However, no two people have the same grief timetable. If we feel that we are not making progress, is there some way to determine whether or not we may need professional help or evaluation or at least reassurance? The following considerations may help you decide:

- Extended withdrawal from the world around you and prolonged inability to accomplish normal tasks or participate in everyday activities.
- Self-imposed isolation where you do not want to be around anyone—friends, family or others.
- Becoming too scared to be alone. You must have someone around all the time.
- Anger or guilt that (a) is out of proportion, (b) does not fit the circumstances, (c) extends for a long time without retreating, or (d) may be directed toward or imposed on others close to you.
- Depression that is exaggerated, unremitting, prolonged and occurs in original intensity years after the loss.
- Anxiety that interferes with going away from home.
- Dependence on alcohol or medications to cope or forget.
- An emotional "logjam" resulting from an accumulation of losses over the years.
- Contemplating or attempting suicide to "get away from it all," or to join your child.
- Self-caused illness or physical health problems that do not go away, or the inability to separate the real from the imagined. This kind of illness is different from the "ailments" that most of us experience during the anniversary of our loved one's death.
- Placing your child on a pedestal and forgetting his/her imperfections; or being unable to redirect your activities or to shift your focus, so that you can honor your child in a positive way.
- An absence of grief or a numbness, anxiety, sadness, or any kind of overall attitude that negatively affects others around you, including over-protectiveness of your loved ones.
- Converting all emotions into one or two favorite or "safe" emotions—like anger, boredom, or despair—which become all you are feeling, taking the place of grief.
- When talking does not seem to help or there is no one able to listen.

From information provided by Vera Baron, LPC, and Ray Johnson, CSW
Libbyrose D. Clark
TCF/Deep East Texas

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Monthly meeting: Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 6:30 pm at
Bethany for Children & Families

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

Please call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) for information and directions.

TCF website: <http://www.quadcitytcf.org>.

Next month's meeting: December 15, 2016, at 7:00 pm

Christmas Memorial Service at Bethel Church in Rock Island

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 .
Rick's House of Hope	This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. There is no fee for services. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806. For more information, call Emily Gordon, Program Director, at 563.324.9580, or egordon@rhoh.org or go to www.rhoh.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)	A peer group for suicide grief support 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 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org .
MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)	Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meets on the second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. Contact Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425, or laura@secondreformedchurch.net .
SHARE	A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets 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 .
Loving Listeners	If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915 ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoheartb3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvechio 563.349.8895 delvechiojudy@hotmail.com <p>Kay, Doug, Rosemary, and Judy are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don't feel alone.</p>

The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. 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

<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>

Mission Statement

The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is when a child dies at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

Vision Statement

The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter

One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families who 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

Also available to read online without charge

e-Newsletter Now Available! An 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.

The first Thanksgiving after my wife and I lost our 17-month-old daughter, Madeline, was incredibly difficult. Thanksgiving is traditionally a time when you stop and give thanks for all the good in your life, but when something so unspeakably horrible happens to you, how are you supposed to be thankful? I was angry at the world, furious that other parents got to give thanks for their children at their side while my wife and I no longer could. My father likely picked up on my feelings because he skipped over a family tradition of ours, which is to go around the table and have everyone say what they're thankful for. I greatly appreciated his having the foresight to do that, because it would have been too much for me, but the next year I did give thanks, and one of the things I was thankful for was having been lucky enough to have Madeline in my life for the time that I did. I've done a lot of reflecting on grief in the four and half years since she passed, and I've found that the bereaved must eventually let go of their anger or it will swallow them whole. To keep on living a healthy and productive life, it's important to give thanks for what you had and not linger on what you don't. It's not easy to do by any stretch of the imagination, but it's how I've learned to live my life, and it's how I will celebrate Thanksgiving again this year.

Mike Spohr

Please contact the editors, Jerry and Carol Webb, Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242, 309.654.2727,

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it.

If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, send us your new address.

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and address.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.



Kael's birthday (his 12th today) has always been a bittersweet day for me. I never know how I will feel, or what the day will bring. I learned a long time ago to let grief be what it is. I don't have to feel any particular way. Most times it's a dull ache that comes whenever I think about him. Other times, even after 12 years, it's like someone just punched me in the gut, it hurts so bad. He didn't live long on this earth, but he has changed us and others immeasurably. And today I get to talk about him without reservation, say my son's name - a name that longs to come off of my tongue, and publicly say how proud I am of him, how strong this little boy was, and how much I miss him. I'm not fully sure what heaven/an afterlife looks like, but to picture my mom and my little boy together today as we celebrate him brings joy to the very depths of my soul.

Happy birthday Kael. You'll always, ALWAYS be a huge part of our family. No time, no distance, not even death can change that. Kristin Reickard

CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday, December 15, 2016
at 7:00 P.M.
Bethel Assembly of God Church
3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

The Chapter's Candlelight Memorial Service is for every bereaved parent who would like to have his or her child(ren) remembered. You may light a candle in memory of your child. (You can bring a favorite candle or one will be provided. You can also bring a photo of your child to place with the candle.) All family members are invited. A time of fellowship will follow the service.



If you cannot attend and would like a candle lighted in your child's memory, please complete and return this form to Michelle Curtis (address below) so we have enough candles on hand.

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Death: _____

Parents' Names: _____

You are welcome to bring a favorite finger-food, help with set up at 6:00 pm, or clean up afterwards.

Please send to: Michelle Curtis 18163 241 Ave Bettendorf, Iowa 52722

If you would like to make a love gift to TCF in memory of your child, you may do so at the service or send your contribution to our treasurer, Michelle Curtis (address above). Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

On December 6th, if the Angel of Hope statue is erected in time, there will also be a candlelighting service at the Moline Memorial Cemetery. Contact Rosemary Shoemaker for details 309.945.6738
shoearth3@mchsi.com



The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



1830 6th Avenue
Moline, Illinois 61265

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Return Service Requested



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.