



The Compassionate Friends

Quad City Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

October 2016

Volume XXIX, Number 8

Dear Compassionate Friends,

Recently I heard a speaker on the radio sharing thoughts and feelings about the death of his child. Every person approaches the processing of grief in a little different way. We all bring to the grief experience differences in temperament, upbringing, experience, faith, etc. Even a husband and wife will process the grief over the loss of their child in different ways. This particular speaker said something very simple, "This is something that has never happened to us before." For him the conclusion to that thought was to seek professional help to assist him and his spouse to walk through the tumultuous emotions of the valley of grief they were experiencing. The premise of The Compassionate Friends is that those who are walking the road of grief after the death of a child can walk beside you, listening as you share both the joy of having had this child and the all consuming sorrow at their loss. Those who are a little further along in their grief can share insights and draw on their experiences to encourage those who are newly bereaved.

Simon Stephens, founder of the Compassionate Friends says this, "*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.*" So whether you seek assistance from a professional counselor or a grief group like Compassionate Friends or Grief Share, remember that it is not surprising that you do not know how to move forward on your own. This is hopefully not something that has happened to you before. Others who have walked this path are willing to walk beside you. You do not need to walk alone.

Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb



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Chalkboard reflections

Psalm 34:18 – The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Grief is not a mountain to be climbed, with the strong reaching the summit long before the weak.

Grief is not an athletic event, with stopwatches timing our progress.

Grief is a walk through loss and pain with no competitions and no time trials.

"LAUGHTER IS NOT A SIGN OF 'LESS' GRIEF. LAUGHTER IS NOT A SIGN OF 'LESS' LOVE. IT'S A SIGN THAT MANY OF OUR THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES ARE HAPPY ONES. IT'S A SIGN THAT WE KNOW OUR DEAR ONE WOULD HAVE US LAUGH. IT'S OKAY TO LAUGH."

MARIANNE WAITE

From Marion County, Oscala, Florida,
Bereaved Parents of the USA

Grief's unexpected turns will throw you again and again. You may feel that for every step forward, you take at least one step back.

The grieving process generally takes longer than you ever imagined. Please don't rush this process. Remember, what you are feeling is not only normal, it is necessary.

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

HOW PRECIOUS WOULD LIFE BE TO US IF THERE WERE NO COST, IF THERE WERE NO LIMITATIONS OR END TO IT? WHEN WE EXPERIENCE DEATH, LIFE BECOMES A FRAIL AND WONDROUS THING TO BE ENJOYED ABOVE ALL ELSE.

JOHN MICHALAK

There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light.

Barry Lopez, Arctic Dreams

“We grieved staring this thing in the face. When unpacking the bag [Lenya] had brought to her grandma's containing the clothes she had worn that Thursday, before changing into her pj's that she died in, it was extremely tempting to hide from it or cling to it. Either keeping them as keepsakes, making all her clothing sacred, or not opening it at all, refusing to go there. But we chose to hug them and weep over them, smelling her on them, and then we washed them so they would be folded and in the drawer for Daisy and then Clover to wear one day. Nothing would be sacred. We didn't want boxes full of mementos waiting to blow us up when we stepped on them in ten years. Looking at pictures, watching movies, going through her clothes — we made the choice to bring this thing to our breast and let it sink its teeth into us and empty its venom. For some reason, though it terrified me, I had to stare this in the eyes and, with my knees shaking, say, 'Do your worst.' Maybe it will kill us, but if we can get through it we won't have to live in fear. I didn't want anything sneaking up on me. I would go all the way into the depths of this sorrow and drink it down to the dregs. I stayed up until 3:00 a.m. or later each night for four or five days, watching videos, pulling out photos, and reliving her five years on this earth, to find all the best clips and pictures to play at her celebration so the world would know who she was. It was horrendously traumatic and would have been easier to take a Xanax and stay in bed crying...but I knew it would only delay the inevitable. No shrines, no booby traps...we faced it all, and then pushed on into the future."

Levi Lusko
Through the Eyes of a Lion

Where is that Spark?

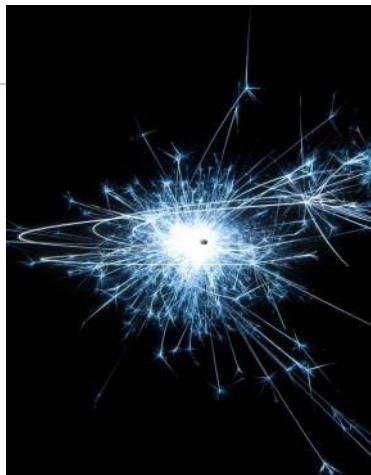
Where is that spark, that sparkle,
That has vanished from my life?
Like dead champagne, flat, inert
No effervescence, none at all,
Will it return?

Now and then I tell myself
That I'm doing well and getting by
But in my heart I must confess,
The magic and the music, once mine to hold
No longer fill the air.

The only panacea I am told
Is time and time alone
And reaching back again
Into the love and sweet memories we shared
Just you and I.

Where is that spark, that sparkle,
That has vanished from my life?
Elusive as it is, it may return someday
When we meet again somewhere
Just you and I.

David Ziv,
TCF/Warrington, Pennsylvania





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 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 Seehueter 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	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.
TCF's Grief Related Webinars	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.
TCF National Magazine	<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.
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 website 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 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.
Previous Newsletter Editions	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.
Alive Alone	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 .
Bereaved Parents' Magazine	Online articles and poems. Reminder emails are sent notifying readers when new issues are available. http://www.bearvedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm .
Our Newsletter	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 your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.

What to Do with Anger

Anger is one of the most difficult emotions for me to express. Reared as a "proper" young lady, I was taught that anger was not becoming. Many of the women I have spoken to were similarly taught.

I found, however, I did not have the tools to deal with the deep anger that came shortly after the death of my daughter. My anger was spilling over to people who did not deserve it, or I vented excess anger by overreacting to some situations.

With the loving care and patience of several people, I developed some tools that helped me to express my anger. Rather than trying to suppress my angry feelings, I learned to release them in constructive ways. Hopefully, some of these coping techniques will be helpful to others.

EXERCISE - This is a great way to release anger, plus get into shape! I joined the YMCA, swam twice a week, did "Y's Ways to Fitness" three times a week, and walked three to five miles each day. At first, I was concerned about doing so much exercise because I have a very bad back, so I took it easy and worked my way up to my present routine. I always feel much better after a good workout, and I had the extra benefit of getting out of our home and back into society. After my daughter's death, my life felt so out of control; but as I became more fit, I regained some control. This renewed strength aided in my recovery.

Exercise decreases stress levels and aids in controlling depression. Since grief can also make us more vulnerable to physical illness, exercising and taking care of our

health is important. Even daily walking is good therapy.

WRITING - When the anger bubbled up in me, I would write. Many times I didn't know where to begin, so I just started by writing, "I am angry because. . ." Soon, my thoughts were coming faster than I could write them down. After I had expressed my anger in writing, I often discovered that the sources of my anger were different than I had imagined. It usually sifted down to just being angry about my daughter's death. The technique of writing about your feelings is especially nice because you can just throw away or burn your words and the anger with them.

PAINTING - There is nothing like taking bright oils or acrylics and stroking them over an open canvass. I had not painted in over fifteen years, but I went up into the attic and got down the easel, brushes, and paints. I always felt better after a good painting session. Those times were very private for me and no one ever saw my creations, but they were helpful in expressing my anger.

TALKING - Sometimes I would call a good friend and just rant and rave. My friend was a very good and non-judgmental listener. She realized that most of what I said in anger I did not mean. She never gave advice or held me to my "anger" statements. She just lovingly listened. This technique calls for a careful choice of friends who can maintain confidentiality and are not afraid of anger. It is even more helpful if the friend has had a similar loss.

ENERGY - Convert anger into energy and use that energy to change the world.

Continued next page

Angry with the limited support that mothers of children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) had in their communities, I converted that anger into action. I joined several nationwide support groups and helped to bring their support into our community.

My anger was further converted into energy, which I used to raise money for SMA research. I baked over 700 loaves of bread (a lot of anger there!) for a fundraiser. My friends saw my energies and joined in to help. Together, our efforts raised over \$6,000 in under six weeks! This kind of energy can be contagious. Reaching out to others can help in healing. If something good can come from our tragedies, it can add meaning to their deaths.

EGGS - Yes, eggs! When I just could not resolve my anger with any of the above techniques, I would take a dozen eggs and a black felt-tipped pen and go into the back yard. Writing the reason I was angry on the egg, I threw it at the back fence. At first, I thought this was a little crazy, but after throwing the first egg and watching it shatter, I felt so much better! I always used just one word to describe my anger. It might be: Death, SMA (the disease my daughter died of), Husband, A friend's name, God. No one need know what you write on that egg! Afterward, the birds would have a treat eating the eggs; and listening to their happy noises while having their treat, eased my anger.

These are some of the techniques I used to express my anger. It is OK to be angry, and it is important to express, not suppress, anger. Suppressed anger can result in deep depression.

It is also all right to be angry with God. He is forgiving and understands our emotions. He would rather have us be angry with Him than shut Him out.

Penny A. Blaze
New Canaan, Connecticut

HOPE

"When does this pain of loss end? Is there no relief?" This is often the cry of a parent who has lost a child. The grief seems too big and too hard at times. And there seems to be no end in sight for the pain and isolation. And yet we know that somehow, some way, life must continue on.

We keep trying; keep reminding ourselves that we must take life one day at a time. In fact, sometimes we take life one hour at a time, giving ourselves the time we need to adjust to our new world, our new way, this life that now is labeled "the new normal."

And so we train our minds daily to look for the good, to listen for the song, and to watch for the sunshine and blue skies. We force ourselves to move forward into this world knowing that it will never be the same again, but also understanding that we must choose to move forward into this new land beyond our grief journey. And, so we do!

Hope is amazing as it teaches us that the very same sun is still shining and waiting to warm us. Nature is still painting the world with beauty beyond words. Our Father is still giving us comfort and help in order to help fill the void. And, so we slowly move forward knowing that one day the curtain of grief will be pulled back and we will be able to see life with new eyes and a heart filled with hope!

Clara Hinton

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Monthly meeting: Thursday, October 27, 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: November 17, 2016, 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 .
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 Waggoner 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): ♥ Kay Miller 309.738.4915 ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearthb3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotamil.com 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.

HOPE

I sat down regularly to read the many newsletters that I receive from the chapters across the country. Most of the time there were articles in them that made me cry a little.

I read about children who are dead and parents who were hurting, but never did I come away from those reading sessions depressed.

I came away with hope; hope that the searing torment does lessen and eventually give way to warm, loving memories of our child.

When we are in the deepest throes of our grief, when our beloved child has just recently been snatched from life by a tragic accident or succumbed to a fatal illness, or died in some other way, can we believe we can ever be happy again? When to simply get up in the morning is a major accomplishment, can we believe that we will ever be able to function with enthusiasm or purpose?

When every thought of our children brings excruciating pain, can we believe that we will someday be able to think of him/her and smile? I know it is hard to believe that this will ever happen, but it will.

Words used in defining HOPE are expect, trust, anticipate, wish, desire and confident. These are the key words.

If we expect, trust and anticipate feeling better, we will in time.

If we wish it and are confident, the day will come when we will feel better. Of course, it doesn't just happen. It takes long, hard grief work. It takes many painful hours of allowing ourselves to go through our grief.

It takes patience and it takes time. But know you will come to the light at the end of the tunnel.

Know that there is hope. I know that many bereaved parents who have been in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again. Know that you will too.

Margaret Gerner - Bereaved Mother and Bereaved Grandmother
St. Louis, Missouri



Men and Grief

- Society pressures fathers to be strong and stoic, holding up others. Emoting is seen as a weakness.
- Fathers typically feel overlooked, particularly when they are so often asked, "How's your wife/partner?" instead of "How are you?"
- Women's friendships are based on emotional connections that can help ease them through grief. It's difficult for men to seek support outside the family.
- "Feminine" mourning is emotion and loss oriented. "Masculine" mourning is task and restoration oriented. There is nothing wrong with either approach, as long as there is integration and acceptance of both styles.
- Grieving fathers should be free to do things in their own way, in their own style, free of judgment or pressure. The best way to help them is to listen and just be there for them. When they are ready to reach out they need patience, tolerance and compassion from those around them, including employers, peers and friends.



*Source: Joanne Caciato, Ph.D.,
founder of the MISS Foundation (missfoundation.org)*

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.



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.



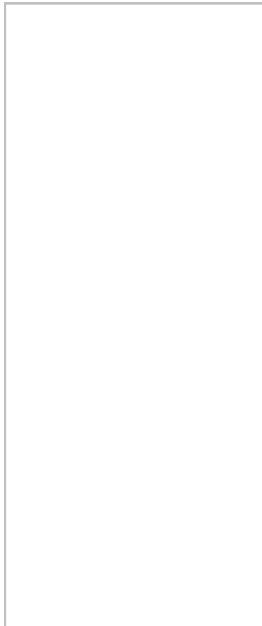
The Compassionate Friends
Quad City Area Chapter
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To those who are receiving our newsletter for the first time, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that your family and you have many friends. We who have received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

You are not alone in your grief.