



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

October 2024

Volume XXXVII, Number 8

Dear Compassionate Friends,

When our daughter died, her older brother was three years old. Shortly after her death, he was invited to a picnic with a group of preschoolers. Parents were not invited since there were several adult supervising, leaders who had met with the children throughout the year. I dropped him off thinking I would run some errands while I was child-free. I had driven only a few blocks when panic overcame me. What if they did not watch him? What if he wandered off the trail? What if he got separated from the group? The panic was so strong I drove back to the staging area and waited for the group to return, dark thoughts blocking out all reason.

A few years later I fought those fears each time he walked out the door to catch the bus for school. More time passed and I smiled and waved as he drove out the driveway, a licensed driver. I faced my fears again when seemingly long periods of time passed without hearing from him when he was in college, or the time he went sky diving.

Letting go is hard for all parents, but I think it can be particularly agonizing for bereaved parents who no longer believe they are among the group of people “bad things do not happen to.” I have a friend whose mother did not allow her to participate in healthy, normal teenage activities because of her fear something would happen to her surviving child.

Sabrina Ivey shares a useful perspective in her article, “The Eternal Battle of Parenting After Loss.” We need to set our surviving children free from our fears and panic. We need to rejoice as they move on with their lives in healthy ways. We should not burden them with our fears. We can ease our fears as we talk them through with our spouse, a close friend, a counselor, or in prayer. We cannot control our world or their world, but we can with courage let our surviving children fly as we cheer them on from the sidelines.

Sincerely,
Carol and Jerry Webb

Often the death of a child is the first time a lot of people realize they are not fully in control of their life and what happens. This realization is tough and you feel powerless. But remember you are not. You are in charge of where you go from there. Initially take one day at a time, and simply survive, but in time you will be more able to make decisions about how you deal with your grief. Reading, talking, seeking support. Crying, taking time to care for yourself, making new rituals. Remembering your child and memories of happier times. And always remembering the love you had and will always have for your child.

Lesley Henderson

Things will happen in your life that you have no control over but that doesn't mean you are at the complete mercy of the unknown. You will always have power over your reaction to the outside world. That is your power. It is the power that can change your life if you choose to use it. Never believe you have no control over your life; you have so much more control over your life than you can even imagine. So be active in changing your life.

Avina Celeste

I promise to find hope through the heartache, to find joy through the sadness, to find strength through incredible weakness, to love even when it is hard, to live freely and bravely, even when I'm scared, to make the most of my days... to live in a way that would make you proud.

Scribbles and Crumbs



October is Pregnancy Loss and Awareness month. Families who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss are encouraged to light a candle on October 15th at 7:00 p.m. in your time zone. If candles are lit in each time zone at 7:00 p.m. and kept burning for at least one hour, there will be a continuous "Wave of Light" over the entire world on October 15th, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day.

The Internal Battle of Parenting After Loss

Parenting is hard. Parenting after loss takes it to a whole other level. From the moment we find out we are pregnant, we immediately begin to imagine our family with our new bundle of joy. Our sole purpose becomes ensuring we are doing everything we can to bring our babies into this world and keep them safe and healthy.

NOTHING WILL MAKE YOU QUESTION EVERYTHING YOU KNEW ABOUT PARENTING LIKE YOUR BABY DYING.

It immediately thrusts you into this world of anxiety. You get this awful feeling that something is going to happen to your other children. Your greatest fear is that death could come along at any moment and steal another one of your children. You MUST remain diligent and eliminate any and all threats. Or so we think.

Without even realizing it, you've become a helicopter parent. As if all dangers are magnified for your children specifically more than any other children. Suddenly there is a target on their backs and tragedy could strike at any time. Again. I desperately wanted them to be brave and experience the world...but at the same time I needed to keep them safe. I always loved watching my kids try new things. The very thought of that became frightening.

WHAT IF?

What if they fell. What if a car hit them when they were riding their bike in the court. What if a dog came into our yard and attacked them. What if I was in the other room and they suddenly choked on their snack. What if there is a shark at the beach. Yes, this was a fear of mine. One of many more, and I couldn't possibly list them all.

I checked their breathing at least three or ten times a night. The smoke detector batteries were changed almost monthly. I checked to be sure their windows were securely locked. My nine- and seven-year old's little worlds became even smaller overnight.

Is it normal? Yeah...it is. It turns out a lot of us loss mommas are like this after loss. Is it rational? No. We have this false sense that we can control the world our children live in. We can't.

WE AREN'T ELIMINATING DANGER. WE END UP ELIMINATING JOY, HEALING, AND THE BEAUTY OF WATCHING OUR CHILDREN GROW INTO THEIR OWN LITTLE PERSON.

There comes a time when you need to do a reality check. Let them ride their bike. Go to the beach and let them have fun. Let them play. Let them be little without all of the fears and worries put on their shoulders.

Sabrina Ivey
SHARE Newsletter
nationalshare.org

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. Recently added groups include Men in Grief; Loss to Long Term Illness; Loss of a Step Child; Loss of a Child with Special Needs.

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter

A complimentary issue of the National Newsletter is sent to bereaved families who contact the office at The Compassionate Friends, Inc., 48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808, Wixom, MI 48393, (877)969-0010.

email:

NationalOffice@compassionatefriends.org

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Visit the **sibling resource** page at www.compassionatefriends.org. It is 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 contains notes and happenings of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.

About The Compassionate Friends

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 (<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>).

TCF National Office

48660 Pontiac Trail, #930808

Wixom, MI 48393

Toll Free (877)969-0010

TCF National Website:

www.compassionatefriends.org

Mission Statement

The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is that 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.

The After Loss Credo

I need to talk about my loss.
I may often need to tell you what happened –
Or to ask you *why* it happened.
Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself
Face the reality of the death of my loved one.

I need to know that you care about me.
I need to feel your touch, your hugs.
I need you just to be with me.
(And I need to be with you.)

I need to know you believe in me
And in my ability to get through my grief
In my own way.
(And in my own time.)

Please don't judge me now –
Or think that I'm behaving strangely.
Remember I'm grieving.
I may even be in shock.
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.
I'm experiencing a pain unlike any
I've ever felt before.

Don't worry if you think I'm getting better
And then suddenly I seem to slip backward.
Grief makes me behave this way at times.
And please don't tell me you "know how I feel."
Or that it's time for me to get on with my life.
(I am probably already saying this to myself.)
What I need now is time to grieve and to recover.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend.
Thank you for your patience.
Thank you for caring.
Thank you for helping, for understanding.
Thank you for praying for me.
And remember, in the days or years ahead,
After your loss—when you need me
As I have needed you—I will understand.
And then I will come and be with you.



He Lost His Baby Too

Survival Guide for the Grieving Dad

By Kelly Farley with David Dicola

This book was written specifically for fathers grappling with the unbearable aftermath of losing a baby. It is all too easy for a bereaved father to succumb to a haunting sense of isolation after such a loss. However, within these pages lies a lifeline—a survival guide infused with wisdom, providing a roadmap through the complicated path of grief.

In the wake of a tragic loss—whether it be a miscarriage, a stillbirth, or the untimely passing of an infant—this invaluable resource unravels the layers of anguish that overwhelm grieving fathers. Written by a grieving dad, this book offers unflinching honesty and poignant insight, it also delves into the raw pain that accompanies such a profound loss, assuring these men that their emotions, however overwhelming, are both valid and shared by others who have walked a similar path.

Available on Amazon.

Roses and Memories

Roses have thorns, but we learn to be wary of them. As we hold a rose,



sometimes unexpectedly a thorn pierces our flesh and tiny drops of blood appear and we are wounded. But we learn to handle this flower gently, carefully, so as to avoid the sting of the thorns. Warily, we clasp the rose stem as we bring the beautiful and fragrant blossom closer in order to scrutinize in detail this lovely creation and to inhale its fragrance deeply.

So, too, it is with our memories. There are sad ones that we skirt gingerly, as we handle the thorny rose. There are bad ones that prick our thoughts and make our hearts bleed anew. But as we learn to deal with these, just as we become used to handling our rose, we can bring memories of good times and days and years of past happiness more fully into our hearts.

Thus, the most cherished moments of the past become like the beauty of the rose – something to fill us with a sense of wonder and feeling of thankfulness that God has given us some very precious days in our lives, just as he graced the stem of thorns with the radiant crown we call the rose.

**Nancy Bellinger
TCF, Milwaukee, WI**

Understand the Role of “Linking Objects”

- Grieving parents are often comforted by physical objects related to the child who died. It is not unusual to save clothing, jewelry, toys, locks of hair and other personal items
- Such “linking objects” will help you remember your child and honor the life that was lived. Such objects may help you heal.
- Never think being attached to these objects is morbid or wrong. If someone tells you you’re crazy for wearing your son’s sweatshirt or not washing your daughter’s pillowcase, ignore them. You’re not crazy; you’re simply holding on to what you have left.
- Never hurry into disposing of your child’s belongings. You may want to leave personal items untouched for months or sometimes years. This is okay as long as the objects offer comfort and don’t inhibit healing.
- When and only when you’re ready, ask a friend or family member to help you sort through your child’s belongings. Fill a memory box with significant objects and mementoes.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt
Healing A Parent’s Grieving Heart
100 Practical Ideas
After Your Child Dies

When we said our vows

and committed to death do us part, we could not have imagined the breadth and depth of the joys and sorrows we would face as a married couple. The following quote is credited to Eleanor Roosevelt:

“It is a curious thing in human experience, but to live through a period of stress and sorrow with another person creates a bond which nothing seems able to break.”

While we know this is not the case for every married couple, our experiences as Anna’s parents as well as other sorrows that have shadowed our life together, cemented our couple bond in a way we could not have imagined.

For those of you in the depths of your grief, you may feel distant from your spouse because you are both grieving in such different ways. That is normal. I think what helped us most was having the freedom in our relationship to be able to openly share our feelings and receiving loving and respectful acceptance no matter what those feelings were. Choose to show love to your spouse today even though you feel empty with nothing to give. Lovingly listen and accept your spouse’s feelings. Trust that your marriage can be strengthened rather than torn apart. Your marriage does not need to be a casualty of your child’s death.

Carol Webb

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter Meeting

October 24, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Bethany for Children & Families

1701 River Drive, in Moline, Illinois

(Please park in the east lot and go to the second floor.)

The next chapter meeting is on

November 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

(One week earlier due to Thanksgiving.)

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine

Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the Snyder and Hallenbaugh Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa, Chapter. The contact person is Tom Summit, 563.506.0103.

Rick's House of Hope

Rick's House of Hope serves children, ages three to 18, and family members from the Quad Cities and nearby counties. We serve those with grief, loss, or trauma issues. Death of a loved one and divorce are common; however, any sort of traumatic event or family change would fit our criteria, such as: bullying, teen dating victimization/harassment, crime victims, and other needs. The continuous groups are Family Together for all members of the family on Wednesday nights 5:00-7:00 p.m. and a Teen Night on Thursdays 5:00-7:30 p.m. All meetings are held at 852 Middle Road (Vera French), in Bettendorf, Iowa, and are free. Rick's House of Hope also does individual counseling/therapy. For more information, contact Lynne Miller, Program Manager, at millerl@verafrenchmhc.org or go to www.rhoh.org.

SHARE

A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. 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.

Phone Support

If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):

♥ Doug Scott, 563.370.1041, dns0826@gmail.com

♥ Rosemary Shoemaker, 309.945.6738, shoearth4@gmail.com

♥ Judy Delvecchio, 563.349.8895, delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com

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.

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 Resources	<p>There are resources on elements of grief with well-known experts in the field. To view the resources, go to https://www.opentohope.com/tv/.</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>
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. https://bereavedparentsusa.org.</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 at climb@climb-support.org. Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.</p>

I Laid a Rose On Your Grave

I laid a rose on your grave.
But that's not what I wanted to do.
I wanted to tickle you, play with you,
laugh with you, read to you, sing to you,
too.

I laid a rose on your grave today
and said a little prayer,
I wished so much with all my heart,
that you were here, not there.

I laid a rose on your grave today,
the tears falling from my eyes.
I will never forget when you were taken
away and left us with broken hearts and
sighs.

I laid a rose on your grave today.
Forget you I cannot do.
Each day, each week, each month,
I will always think of you.

Author Unknown

**What the caterpillar thinks is
the end of life, the butterfly
knows is the beginning**

Many years ago I shared the following thoughts in the newsletter: My belief that at my death or the return of Christ I would be reunited with my daughter gave me the perspective and hope I needed after her death. However, in the midst of my grief it was difficult to live daily with the infinite pain of my loss. I had never thought much about it before Anna died, but the Bible tells us that our life on earth is like a blink of an eye. What seems like never ending pain is but a moment in the time frame of eternity. In the August 1988 issue of *Guideposts* magazine, I read an article describing a tragic bus accident in Florida. The parents of a child killed in that accident were questioned as to how they could stand losing their daughter. Her parents responded, "You haven't lost someone, when you know where to find her. And we know where to find Angie, in heaven." And so, I know where my little "butterfly" is and someday I will join her because what seems here on earth to be the end is only the beginning. I have hope that the best is yet to come.

Carol Webb,
Quad City TCF



There will always be "those" days when you just can't force a smile, days you just don't have the energy to "pretend" that everything is fine. Know there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's a natural, very "normal" part of grief. It truly is okay, to not be okay. Be patient with yourself. Give yourself grace. Don't allow yourself to be imposed by the perceived expectations of others.

Charlotte, NC
TCF Newsletter

Love Gifts

If

If

If

If



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



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Moline, Illinois 61265

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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.