



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS



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

You are not alone in your grief.

The Quad City Chapter



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Dear Compassionate Friends,

I usually listen to books on tape when I am driving but have not been to the library recently so have been listening to the radio this week. Thursday morning, as I was driving to school, I heard the song, "Heaven is the Face," by Steven Curtis Chapman. Eighteen months ago, the five year old daughter of Steven and Mary Beth Chapman was killed in an accident. This song describes thinking about heaven in relationship to his child being there. I strongly identified with it because I remember how heaven became a much more real place to me because it connects me to Anna (as well as other loved ones.) I found the lyrics at: www.onlylyrics.com/hits.php?grid=11&id=1036348.

I think you can also hear the song played on this site as well. I looked at the website for Steven Curtis Chapman and found the following information about his recently released album. "Beauty Will Rise is a collection of 12 new and profound songs from Steven Curtis Chapman. Created in the past 18 months in the walk through the darkness of the loss of his daughter Maria, and while God continues to meet him there on the journey. Part lament, part praise, part grief, part hope, part wrestling, part pondering; these tracks resonate as Steven's personal Psalms. It is a desperate, hopeful, raw, personal and honest recording that is likely the most important of his already incredible 20 plus year ministry." For those of you who find healing in music you may find this resource very meaningful, encouraging, and a source of hope.

The following is the closing chorus of his song.

Oh God, I know, it's so much more than I can dream.

It's far beyond anything I can conceive.

*So God, You know, I'm trusting You until I see
Heaven in the face of my little girl, Heaven in the face of my
little girl.*

I am looking forward to the day when I will see Heaven in the face of my little girl too.

Sincerely, Jerry and Carol Webb



Wintersun

There are those days in winter when your world is frozen into a vision of eternal ice, when earth and air are strangers to each other, when sound and color seem forever gone. There are those days in winter when you feel like dying, when life itself surrenders you to anguish, to total mourning and to endless grief. And then it happens, from a bitter sky, a timid sun strides to his silent battle against the gray and hostile universe. It changes ice to roses, sky to song. And then it happens that your heart recalls some distant joy, gladness from the past. A slender light, then larger, braver, until your mind returns to hope and peace. Let memories be beauty in your life, like song and roses in the winter sun.

Sascha

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.



Darkness

by Ruth Senter
from Power for Living 2/21/93

Life sometimes draws a shade, and you are left in darkness for a while.

But, even in the dark, you have to get up and face the day.
The sun rises whether you can see it or not.

Clocks keep ticking.

Life goes on, and so must you.

Groping,
faltering,
with unsure step,
you face the day -
holding onto what you have:
your God
your life
those who love you
(even though you sometimes forget
them when it's dark).

And somewhere,
sometime,
through the murk,
you will be able to see
a thread of hope
weaving itself in and out
of the silent gloom.

Then you will remember:
God does not inflict darkness.
But when life draws a shade,
He is in the darkness with you.
You will recognize
His love again
And you will go on
with courage.



The first time a memory slides over us like a wave of warmth, we have turned the corner on our grief. When a once painful reminder evokes a gentle laugh, when we recognize the joy of the present in an image from the past, we have arrived at an important moment. Those memories are being transformed, unmistakable, into a message of hope. **From the Central Iowa TCF Chapter Newsletter December 2009.**

ONE WOMAN'S OPINION

When a child dies, the surviving parents and siblings of that child are often bewildered by the surge of many emotions such as denial, sadness, anger, guilt, and hopelessness, to name a few. They are also confounded by unexpected confusion, by difficulty in making decisions, and even sometimes by physical and/or mental collapse. Bereavement literature addresses all these hazards so that if one can concentrate on reading material for a few minutes at a time, one becomes aware that all these feelings are normal during the grieving process. One begins to grasp the idea that grief will not be entirely expended in a few weeks for the literature documents the months and sometimes even years that others have endured before rebuilding their lives to comfortable, enjoyable levels. And while many people are surprised that their grief is so persistent, they also find a kind of comfort in knowing that what they are experiencing is normal, particularly for bereaved parents and siblings.

It's surprising to me that much bereavement literature omits mention of the huge energy drain which comes with grief. If you are newly bereaved and have not yet realized that nearly all your energy is required just to deal with these many emotions that you are now confronting, then let me assure you that this is the case.

Don't expect yourself to complete projects within the same time frames as you once were able. And if you work outside the home, don't expect to be able to dazzle clients with your usual repartee. It simply takes too much energy just to dress in the morning, to make the simple decision to eat, to stifle tears in public, to keep your anger from inappropriately erupting, etc. There's very little energy left over for anything else. Everything will take longer than you think including grief recovery. You will, however, gradually rediscover yourself and rebuild a new life. Your new life will be a rich and full one in which the memories of your child will no longer produce pain. In fact those memories will continue to enrich your life. And that's the truth!

Meantime, conserve your energy when and where you can, and allow yourself time to grieve. Remember that those persons who deny (or stifle or stuff) their grief simply delay the process. The quickest way to recovery is straight through the grief, not around it!

Shirley Ottman TCF/North Texas

It seems like my spouse isn't grieving for our baby. Why are we so different?

The death of a baby can be difficult for both parents. It is important to give yourself permission to grieve the way you need to grieve, and to allow the same for your spouse. You and your partner may have similar feelings, yet you may feel miles apart. You may even have difficulty understanding how your partner is grieving even though you both lost this baby. As much as some people would like one, there is not a step-by-step process for grieving. Everyone grieves differently. Some people are quiet in their grief, choosing solitary activities. Others may be more expressive in how they show grief and may be more assertive in grieving, such as sharing openly, crying, or

sharing and making memories. For the quiet griever, they may be perceived as cold and irritable, or even depressed. Your partner may wonder why you don't feel the same emotions at the same times. You may need to take a long walk alone, while your partner may need to be held and hear that you are sad too. It is normal to question your spouse, or for your spouse to question where you are in your grief. People want to know that they are all right and that you are too. Finding ways to express to your partner how you grieve or what you need to get through the death of your baby is invaluable to your relationship.

From the SHARE website -
www.nationalshare.org/parents.html

Grief

There is no right way to grieve. The following are natural and normal grief responses:

- Having an empty feeling in the stomach, yet having a loss of appetite.
- Feeling restless and unable to concentrate.
- Feeling as though the loss is only a bad dream.
- Sensing the loved one in your presence, hearing his voice, or seeing his face.
- Unable to complete schoolwork.
- Finding yourself constantly thinking of your loved one.
- Feeling angry that he left you so suddenly without even saying good-bye.
- Needing to go over and over the details and experience of his death.
- Suffering mood changes over the slightest thing.
- Crying at unexpected times.

TCF Bulletin Board

Contact
www.preciousparents.org
which publishes a
newsletter titled
HEARTLINE for parents
whose infants have died.

The next monthly meeting of the QC Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is on Thursday, January 28, at 6:30 pm at the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Rock Island. The February meeting is on the 25th.

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.

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 The Compassionate Friends national Web site, and a portion of the purchase price will be donated to further the mission of TCF. This donation applies to all purchases, not just books, made from the Amazon.com site.

We Need Not Walk Alone

The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter
One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families that 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

Looking for more articles or previous copies of this newsletter? Go to www.Bethany-qc.org for copies of the last two years of the Quad City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends Newsletter. They are download-able in Adobe Acrobat format.

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.

Thank you to:
Cheryl Huges Empke, in memory of her son, Jonathon.
Glen and Sylvia Just, in memory of their son, Shawn.
George and Mae Mech, in memory of their daughter, Sara Ann.
Maureen Nowachek, in memory of her son, Nikolas Hartman.
Dave and Micki Quinn, in memory of their son.
Bill and Laurie Steinhauser, in memory of their daughter, Maggie, who died five years ago February.

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.



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 the 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.

Resources for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities Monthly Meeting: January 28, 2010, at 6:30-8:30 pm Bethel Assembly of God Church, 3535 38th Ave., Rock Island, IL

From John Deere Road, turn right at 38th St. (by Kmart) and go up the hill. Turn left on 38th Ave. The church is on your right. (Or turn into the church driveway off 38th; the church is on the west side of the road.) We meet in the downstairs fellowship hall. Please call Alan and Rosemary Shoemaker at (309)441-5586 or Michelle Cauwels at (309)755-0783 for directions or information. Next month: February 25, 2010.

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine	This group 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)263-2737 for directions or information.
Helping Heavy Hearts — Grief Support Group	This group meets the second Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm in the office of Family Resources located in Building 9 of the Annie Wittenmeyer complex off Eastern Avenue in Davenport. For more information, contact Kirby White at (563)271-5908.
Mom's Group meets in Aledo	This 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 the Happy Joe's in Aledo. For directions or more information, call Kay Forret at (309)582-7789.
Rick's House of Hope	Located at 4867 Forest Grove Drive in Bettendorf is a community resource is for children and adolescents dealing with grief. "Children and adolescents experiencing grief and trauma often need a safe place to express their feelings. They need companions for the journey of grief who are outside their family and not themselves grieving." The volunteer mentors at Rick's House of Hope provide this for young people and their families during painful and confusing times of grief. There is no fee for services. For more information, call (563)324-9580 or (563)421-7970. Find Rick's House of Hope on the web: www.genesishealth.com — keywords "children and grief."
Quad City SHARE	This is a support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday of each month at Grace Lutheran Church, 1140 East High Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information, call Chalyn Fornero-Green at (309)496-2568.
Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Fulton	Second Reformed Church, 703 14th Ave., Fulton, Illinois. This support group meets the second Monday of each month and is open to anyone who has lost a loved one through suicide. It's a safe place where survivors share their experiences and support each other. The group is completely free and light refreshments are served. For more information, call 589-3425.
Survivors of a Suicide Loss Support Group, Moline	For those who have lost someone to suicide, this group, facilitated by a peer survivor and a professional, meets the third Monday of the month in the Moline Library, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. For details, contact Joel M. Moore (309)235-7174 or gcsos@yahoo.com .

The Start of a New Year

We are well into the start of a new year now. For the newly bereaved, the start of anything new is hard. Time passes, though, no matter how we feel. There is no way to stop it. Time's healing power is revealed only in the looking back.



As I look back over the past three years, I realize there has been much improvement. It didn't seem to be getting better as I experienced it, though. Sometimes we just have to get through the days one at a time, and hope for better.

I stood in the Hallmark store recently, and my eyes filled with tears as I looked at Valentines. I longed to buy a card for Peter, and one for my dad, too. I wish they at least had a mailing address. I got on with the business of choosing cards, but it was hard to shake the sadness.

Time passes. It will get better. Hold on to that.

Sandy Page
TCF/North Georgia Chapter

More Suggestions for New Year's Resolutions

- ☼ Let's not try to imagine the future – take one day at a time.
- ☼ Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
- ☼ Don't shut out family and friends from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- ☼ Try to be realistic about your expectations – of yourself, your spouse, other family members, and friends.
- ☼ When a good day comes, relish it, don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last – it WILL come again and multiply.
- ☼ Take care of your health. Help your body heal, as well as your mind.
- ☼ Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you.



Mary Ehmann

A New Year's Prayer

From LaJean Sturman

At the beginning of the Jewish New Year, there is a special service held in remembrance of loved ones. This is a prayer that we say, and I thought you and your chapter might like it.

I remember in this solemn hour, beloved child, the many joys you afforded me during your lifetime. I recall the days when I delighted in your physical and mental growth, and planned for your future. Though death has taken you from me, you are not forgotten. Your spirit is enshrined in my heart.

Oh, Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for the precious gift which Thou did entrust to my keeping and which in Thine infinite wisdom Thou has called back unto Thyself. Though few were the years wherein I rejoiced with my child, many are the blessings that he brought into my household. Teach me to love more nobly and to extend my love and devotion to other children in thankfulness for the privilege of having had and loved this child, though but for a few brief years. Thus may his soul be bound up in the bond of life and (her) memory remain an inspiration to me. Amen



The Image of Grief

I am a tree, standing alone in the early winter. I feel cold, empty, gray, and ugly. The winds of grief have ripped away a branch and have left me unbalanced – with a great gaping hole. The sap of my innermost being rushes to the hole to provide a balm for the pain of the open wound. The icy cold rain of my weeping falls through the shaking of my boughs. I continue to sway in the harsh gales of reality, and the keening of the winds are the voice of my heartache. But... Under the ground there is life. Each root of love, friendship, care, family, and faith is feeding into the trunk, and I know for a certainty that surely spring will come again! The bark of time will cover the rending wound. The scar will always be there, but the drain on my heart will be over. The leaves will burst forth and gently surround the wound with breezes of living memories and promises of life to come. My boughs will be heavy with the wonder of living. Nestled near the scarred trunk, secure in the knowledge that God is my refuge and strength, the sweet bird of happiness will sing again.



Anite King, TCF/Hagerstown, MD

Hopes and Wishes for Bereaved Parents

To the newly bereaved, we wish you patience, patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, and even years ahead.

To the bereaved siblings, we wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those of you who are single parents, we wish you all the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.

To those of you who are plagued with guilt, we wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances and that your child knew that.

To those of you who have suffered multiple losses, those who have experienced the death of more than one child, we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who are deeply depressed, we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."

To those experiencing marital difficulty after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To all fathers, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.

To those with few or no memories of your child, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and that your grief is real.

To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or all your children, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To those of you who are unable to cry, we wish you healing tears.

To those of you who are tired, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding that you need and the assurance that you are loved.

And finally, to all of you, we wish you hope, and peace in the year to come, and a reminder that, "We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends."

Joe Rousseau, TCF Past President