



The Compassionate Friends

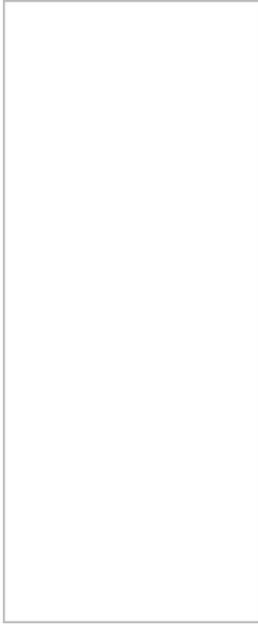
Quad City Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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 Compassionate Friends
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September 2015
Volume XXVIII, Number 7

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I have been reading a book, *Gratitude in Grief*, by Kelly Buckley. Kelly wrote the book after her 23 year old son, Stephen, drowned in 2009. Stephen's twin brother was still born so she is twice a bereaved parent. I was particularly moved by her desire to make sense of her grief by practicing gratitude.

In the preface to the book, Kelly writes, "Shortly after Stephen's death, I told my son we would need to find one little thing each day to hold on to, to help us when we felt sad. I knew that I needed to look for those little things to take comfort from in the dark days of mourning. And, to my surprise, I found countless things to be grateful for each day. It created a shift in my thinking, in my grieving, and in my life."

In an effort to become more intentional about daily devotions, in January of this year, I began journaling short statements for each day reflecting my gratitude. I have found this to be a useful practice and appreciate looking back at the blessings big and small, that have touched my life this year. When our grandson was critically ill for weeks, I found that keeping a list of our daily blessings helped me to focus away from the pain and turmoil in our lives, at least for a little while.

In your journey through grief following the death of your beloved child, I would encourage you to try, like Kelly to find one little blessing each day to hold on to and then write it down. Perhaps you will find that on some days you can even find several things. We believe that through the intentional practice of gratitude you may also find hope and healing in the days and weeks to come.

*Sincerely,
Jerry and Carol Webb*

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We never really get over devastating loss. In the thick of it, we almost stop breathing; sometimes even wishing we could. And we know deep within that we will never be the same. Yet, one day we feel the sun on our face again. We find ourselves smiling at a child or a joke or a memory. And at that moment, we realize we are finding our way back. Changed forever? Yes. But also softer, deeper, more vulnerable and more loving too. And we are breathing again.

Gratitude, even in grief, can uplift and transform your life and we can transform that thankfulness to make all our days better. Gratitude is the one miracle that we can bring about through our own free will.

This is not to say I don't hurt. My heart physically aches for my child,

aches for my remaining son and his pain; it aches for what my husband and I and our families have lost, it aches with each passing day for the reality of this situation. It is not going away. But, for some unknown reason, I have decided to embrace it. I am embracing the ache, the pain, and I am seeing where it takes me and how it changes me. I think my past has allowed me to see that resisting a change will only make it worse and with change, comes true vision, but you have to be brave enough to look at it. The true and only way through is to embrace it, let I happen, and learn. And, when you get to the other side of the grief, you pick yourself up, stick those lessons in your pocket, and become a better person because of it. I've promised myself, God, and Stephen to live that purpose and be grateful for the lessons I have been given.

Kelly Buckley

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

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.

<http://www.quadcitytcf.org>

The Power of Talking

One of the most valuable things you can do is to talk through your grief with a good listener. We now know that the stress level of grieving people can be cut in half when they talk about their loss to someone who does not judge or advise them. Having someone as a backboard to hear your thoughts and feelings bounced off is the greatest gift you can receive. Too often, everyone wants to make you feel better; so they try to give you advice rather than just listen.

Repeating your story is healthy. Talking about your loss works like a sponge. Each time you talk, a little more of the emotion is squeezed out and the need to talk about the incident becomes less after awhile. It's as if your story is being framed within your mind. Soon you can hang it on the wall. You'll always have it there to look at whenever you want, but you no longer have to carry the whole thing around with you and be emotionally burdened and controlled by the past.

There will be times when no one is around to listen. Keep a journal to write down your thoughts and feelings. Buy a journal just for this purpose. Write when there's no one around and you need to talk. Talk out loud as you write, if it makes you feel better. Research shows journaling decreases stress by up to 35%.

Write a letter to your loved one who

left you or died. This can be a very powerful process. Share your thoughts and feelings. Pour them out on paper. You may feel emotionally drained afterwards. You may even find it helpful to write a letter back to yourself from the person who died or left.

Others have found that talking aloud or into a tape recorder is helpful. Playing the tape back and listening to yourself decreases the stress even further. Some stand in front of their mirror to talk. As a friend once said to me, "Don't worry about talking out loud to yourself. It's good to have a conversation with an intelligent person."

However you do it, remember: Talking it out is one of the best medicines of all.

While some people won't want to listen to you, you will also find they can say some naïve, hurtful things. It helps to know they do not understand the impact of their words. Some really want to help but do not know how.

Know that you honor the person every time you mention their name. People will know they made a difference in their time on earth and in others' lives.

A feeling shared is a feeling diminished!

Excerpts from "More Than Surviving, Caring for Yourself While You Grieve,"
A Centering Corporation Resource by
Kelly Osmont, MSW, LCSW

Listen to Your Heart When your heart says "cry," but your mind says "don't," listen to your heart. It could be pride, not your mind, that is saying "don't cry," for tears are hard for one's pride to accept. Crying because your child died does not mean that you are not a strong person. Tears do not mean you are having problems with emotional instability. You are crying because you hurt. Next time your heart says "cry," listen to it. In the long run you'll feel better.

Rose Moen, Carmel-Indianapolis, Indiana TCF

Regional Conference
October 2-4, 2015
"Hope and Healing for Our Broken
Hearts"
Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester, MN

Speakers will be Mitch Carmody, author and bereaved dad and sibling; Alan Pedersen, Executive Director of TCF and bereaved dad; Dr. Heidi Horsley, TCF National Board Member and Executive Director of Open to Hope and bereaved sibling; and Glen Lord, vice president of the TCF Board of Directors, author of "The Grief Toolbox," and bereaved dad. A special Friday night program with Carla Blowey of *Dreaming Kevin* and Mitch Carmody of *Letters to My Son* will focus on signs from our children and dream work.

More information is available on the national chapter's website. We will also have information available at our local chapter as well. More updates will follow as the event gets closer.

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

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild

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

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.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

The depth of your sorrow diminishes slowly and, at times, imperceptibly. Your recovery is not an act of disloyalty to the one who has died. Nor is it achieved by forgetting the past. Try to strike a delicate balance between a yesterday that should be remembered and a tomorrow that must be created.

TCF, Atlanta, Georgia

About Being Strong

by Sascha

Many people are convinced that being strong and brave means trying to think and talk about "something else." But we know that being strong and brave means thinking and talking about our child until our grief begins to be bearable. That is **strength**. That is **courage**. And only thus can "being strong and brave" help us to heal.

USE THE NAME OF THE PERSON WHO DIED

When you're talking about the death or about your life in general, don't avoid using the name of the person who died.

Using the name lets others know they can use it, too.

Acknowledge the significance of the death by talking about the person who died: "I remember when David . . .," "I was thinking of Sarah today because . . ."

Encourage your friends and family to use the name of the person who died, too. We often love to hear that special name.

Flip through a baby name book at a local bookstore or library and look up the name of the person who died. Reflect on the name's meaning as it relates to the unique person you loved.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt,
Healing Your Grieving Heart

This I Can Share

I have not experienced the death of my only child, **but some of you have**. I have not experienced a child dying by suicide, **but some of you have**. I have not watched my child fight a terminal illness, **but some of you have**. None of us would dare say, "I know just how you feel."

Even if our experiences are similar, no two situations are exactly alike.

But I can say,
I remember the pain when my child died
– I remember the feelings of insanity.
I remember the feelings of aloneness – I
remember wishing I could die.
I remember wanting to share something
with my child, but he wasn't there.

So, my friend, our experiences have parts in common. And parts that are different. So, why **should** we listen to each other? Do we have **anything** to share? - Do you know what heartbreak feels like?

All of us do.

Do you know the numbness of grief?

All of us do.

Do you know what it's like to have empty arms?

All of us do.

So let's learn what we can of our commonalities.

We love a child our child left too soon.

This we can share with you!

by Marilyn Heavlin



DONATE

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:

Diane Stock in memory of her granddaughter, Claire

Dave and Micki Quinn in memory of their son, Bryce

Maria Steinbaugh in memory of her son, William Burke.

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.**

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 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.



Rebuilding Your Life One Piece at a Time

Death, especially unexpected death, changes one's life in ways that cannot be expected. With the death of someone close, one's world is forever changed. One analogy I have found myself using with clients is the following: If you were to imagine the day before your loved one died, there was an intact picture of your life. The picture may not have been perfect, but it was there and it made sense. There was a beginning, a middle, and an expected end. With death comes the destruction of that picture. It is as if the picture is taken out of your hands, smashed to the ground in a thousand pieces and then some of the most treasured pieces are forever taken away.

The challenge with grief is to then take all of those pieces which are left and attempt to make a new picture. The picture of the life you once had is impossible to recreate; as much as one may try, it cannot be recreated with pieces missing. A new picture must be assembled with the pieces that are left and with new pieces that are picked up along the way.

The process of "putting the pieces back together" is one that often feels chaotic and confusing. It may sometimes be surprising to find out how much thinking is involved in the grief process. Thoughts bounce around trying to connect "what was" with "what is" and struggle to make sense out of what seems to be incomprehensible.

With each piece, the bereaved, through trial and error, find where each piece belongs or even if it belongs at all. This process is different for every person and does not adhere to any kind of timeline. This (what feels like endless) thinking is the work that grief demands—it is the creation of a new picture of your life—created one piece at a time.

Written by Stephanie Elson, lifted from the "Tears to Hope" August/September 2007 newsletter of The Amelia Center, Birmingham, AL, providing a place of hope for grieving children, parents and families. www.ameliacenter.org

REMEMBERING YOU

The fall is here.
And all my memories flood my mind.
Memories of time past
And memories that could've been.
So many times I see your face, I hear your voice, I
touch your hand, I feel your presence
But only in my mind.
Three years have gone by
Has it been that long?
It seems like only yesterday
And still this sadness lingers.
Sadness . . .the sadness of losing you
And the sadness of missing you
And yes, even the sadness of remembering you.



Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Upcoming Meetings:

Thursday, September 24, 2015, 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>.

The next meeting is October 22, 2015, 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 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 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 ♥ Kirby White 563.271.5908 kombo100@msn.com ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearth3@mchsi.com ♥ Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com <p>Kay, Kirby, Doug, Rosemary, and Judy, and 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>

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.bereavedparentsusa.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.

