



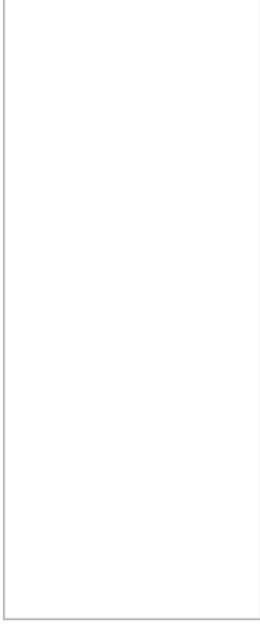
The Compassionate Friends
 Quad City Area Chapter
 Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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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Volume XXXI **March 2018** Number 3

Dear Compassionate Friends,

This March 27th, it will be 34 years since our precious daughter died. Back in the 80s, the Family and Medical Leave Act did not exist. During the weeks of our daughter's health struggles, Jerry had to work, since vacation time was limited. Even after her death, he was back on the job within a few days. His boss at the time told him that he was going to give him additional work projects so he would not have time to think about his family issues. (not helpful).

At one Quad City Compassionate Friends meeting, the question was asked how long it would take to heal after the death of a child. The response from one man, "My employer thinks that three days will do it." Over our years of TCF involvement, we have heard many stories of compassionate employers and coworkers who were supportive and encouraging to their bereaved employees and work colleagues. Some companies have employee assistance programs that provide resources for employees in crisis. However after the death of our child, our whole life changes, radically and forever. The rhythm of our life is altered; relationships with family members are affected. We may be unable or unwilling to complete the most routine of tasks at home. Yet, as much as life around us might have changed in our home environment, life in the workplace has carried on without us. When we return to work, we have to re-join that world and try to immerse ourselves in it, although our hearts are broken.

The grieving process takes time. Healing happens gradually; it can't be forced or hurried. Almost all bereaved parents who are employed will have to return to their job and continue working while they are also journeying through grief. There are no quick fixes or easy answers, but this month we have included several articles about returning to work after the death of a child. One word of caution: some bereaved parents jump back into work, immerse themselves and use constant work as a way to avoid dealing with the feelings of grief. Busy-ness does not mean you are coping and adjusting to grief in a healthy way. In the article "The Myth of Keeping Busy" ideas for self-care while you are grieving are explored. Remember that the grief process is one step at a time; one day at a time.

Sincerely, Jerry & Carol Webb

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Self Care in Grief – The Myth of Keeping Busy

When experiencing grief keeping busy only serves as a distraction that buries the pain underneath every activity you can pile on top of it. It only helps to make one more day go by which in itself connects to the myth that time heals all wounds. If this were true when someone breaks their leg we would say to them, “Don’t be upset, time will heal this wound.”

Beyond all this... keeping busy is *not* self-care. So, how *can* we take care of ourselves while grieving? Well, here are a few ways we can truly care for ourselves during this time when we need self-care more than ever:

Face your feelings – the painful emotions associated with grief are a natural and normal response to loss. You can try and suppress them or hide from them all you want, but in the end this will only prolong the grieving process. Acknowledging your pain and taking responsibility for your feelings will help you avoid the complications often associated with unresolved grief such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and health problems.

Express your feelings – the most effective way to do this is through some tangible or creative expression of your emotions such as journaling, writing a letter expressing your apologies, forgiveness and the significant emotional statements you wish you had said, or art projects celebrating the person’s life or what you lost.

Feel whatever you feel – it’s okay to be angry, to yell at God, to cry or not to cry. It’s also okay to laugh, to find moments of joy, or to let go when you’re ready. Your grief is your own and no one can tell you when you should be “over it” or when to “move on.”

Look after your health but be aware of short-term relievers – these can be food, alcohol/drugs, anger, exercise, TV, movies, books, isolation, sex, shopping, workaholism (the trap I fell into), etc. Most of these are not harmful, in fact some are healthy, but they become harmful when they are used for the wrong reasons...to cover-up, hide or suppress our grief. Try and get good sleep, try and make healthy food choices, try and be physically active but more importantly, allow yourself to grieve as this is the best form of self-care.

Excerpted from a blog post by Nick Frye at whatsyourgrief.com



Reflections Board

Be prepared that you may feel a total apathy about your job or want to quit. Grief changes our priorities completely. Suddenly the job you loved might feel totally meaningless. Everyone around you still cares about deadlines and reports and you feel like none of that matters anymore. Don't make any hasty decisions. Give yourself some time before writing that resignation letter or screaming at your coworkers that they don't understand what is important in life.

whatsyourgrief.com

You don't go around grieving all the time, but the grief is still there and always will be.

Nigella Lawson

We found that our circle of friends shifted... We were surprised and disappointed that people we thought were good friends became distant, uneasy, and seemed unable to help us. Others who were casual acquaintances became suddenly close, sustainers of life for us. Grief changes the rules and sometimes rearranges the combinations.

Martha Whitmore Hickman

People keep telling me that life goes on, but, to me, that's the saddest part.

And can it be that in a world so full and busy the loss of one weak creature makes a void in any heart, so wide and deep that nothing but the width and depth of vast eternity can fill it up.

Charles Dickens

Spring Waiting
Winter's end is almost here. Crocus struggle in the snow. Sunlight has a softer glow. Is the winter long this year?
Spring waits, watching for a cue... Not to rush your grief away. But to be there, when you say. Spring is waiting, friend, for you. Find a little time for Spring. Even if your days are troubled. Let a little sunshine in, let your memories be doubled. Take a little time to see all the things your child was seeing and your tears will help your heart find a better time for being.

Sascha Wagner

Back to work after our child has died

Work relationships

Most of us find that relationships with our work colleagues change when we first return to work. We feel alienated and they feel awkward. The usual trivial conversations, which are part of most workplaces, irritate or distress us, and we have trouble relating to what seems important to others. We may not wish to join them for social occasions outside work; if we are asked and refuse too often, they may stop asking. It is not easy for anyone.

It is also difficult for us if people unthinkingly make insensitive remarks, perhaps unfortunate comparisons with the death of a pet or other loss that feels insignificant compared to the loss of our child. We feel annoyed by this thoughtlessness, but have no easy way to show how hurt we are without making everyone even more uncomfortable. This means that we can carry a burden of resentment against people for their insensitivity. Hopefully, we will find a way to deal with these problems even though our work colleagues may not understand the way our grief is affecting us.

Fortunately, for some of us the warmth of companionship, the building of friendships and the encouragement to keep going that we have found in our place of work have been crucial in helping us back on our feet again.

TCF/UK

Where Are You Now?

Where are you now
but in my heart
your voice clear in my mind.
I know we're never far apart
mind to mind
heart to heart
and, maybe, if I'm fortunate,
soul to soul
we connect
you, watching over me
me, so unaware
but, oh, to actually see you
how you've grown and changed
still, oh, to embrace you
feeling your strength and youth
breathing in your life
now held only within
mind's eye
heart of hearts and lonely soul.

Victor Montemurro – TCF/Brookhaven, Medford NY

FINDING

It is the end of February, which means we are nearing the end of what has often been a brutal winter. While gazing at the mountains of snow piled high in my front yard and the foot-long icicles hanging from my roof, it is hard to imagine that spring will ever come. We have endured bitter cold winds that have chilled us to the bone and treacherous roads that we have cautiously traveled. The days have been long and dark and often free of sunlight. No matter how long you have been a native of the Upper Midwest, I know we all will be glad when it comes to an end.

However, as I described these thoughts about winter, I felt as if I was describing the days of my early grief. At that point, I did not believe that a day would ever come when I would thaw from the chill that had overtaken my body and mind. The bleakness of my existence during those early months after Nina died is almost frightening to remember; it is so difficult to even conceive of that much pain. I was anesthetized from some of its cruelty by the protective blanket of numbness that blessedly shielded me from the gale force of such overpowering sorrow. How could I ever feel spring in my heart again?

Spring had always been my favorite season. The air had a certain freshness to it that I would drink in. Simply put, it always made me feel happy and light of heart. Spring was our reward for surviving the freezing winter months that preceded it. It brought a smile to my face and a bounce to my step. However, it was the spring of the year where my heart was irretrievably broken. It was during this exquisite season of warm, lilac-scented breezes and sun-kissed mornings where my sweet daughter Nina's life would end.

I wondered if my thoughts about spring would ever be the same. Rather than anticipate with gladness the coming of

spring, I dreaded it with the knowledge that it contained the anniversary of her death. The smell of the air and the look of the sky that I once found exhilarating now

SPRING AGAIN

brought me back to my darkest day. I know that anyone who has lost a loved one to death, no matter the season, understands.

Will spring come again to your life? In the almost six years since Nina died, has it come to mine? Looking back at my description of the winter of "my early grief," I know that I have come a long way from that time of desolation. I have found, especially after the first two years, that with each subsequent spring, I have rediscovered some of the pleasure I used to feel. I have learned that just because I have found things to feel joyful about again, it doesn't mean I am dishonoring my daughter's memory. I now take her along with me in my mind and my heart. I try to retrieve memories of the dandelion bouquets she so carefully gathered and presented to me, the rides to the park in the Radio Flyer, our talks while sunning on the deck, and, of course, shopping for spring clothes! Her favorite pastime! I will always feel tenseness, apprehension and sadness as May 11th draws near, but I no longer hold it against spring.

It is a slow, difficult journey, this grief pathway we travel. It is as treacherous as the roads we maneuvered following the winter storms, never knowing when we will hit an icy patch on the road and be thrown into a tailspin. Yet, we must travel it if we are to find any measure of peace and healing.

Please be patient with yourself as you are working hard to survive this winter in your heart. Trust that spring, though a much different one than the one we knew before our beloved child died, will come again.

Cathy Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, Minnesota

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 of Long Term Illness; Loss of a Step Child; Loss of a Child with Special Needs.

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
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.

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.

Love Gifts

As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from this newsletter, they often wish to make a **Love Gift** to help with the work of our chapter. This is a way to remember a beloved child, and to help other parents who mourn the loss of their child.



Thanks to:

Lisa Carver, in memory of her son, Clayton.
 Laurie and Bill Steinhauser, honoring the life of Anna Webb, daughter of Jerry and Carolyn Webb.

Donations 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 donation or love gift, please send it or to our chapter leader, Doug Scott, 6550 Madison Street, Davenport, Iowa, 52806. Checks should be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.

41st TCF National Conference July 27 - 29, 2018 - The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. "Gateway to Hope and Healing" is the theme of this event, which promises more of this year's great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. Details will be posted on the national website as well as on the [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heart-warming experience.

Contact the Editors

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. Please contact:
Jerry and Carol Webb
 390 Arbor Ridge, Benton Harbor, Michigan, 49022
CarolynPwebb@gmail.com



Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

March 22, 2018, at 6:30 pm at

Bethany for Children & Families,

1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265

The next regular monthly meeting is Thursday, April 26, 2018,

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

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

Inclement Weather: The winter season is upon us now with unpredictable weather. If the weather is severe the night of our meetings, please use good judgment before venturing out. Listen to local TV and radio stations or check cancelations online. If most school activities and other events are cancelled, we will not meet. You can check the website or call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) to double check if the meeting has been cancelled.

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	Rick's House of Hope serves children ages 3-18, 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. At this time, Rick's has a Holiday Healing group for children experiencing loss on Tuesday nights 5:30-7:00 until the Christmas holiday. The continuous groups are Family Together for all members of the family on Wednesday nights 5:00-7:00 pm and a Teen Night on Thursdays 5:00-7:30 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806 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, still-birth, 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"> ♥ Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com ♥ Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoearthb3@mchsi.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	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.
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. https://bereavedparentsusa.org
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.

Returning to Work After Losing a Child

After a death in the family, the time comes when grieving family members begin to re-enter the routines of everyday life. Out-of-town relatives return home. Children go back to school and grieving adults must get back to work. For some, returning to work is a welcome change. It is a part of their life that did not include their loved one, and it can create a break from what has been an ever-present grief. The office may be the only part of life that seems normal and routine.



But for many who have experienced a recent loss, returning to work can be difficult. If you are grieving, you may be dreading the thought of returning to the business world for several reasons: Seeing co-workers for the first time exposes you to “I’m so sorry” comments, and they remind you of your loss. As difficult as these expressions of sympathy may be to hear, they are better than no acknowledgement at all. A simple “thank you” is all the response that is necessary. You do not owe anyone a story you do not wish to share.

You may have a high-pressure job with many deadlines and little room for mistakes. You have probably noticed that it is hard to concentrate and retain information in your grief. You may be easily distracted, and errors can occur. It is useful to check everything twice, or ask a co-worker or supervisor to review what you have done. Let your co-workers or supervisor know how difficult things seem

at this time and where you need their help.

You may worry about breaking down in front of colleagues or in the middle of an important meeting. This can happen, but save yourself embarrassment by briefly letting people know what has occurred in your life. If you need to excuse yourself, do so.

Before returning to work, try some of the following suggestions:

Be sure your office knows what happened. Give them as much information as you are comfortable sharing. Sometimes the circumstances around a death are very personal; if people ask too

many questions, let them know you are not comfortable going into that right now.

Allow one key person to have enough information to keep speculation at a minimum. Keep him or her informed about funeral arrangements, time away from work, and how you are doing. Let your office know you want to be included in regular e-mail correspondence so you can be kept updated on what is happening at the office.

You might arrange to go into the office to meet co-workers for lunch, getting past the first encounters and “I’m so sorry” comments. It can make it easier to go back to work at a later date.

Consider returning for half-days for a week or so, easing your way back into the normal routine.

Ask a grief therapist — or ask your employer to arrange for one — to meet with co-workers, especially if the death was sudden or traumatic. An example:
continued on the next page

Continued from the page 6

One employer called a grief therapist to help employees after a co-worker reported the death of her child. These co-workers had some good questions: “What do we do with the pictures of our kids that are on our desks? Should we put them away because it is going to be so hard on her?” The answer: “It will be hard for her to see the pictures. But she must deal with it at some time, and it is better she do it with people like you who care for her. It may be worse if you put all the pictures away. She’d surely notice, and know it is because of her. Expect her to keep the picture of her dead child on her desk, and it is okay to comment on it.”

Encourage your co-workers to learn more about grief so they can better understand what you are going through. Let them know what is helpful to you when you are having a particularly hard day: giving you a hug, allowing you to have some alone time, fixing a cup of coffee, or going for a short walk. The more they know what they can do for you, the more comfortable they will be with your tears—and the more comfortable you will be in their presence.

Keep good communication going. Set up regular meetings with your supervisor,

STANDING

People say
“Oh you are doing so well,
you are so strong,
you are an inspiration!”
We do not feel strong.

We feel shaken to the core,
saddened beyond belief,
pain beyond comprehension.
Forever changed.

What do they see that we cannot see?

colleagues or employees to talk about what is happening. Ask for feedback. Good, clear communication will discourage idle and unhelpful chatter.

It is important to tell your story. But be careful not to share your feelings too much or too often. If you notice people getting bored, looking at their watch, or changing the subject, you may be overdoing it. Ask a trusted co-worker if you are talking too much. However, the need to talk to help yourself heal is very real; setting up an appointment with your company’s EAP (Employee Assistance Professional), contacting your local hospice, or joining a support group can give you an appropriate place where you can say what you need to say.

You may need help with certain projects or deadlines. Don’t forget to thank those who help you. Small rewards are often appreciated, such as coffee break snacks, flowers, public thanks at a meeting, or an appreciative e-mail.

Thinking ahead will make your return to work easier and less painful. Healing from the death of a loved one is a long, slow process, but getting back into a routine is an important step in the journey.

Helen Fitzgerald, Connecticut

That a horrible storm,
unexpectedly ripped through
our lives and we are
still standing.

They are amazed.
We are paralyzed.

Still standing.



Julie Short,
TCF/Southeastern Illinois Chapter
In Memory of Kyra