



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

Volume XXX **September 2017**

Number 7

Dear Compassionate Friends,

On August 1, after 43 years of living in the Quad Cities, the Webbs pulled ourselves out by the roots to be transplanted in the sandy soil of Southwest Michigan. Many evenings we are on the beach watching the sun go down over Lake Michigan (only a mile from our new home). It is an amazing sight to see the vibrant sun disappear over the rim of the lake. The following article from the Lubbock, Texas, newsletter particularly struck me as we have observed several “afterglows” this past month.

AFTERGLOW

We came to the beach in Florida intending to watch the sun set over the Gulf. The sun had already disappeared over the horizon, apparently lost beyond the waters. After a brief period, emerging from where the sun had set arose a brilliant afterglow, seemingly covering the sky with a growing, pulsating display of molten gold.

I was struck by the spectacular beauty emanating from the sun already gone from view. Involuntarily I thought, just like our children! When the sunshine of their lives disappeared, we expected eternal darkness to remain. After our initial period of grief, we find that each child has left an afterglow – the memories of the beauty and joy their lives brought us.

It is incumbent upon each of us left on the beach of mortal life to allow ourselves to maintain that afterglow and continue to bring meaning to the “suns” of our lives who have disappeared from view “over the horizon.”

Hopefully, we can help one another honor our children’s lives by perpetuating their afterglow with our own meaningful lives of hope, optimism, and peace.

Toba S. Cohen, TCF, Bustleton, Pennsylvania

Our years of editing this newsletter have been part of the “afterglow” of our daughter’s life. Each time we can reach out to another bereaved parent we are reminded of the purpose and meaning of her all too short life. We are glad that through our partnership with Bill and Laurie Steinhauser we can continue what we believe is important work reaching out to bereaved parents to remind them that WE DO NOT WALK ALONE.

Sincerely,
 Jerry & Carol Webb

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The members of the Compassionate Friends of the Quad Cities and the Angel of Hope cordially invite you to the dedication of the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden

Sunday, September 24 at 3:00 PM

**Moline Memorial Park
5001 34th Avenue | Moline, IL 61265**

Contact Lisa Rains at qcangelofhope@gmail.com or 309-912-1152 for more information.

Angel of Hope Dedication Ceremony

Sunday, September 24, 2017 at 3:00 pm

Moline Memorial Park

5001 34th Avenue, Moline, Illinois

Please bring a long stem white rose or carnation if you are able.

Deep grief sometimes is almost like a specific location, a coordinate on a map of time. When you are standing in that forest of sorrow, you cannot imagine that you could ever find your way to a better place. But if someone can assure you that they themselves have stood in that same place, and now have moved on, sometimes this will bring hope.

Elizabeth Gilbert,
Eat, Pray, Love

The Death of the Young

People ask: "Why do children or young people die, when they have lived so little?"

How do you know that they have lived so little? This crude measure of yours is time, but life is not measured in time. This is just the same as to say, "Why is this saying, this poem, this picture, this piece of music so short, why was it broken off and not drawn out to the size of the longest speech or piece of music, the largest picture?" As the measure of length is inapplicable to the meaning (or greatness) of productions of wisdom or poetry, so - even more evidently - it is inapplicable to life. How do you know what inner growth this soul accomplished in its short span, and what influence it had on others?

from *Spiritual Life Cannot be Measured*, by Tolstoy. Reprinted from TCF/Atlanta Newsletter July/August, 2002

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.

Donations and 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.

Thank you to:

Bill and Laurie Steinhauer, for their love gift in honor of their nephew and friend, Pat Hagerty V, on the upcoming first anniversary of his passing.

If you would like to send a donation or love gift, please send it or to our chapter leader, Doug Scott, c/o Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265. Checks can be made out to *The Compassionate Friends*. Your gifts are tax deductible.



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.

About TCF...

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>

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.



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.

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 Webinars	<p>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.</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>
Our Newsletter	<p>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, Alaska 99509.</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. http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/BP_NatlNews.htm.</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, climb@climb-support.org. Include your full name, your location, and your reason for interest.</p>

There is nothing like the death of child.

Life can't ever be the same after it. People are not the same after it. Parents become inevitably transformed. Their whole beings, shifted. Their marriages, rocked and jilted by one of life's most unimaginable tragedies. Many believe divorce rates following the loss of a child are markedly higher when compared to other couples. But, remember, it's not a definite. There are *signs your marriage will survive the loss of a child*.

Although the actual rates of divorce following the death of a child haven't been explored in more than 10 years, one can assume that married couples dealing with such a tragedy have an incredibly tough road ahead of them. It's a grieving journey. One that has no predictable outcomes, and one that has no set timeline. Everyone grieves differently.

Unfortunately through this grieving process, the reality is that some couples will inevitably split. Dr. Jessica Zucker, a clinical psychologist that specializes in pregnancy loss and miscarriage, says that sometimes a stressor as enormous as the loss of a child can exacerbate existing issues that may have existed before. And it can also reveal a new dysfunction. But that doesn't mean it can't be worked through.

Zucker says even the most struggling couples can survive. There is no definitive way of knowing if a marriage is going to make it. Which is kind of the beauty of it. The most unsuspecting couples, the ones that look the most broken, can ultimately be repaired. "Some of us thrive and can decide to make a marriage stronger after something so tragic happens," says Zucker. And although no one can predict whether a couple's marriage can survive the loss of a child, there are signs that the couple will ultimately make it.



Here are seven signs your marriage will survive the loss of a child.

- **You and Your Partner Are Being Honest with Each Other** - When both partners are honest about their grief, it goes a long way towards working through the emotional pain. "I've seen some couples where they feel like their spouse is so sick of hearing them grieve that they just try to put on a happy face for them because they're feeling kind of self-conscious," Zucker says. Pretending you've adequately dealt with your grief, or lying about it, won't bring true understanding to the relationship.
- **You Both Make A Mutual Commitment To Heal** - Some people may never fully heal from such harrowing experience. But both spouses need to be committed to making the relationship survive. That commitment can be agreeing to read books together, joining support groups, or going to therapy.

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- **You Honor Each Other's Way Of Grieving** - It's unique for everyone. Some people are very vocal. Others become almost paralyzed and mute while grieving. "Someone can seem like they're doing OK one day, then a month later, it pops up," says Zucker, "so really trying to honor each person's journey and know that grief can look different - it doesn't necessarily mean that anyone is in any less pain." If spouses stay open-minded about what grief looks like, they'll discover that everyone has their own way of showing (or not showing) their emotions. Everyone has their own way of dealing. And coping. And all on different timelines.
- **You And Your Spouse Connect Through Grief** - The baseline is talking and communication for a connection between grieving spouses. That doesn't necessarily mean emotional or deep conversations. It can be as simple as consistent check-ins throughout the day via text saying, "How are you feeling today?" People can get busy with work, travel and social commitments, but making a point to check in through the busyness, with your spouse, is key to surviving such a significant loss. It's also important to spend time together, whether it's cuddling, taking walks, eating – just being together, even if there are no spoken words.
- **Both Of You Help Memorialize/Ritualize the Death** - When a couple chooses to celebrate the life of their child in meaningful ways, it forces the spouses to work together, and *be* together. "It'd be beautiful for a couple to carve our time or do something to honor this child, even when they don't want to," says Zucker.
- **You Don't Turn Elsewhere For Support** - Spouses sometimes turn to unhealthy substances like drugs or alcohol during times of tragedy. Doing so is dangerous. And it risks excluding their spouses from the grieving process. But it's not just about substance or alcohol abuse either. Turning to another human being, a person who's not your spouse (a parent, a sibling, best friend) is counter-productive and possibly damaging to the relationship. Venting to someone else can have the unintended effect of pushing your spouse away. The best way spouses can support each other is to turn to each other for help.
- **You Never Really Know If You're Going to Stay Together** - Both comforting and unnerving is the ambiguity. As mentioned earlier, sometimes the most unsuspecting couples who don't show any of the above signs can end up turning things around. The positive part of this uncertainty is that it gives hope, to even the most seemingly hopeless couples. Although the immediate, knee-jerk reaction may be to try to be happy again, Zucker really believes that we need to take our time with grief, personally and communally. "In our culture too many people are trying to get rid of their grief and heal as quickly as possible – in the case of losing a child, there's no way to rush that," she says. And because she believes grief has no timeline, that means it's never too late for a person or a couple to start their grieving and healing journey *together*.

Sarah Hosseini

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter

Monthly Meeting, Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 6:30 pm at
Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline

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

The next meeting is held on

October 26, 2017 at 6:30 pm

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

<p>The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Rick's House of Hope</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)</p>	<p>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 Waggner Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 54742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org.</p>
<p>MJL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)</p>	<p>Survivors of Suicide Support Group meets on the second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. Contact Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425, or laura@secondreformedchurch.net.</p>
<p>SHARE</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Loving Listeners</p>	<p>If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):</p> <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 <p>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.</p>

ACT ON YOUR GRIEF

Joann is an actress. She is also a bereaved parent. She shared with me that when the emotions of her grief welled up inside of her she would act them out. She would become the voice of her anger or guilt. She created monologues of her emotions. She thought she was going a little crazy.

However, Joann was far from crazy. For some, she could actually be a model for handling grief. By literally acting out her emotions, she found a way to act on them – to vent, express and explore her grief. She used her creativity as a tool to help her grieve.

Not everyone can act or not everyone feels comfortable on a stage. But each of us possesses our own creative impulses. We can use this creativity to give expression to our grief.

When rock singer Eric Clapton's young son died in a tragic accident, Clapton expressed his grief in a poignant song, *Tears in Heaven*. Many singers and songwriters have created their own music as an expression of their grief or a tribute to a person who has died. Sometimes even listening to these songs can offer a sense of expression or even release.

Music and acting is just a couple of types of creative arts. Photography actually helped Tom. It had been a lifelong hobby and so it felt natural to use photos to express his journey of grief. Different black and white photographs captured emotions and characterized his mood. Bleak shots of winter showed despair. Anger reflected in his shots of waves beating against a ragged shore. Hope emerged in pictures of budding plants. Rhea also used

photography. She created a photo montage for her father's funeral. She found it therapeutic and later decided to create an entire album that would serve as a tribute to his life.

Poetry, painting, dance, storytelling, sculpture or any of the various creative arts can be effective outlets. Less formal outlets may also be helpful. Marcie, a therapist, shared the value of creating collages for survivors of violent and traumatic loss, noting that the random



placement of newspaper clippings and photographs somehow seems to bring a sense of order into the chaos survivor's

experience.

Using these creative outlets has much value. First, they give expression to our deepest experiences. Sometimes we may not be able to find words for the grief. Sometimes there are no words.

More than that, creative arts are suited for every individual. Each of us has unique talents or abilities, our own interests, levels, and our own preferences. Some may use the creative arts to express feelings while others will use it to share fond memories or thoughts. Still, for others, the very act of doing something is therapeutic.

There is one last value. Producing or experiencing the productions of others gives a visual reminder that sometimes the worst experiences of life can be transformed into a tragic beauty. In its own way, that offers continued hope.

By Kenneth J. Doka

Some Things You Need to Know

- Grief Waits. If you put it away and try to ignore it, it will simply wait until you have no choice but to experience it.
- We grieve as intensely as we love. There is no “normal” in grieving.
- You will never be the same person you were before your loss.
- You must make a conscious decision to “get better.”
- There are no set-in-concrete stages or timelines in grief.
- It is typical to feel almost numb for the first few months. When that “fog” lifts, it can be very frightening. Think of it as a wave and ride it out.
- Losing a child is “out of order.” Talking to and being with other bereaved parents is extremely helpful.
- Other people will not understand your grief unless you share it.
- It is okay to talk about your child as long as you want.
- It is okay to keep their belongings as long as you want.
- It is okay to include them in celebrations and special occasions for as long as you want.
- “Finding closure” is not a requirement of healing. For parents, it is not even an option. Even in death . . . love remains.

Sandy Goodman

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, MI 49022
carolynpwebb@gmail.com

Reflections Board

Grief is a tidal wave that over takes you, smashes down upon you with unimaginable force, sweeps you up into its darkness, where you tumble and crash against unidentifiable surfaces, only to be thrown out on an unknown beach, bruised, reshaped.

Stephanie Ericsson

Good memories are the perennials that bloom again after the hard winter of grief begins to yield to hope.

Sascha Wagner

My grief and pain are mine. I have earned them. They are part of me. Only in feeling them do I open myself to the lessons they can teach.

Anne Wilson Schaefer

THE PRICE

It is not really a question of whether I could have wanted never to have you with me, if had I known how deeply your dying would break my life today.

There is only one certain truth: even if I had known that there would come to me the cruel grief I suffer today, I would endure it all again for the wonder of having had you in my life.

Sascha Wagner

Life will not go on in the same way without him. If it were the same, we could only conclude his life meant nothing, made no contribution. The fact that he left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to the uniqueness of his soul.

Molly Fumia from "Safe"

"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever."

- Winnie the Pooh



**My child died.
I don't need advice.
All I need is for you
to gently close your mouth,
open wide your heart and
walk with me until
I can see in color again.**

Angela Miller



The Compassionate Friends

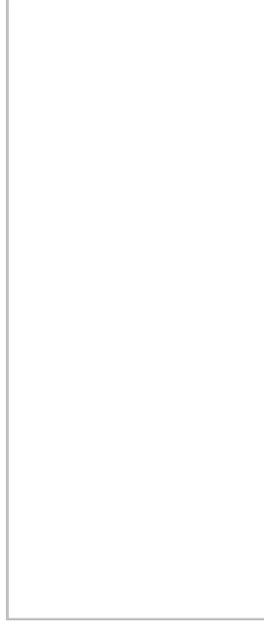
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Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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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.