



The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



THIS MONTH: OCTOBER 2014 ISSUE

This Month: Holiday panel—How to handle the Holidays.

Newsletter Editor: Crys Kelly

RESEARCH OFFERS HOPE

I recently learned of a wonderful new website that may benefit many members of TCF Alamo Area Chapter and other bereaved parents. Researchers and scientists are just now starting to understand the emotion of grief and the devastating effects of protracted grief. Unresolved mourning now has a name. It now can be identified as a condition: Complicated Grief. At least 10% of those individuals suffering from grief may actually have complicated grief. That percentage may increase substantially for grieving parents who are especially at risk. The death of a child brings on a grief that in magnitude surpasses all others in its complexity.

Complicated grief manifests in prolonged mourning with increased symptoms over time. It is unrelenting. It is also very difficult to find peace and happiness when suffering from complicated grief. The complexity of complicated grief is part and parcel to unresolved issues such as anger, guilt, regret and unfound forgiveness which can feed into this condition. Those who have complicated grief often have thought patterns regarding their loved one's death, in which they obsess about the overwhelming thought of, "if only", or "what might have been." Practitioners refer to this thought process as *Magical Thinking*. The Center for Complicated

NEW

Grief was launched by Columbia University School of Social Work in February, 2013. I would like to recommend that as bereaved parents we take a look deep within ourselves and ask, "Am I suffering from complicated grief?" Log on to the website: www.complicatedgrief.org. There you will find a checklist of the 11 symptoms of complicated grief and the resources for treatment. We will always have a hole in our hearts that only our child could fill. I believe that together we can learn to live a full life despite of our loss.

Janet Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter,
TX

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THE 18TH TCF WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

The 18th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will be held this year on Sunday, December 14, 2014. This is a very special and moving event, when bereaved families join together from around the world in memory of all children gone too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and

honor the memory of all children gone too soon. Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 18th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the

United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

Albert Einstein

Monthly Newsletter

Newsletters are now available online the 1st of every month on our website. If you would like to have a hard copy mailed, please contact Crys Kelly *Chapter leader*.

Need to Talk?

Listed below are parents, grandparents and siblings who have walked where you are today.

If you are having a difficult day and just want to talk, please call.

Addiction

Helen 817-431-6964

Auto

Jeff & Marty 817-991-9121

Grandchild/

Multiple Loss

Lydia 817-829-3801

Drowning

Debi 817-270-3275

Drowning (Young Child)

Stacy 817-656-7540 or
817-845-3433

Long Term Illness

Marty 817-636-5645

Homicide (Only Child)

Steve 817-914-8689
sjroberts1216@hotmail.com

Suicide (Only Child)

Joy 817-453-2227

Suicide

Glinda 817-485-3772

Siblings

Cheryl 817-624-7043
lopezgregg@aol.com

Middle of the night calls

Liz 817-726-3999

WANT TO SHARE ?



If you have read an article, poem, book, or other material that has helped you along your grief journey, please share it with our newsletter editor. We also encourage you to submit your own works of poetry or prose for our newsletter to the editor.

DAISIES IN HUGE HANDFULS

"Pick more daisies" was the most popular expression in our family. I picked it up from a magazine article about a 94 year old lady in Kentucky who, when asked what she would do differently if she had her life to live over, responded "I would take more chances; I would eat more ice cream and less beans; I would have more real troubles but fewer imaginary ones; I would climb more mountains; I would swim more rivers, and I would pick more daisies."

Our son, Mark, seized the daisy expression as the theme both for his life and his entrance exam essay at UCLA. It helped him live his brief 18 years; his essay helped him get an academic scholarship.

Daisies became our family flower. They marked our attitude about living. And they marked our son's memorial service. After it was over, his friends and fraternity brothers each threw a daisy into the ocean. Daisies still mark his grave every week. It has taken me almost two years to return to really thinking about daisies and what that quote by a 94-year-old lady really means. During that time I made a pretty big mess of things. I did the best I could, but I was often going through the motions outside, but empty inside.



To me, what this quote means is we really do have to pull ourselves together again and go on. Dr. Charles Heuser, a former pastor at our church, notes "going through the steps of grief is like walking through the valley and shadow of death. Keep walking, but don't camp there."

Our children would not want us to "camp there," but to go pick more daisies—to somehow live an even more meaningful life in their name. As I go on I am truly a different person. I don't suffer fools or superficiality very well any more. As one of my best friends said..."I get tired of beige people." Yet, I will drop everything to help another bereaved parent. I certainly have more

"real troubles and fewer imaginary ones." But it's OK—I like myself better that way.

And I am returning to embrace life each day again. But this time I am following my heart instead of my expected career. I am taking more chances, climbing more unfamiliar mountains, and picking daisies in huge handfuls.

Mark would want it so.

By Rich Edler TCF South Bay, CA

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Website: www.compassionatefriends.org The website contains links to TCF's national and regional conferences, brochures, e-newsletter, online support community, *We Need Not Walk Alone* magazine, "Healing the Grieving Heart" and "The Open to Hope Show" radio program archives, webinars, chapter websites, and other resources. **Regional Coordinator:** Bill Campbell 972-935-0673 jojobill@sbcglobal.net

Facebook: The Compassionate Friends/USA **In Spanish:** Los Amigos Compasivos/USA **Twitter:** Text follow TCFofUSA to 40404

I DON'T CARE

They don't understand.
They can't.
Nothing has changed for them.
A job is still important.

The filing, the typing, the endless emails
It's all still a crucial part of their life;
It's all so meaningless to me.



None of it matters.
My child is dead.
I want to scream.
I don't care!

You expect me to be as I was
You expect me to want the same as you
I will never again be the same as you.
I don't care!

The desire to perform is gone
It is a faint memory, a fog that is no longer real
When my child was alive, maybe, but now,
I don't care!

Work is a mere distraction,
A momentary pause,
A meaningless respite,
In the middle of a nightmare
I don't care!

Money, a raise, a new care, a new house
That's what it's all about for you;
I go through the day with a longing and
some days
Filled with a deep anger,
I don't care!

I would give it all just to see her again.
Go ahead life, try to hurt me more.
I don't care!

I don't care what happens.
I don't care if anything ever gets done.
My child is dead and,
I don't care!

By Joanne Naples
Mother of Tiffany Nicole Schupp
TCF FW member

REFLECTIONS

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations: that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time – time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger
from *This Healing Journey – An Anthology
for Bereaved Siblings*



"The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of confusion or despair, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing... not curing... that is a friend indeed."

Henri Nouwen

BIRTHDAY TABLE

October birthdays will be celebrated at this month's meeting. If your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday is in October, please feel free to bring a photo or memento of them for the birthday table. It is also a great time to bring their favorite food or snack to share with the group on the refreshment table.



LOVE GIFTS



In Memory of Rae Lynne

By Janie Rucker

Rae Lynne's Mother

SOMETIME

My Darlin(g) Rae Lynne, You've been gone for seven years. Sometimes it seems like yesterday and sometimes it seems forever. Teri (sister) gave mama this and I wanted to share it with all who have lost a daughter, son, or a loved one.

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not "get over" a loss of a loved one, you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same, nor would you want to.

All Mama's Love Darlin(g)

"I Love You"

Love Gifts can be made by sending your donation to: Steve Roberts P.O. Box 202654, Arlington, 76006

Visit our website for more Online Grief Resources





**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Fort Worth Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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October 2014

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Fort Worth Chapter Meeting

**We meet the 2nd Tuesday
of every month.**

Meeting Time: 7 P.M.—9 P.M.

This Month's Program

Holiday Panel: *How to handle the Holidays.*

Refreshments

Mark & Annetta Deegear

Please feel free to bring refreshments to share.

~ *Paper Goods and Drinks are provided* ~

ARBORLAWN UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH - ROOM 271
5001 Briarhaven Rd., Fort Worth

A Special Message

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome you to The Compassionate Friends. We are a self-help organization of parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the death of a loved one. We offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings, a lending library, support materials and loving telephone listeners. Please do not be afraid to come to a gathering.

Every other person in the room has lost a child, grandchild or sibling. They come because they feel the need to be with someone else who understands. We know it takes courage to attend that first gathering, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from others who have experienced

the grief that you have now. Nothing is asked of you. There are no dues or fees and you do not have to speak. There is a special feeling at meetings of **The Compassionate Friends.**