



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER

Carson City, NV

April 2012

Chapter Leader's Message

My heart goes out to those new in grief. The journey of grief from death of a child or sibling takes time to mend.

Grief has many feelings. All these feelings are normal; you are not crazy. I found support in a good friend and a loving sister. But what helped most of all was the support of The Compassionate Friends family. They would listen to my story over and over and give me support. It was a safe place to grieve. I learned from those further along in their grief, and learned what helped them.

Hope to see you at the next meeting.

*The LOVE of the children forever in our hearts,
Delores*

***Sometimes our light
goes out, but it is
blown again into flame
by an encounter with
another human being.***

***Each of us owes
deepest thanks to
those who have
rekindled this inner
light.***

Albert Schweitzer

SPECIAL DATES

April 24th
Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Carson Tahoe Cancer
Resource Center
1535 Medical Parkway

May 29th
Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Carson Tahoe Cancer
Resource Center
1535 Medical Parkway

June 26th
Carson City Meeting

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Carson Tahoe Cancer
Resource Center
1535 Medical Parkway

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chapter Leader
Delores Sherman

Treasurer/Mailing List/Memorial Page
Kathy Schultz

Newsletter Editor
Georgette Riley

Regional Coordinator
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Members
Betty Kalicki
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Cathy Silva, Delegate
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Judy Dunning



The National Office

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www.compassionatefriends.org

Our Children Loved, Missed & Remembered

Our dear children, though gone from our sight, are forever loved and will always be remembered. We remember, with compassion, the parents and families of these precious children on the birthdays and anniversary days listed here.

April Birthdays

Kelly Barr

Mother: Linda Barr

Amber Black

Mother: Mary Anne Black

Benjamin Brown

Aunt: Laurie Herrera-Cassar

Robert Bugajski

Mother: Joann Ignatich

Nova Gibbons

Parents: Andrzej & Teresa Bugajski

Austin Hawk

Mother: Roberta Begley

Ethan Harmon

Mother: Jackie Hawk

James Falconio

Parents: Ken & Duana Harmon

Eric Steven Marchant

Grandparents: Chuck & Shirley Evans

Debra Kay McDowell

Mother: Rose Falconio

Parents: Larry & Cindy Marchant

Mother: Maureen McCarthy

April Anniversaries

Jasmine Gibbons

Mother: Sandra Gibbons

Mark Holder Jr.

Father: Mark Holder Sr.

Michelle Jacoboni

Parents: Ron & Judy Jacoboni

Edward John Kunzi

Parents: Eugene & Lois Kunzi

Joseph Mall

Mother: Laura Mizrahi

Alexis Dae Melendrez

Mother: Natasha Gibson

Colton James Melendrez

Grandmother: Patty Robson

Mother: Natasha Gibson

Grandmother: Patty Robson

Brandon Painter

Mother: Mary Painter



Do It Your Way

I think it's only fair to tell you - there is no bereaved parent of the month award, nor an award for the one with the stiffest upper lip. In fact, what you will find, if you try to be the most stoic, brave, and strong... the one doing too well, is that instead of a reward, you suffer the consequences.

It is not possible to lose someone as vital as one's child and not have the pain of deep grief. You'll find that a great many non-bereaved people will encourage you to play the old "if-you-pretend-you're-okay-and-it's-not-really-so-bad-then-we'll-let-you-come-play-with-us-but-if-you're-going-to-cry-and-talk-about-your-dead-child-then-you-can't-play" game.

This is one time in your life that you don't have to meet anybody else's standards. There is nothing more unique about you than the way you express your grief - and you have that right, however it may be manifested. A great deal of how you go about it is determined by how you have handled previous problems.

So, if someone tries to influence you to play the old game by rewarding you with attention because you're "doing so well," tell them you're not doing well, that your child has died and you're hurting. Let them know it doesn't help for them to pretend everything is okay. Do whatever it is you need to do to survive this trauma, and don't worry about whether it pleases or displeases other people.

Do it your way!

*Mary Cleckley, TCF Ft. Smith, AR
Reprinted from the May 1989 newsletter of the
Portland, OR Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



Love Gifts

*Betty Kalicki in memory of her daughter
Kara*

*Helen Johnson in memory of
Nicholas Clark*

*Tom and Laurie Herrera-Cassar in memory of
Amber Black*

***"... in memory of the children we love,
miss and remember every day."***

The Grief Process

One out of one dies. Nothing, no one lives forever. In an age of medical miracles, we have not yet eliminated death. Through technology, we have introduced new and different choices concerning the when, where, and how of death, but still not the whether. All things end at some point. Regardless of how much energy or emotional commitment we invest in a relationship, it cannot last forever. Because we care, because we invest a certain portion of ourselves into the cycles of others, we learn what it is to hurt and to grieve when those cycles are completed in one or another.

If we have, then we are in danger of not having, and that loss (whether through death, divorce, abandonment, or mutual dissolution) can be the most painful and devastating of the spirit. But regardless, loss hurts.

Grief is a natural and normal reaction of loss, loss of any kind. It is a physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological response. The death of a child is perhaps the most devastating loss a person can experience. Yet grief occurs following any change in our lives. Even positive changes can bring a momentary grief response. Grief is a complex process, guided by our past experiences, our religious beliefs, our socioeconomic situations, our physical health, and the cause of loss. Love, anger, fear, frustration, loneliness, and guilt are all part of grief. It is important to understand that grief is not a sign of weakness or lack of faith. Grief is the price we pay for love.

In his research, Colin Murray Parkes identified four components of the grief process. When we first become aware of the loss, we become NUMB. Shock is physiological phenomenon that protects us from further pain. When our circuits become overloaded, we cannot accept further information. We stop listening, stop hearing, and may feel like we've stopped breathing. A protective fog blankets us and cushions the reality of death. We switch to "automatic" and our responses become mechanical. Decisions are made, actions are taken, and events pass, all without our full participation. Shock is what helps us get through the necessary details of death. It can last anywhere from a few moments to several months.

When the shock or numbness wears off, the reality of our loss crashes into us. The collision with reality of death hurts. Parkes calls this part of the grief process "pining." We know it as HURT. Unlike the localized pain

of a physical injury, this pain is totally engulfing. Every part of us hurts. There's a tightness in the throat, a searing pain in the chest, a heaviness in the heart. It hurts to move. It hurts to breathe. It hurts just to be! Sometimes the pain is so intense, we may develop physical symptoms. Sleep irregularities, changes in appetite, and gastrointestinal disturbances are common. Heartache, restlessness, muscle tension and sighing may occur. Anger and guilt are common emotions. We may feel angry with God, our spouses, our child or with others either involved with or totally separate from the death of our child. We may be angry with ourselves. Our sense of helplessness intensifies our anger. WHY couldn't I prevent my child's death? "If only's" begin to haunt our thoughts. We trace over and over again the circumstances of our child's death. WHY cries out; goes unanswered. Guilt feelings often accompany or follow anger. We may want to withdraw and be left alone. Depression, feelings of emptiness and hollowness may temporarily overcome us. We may experience headaches, tightness in the throat or chest, muscle aches, or a burning sensation in the stomach. GRIEF HURTS! We may, for a while, become preoccupied with images of our child. We may "see" or sense our child's presence. We may begin to wonder if we are going crazy.

Parkes calls the next part of grief DEJECTION or DEPRESSION. Now pain is replaced by emptiness. It may seem as if we've fallen into a great void. Apathy and deep depression are common. We may feel that our lives have lost all meaning. Who are we now that our child is dead? Am I still a mother if there is no child to kiss? Am I still a dad if there is no one to tuck in at night? How can we go on living when our child has died? We feel cheated, betrayed, robbed not only of our child's presence, but our future as well.

As deep as the depression may become, other emotions can trigger a return to earlier feelings. Anger and guilt can be revisited many times during the grief process. We may begin to fear that we can never be happy again. Does grief ever end? How can we possibly recover from the death of our child?



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Parkes identifies the final phase of grief as RECOVERY. And yes indeed, recovery from the death of our child is possible! First, however, we must understand that grief takes far longer than most assume. One cannot recover from a child's death in a matter of weeks. It may take months or even years of traveling the roller coaster of emotions before recovery is achieved.

We can help ourselves through grief.

1. Acknowledge the loss.
2. Accept the pain of grief. Try to live through it, not avoid it.
3. Share thoughts and feelings. Find enough compassionate listeners. We can talk more than one person can listen!
4. Understand each person has an individual timetable for grief. Each person grieves separately and differently. We each move through grief at our own pace.
5. Find a sense of humor. Try to hang on to it.
6. Get some physical exercise. If nothing else, jog your memory.
7. Learn to hug again.
8. Accept yourself. Begin to understand you are someone new. Acknowledge that change.
9. Begin to become the person you already are.

Recovery from the death of a child is a matter of choice. Time does help heal over the open wounds. Scars form and serve as a reminder of battles once fought. Gradually, however, we must learn to live with those scars, and slowly they sink into place within the scheme of our lives. Recovery is possible when we discover a smile flickering across our faces, when a chuckle grows into laughter and when memories bring warmth and comfort rather than tears and pain. Recovery begins to occur when we can learn to reinvest our energies, emotions and love rather than seek to replace them. We know we're making progress when we fully understand that putting our child's things away does not mean we are forgetting or negating his/her existence. When we completely understand we did not lose our child, recovery from grief is possible. Our child died, but the love we share between us can never be destroyed. As we recover, we must learn who we are now and abandon

attempts to return to who we used to be. A part, a big part, of us died when our child died. Yet, the sun got up the next morning and so did we. Our child died, we did not. Living continues.

How it continues is up to us. We must learn to dream new dreams. Grief is the pulling of memories into focus. It is feeling, hurting, caring. It is struggling with the guilt that we might have done differently or better and with the anger that we are left alone. Grief, in its pain and loneliness, is the memory of a loved one no longer here, but truly never far away.

Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children; they died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it into today.

Darcie Sims, TCF Albuquerque, NM
Reprinted from the March 1997 newsletter of the
Sacramento Valley, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

More Tips for Creative Coping

10. Identify specific feelings. Do not generalize.
11. Make a conscious attempt to regain a sense of humor, zest for living.
12. Figure out exactly what you want...do it!
13. Become as informed/knowledgeable as possible. Knowledge is power.
14. Assert yourself. Ask for what you need!
15. Believe in yourself.
16. Listen to yourself.
17. Set small goals first. Accomplish them. Set bigger goals.
18. Focus on only one worry at a time. This helps combat feelings of being overwhelmed.
19. Realize that love isn't enough, but nothing works without it.
20. Don't forget how to dream. Practice it often.

Darcie Sims

A Heart Weeps

This is a level of loss That numbs every part of my being.
My heart is bound so tightly That it cannot even weep.
Will this ever end?

The ground lies bare and brown Covered with last year's
leaves.
The earth is cold and hard As desolate as my heart.
Sustain me in this hour!

Today, from that barren earth A clump of green
appeared
White snowdrops clustered there.
And I saw, once again, a fragment of beauty!

I weep with thanksgiving For this beauty that has
warmed me,
For this heart that leapt, and now knows
That joy can enter once again.

Marie Andrews

*Reprinted from the April 1996 newsletter of the
Kansan City, MO/KS Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*



Welcome New Members

We welcome new members to our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. *Each meeting is different and the next one might be the one that really helps.*

Meetings are generally held the last Tuesday of every month, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., at the Carson Tahoe Cancer Resource Center, 1535 Medical Parkway, Carson City, NV.

I Still See Him

I still see him wherever I go.
It's not really him, I know.
The blond toddler held by his mother.
The boy and his sibling as they play with each other.
That little boy laughing playfully in the pool.
The active boy running in the yard at school.
The maturing young man with his hair cropped short.
The high school boy enjoying his sport.
The teenager hanging with his friends at the mall.
These, though not my child, I cherish them all.
For they bring to surface memories
safely tucked away;
so special, giving me a glimpse of him today.
I don't see him in that young father
who plays with his son.
He's not in that proud grandfather, enjoying his life.
Nor the retired man, dining out with his wife.
He left too soon!

*Anne M Dionne, In memory of her son,
Michael Steven Dionne*

*Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone, the national
magazine of The Compassionate Friends, Spring 2006*

A Hopi Prayer

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet white doves in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there, I did not die.

Mary E. Frye

*Submitted by Andra Wollman
in memory of Clint Baker (1975-2002)*

Box of Memories

It sits alone in a dark corner of a basement. An ordinary brown cardboard box, sealed with ordinary tape.

What's in the box? Material things. When you lose someone you love very much, you have some very emotional decisions to make. Your child is taken from you, but he leaves behind the material things he accumulated in his short lifetime. His clothes, some he hated and some that were his favorites that he seemed to always be wearing. You take and hold them, you can still feel his body warmth, they still have the smell of him. What do you do with them? You have some choices; leave them where he left them, give them away, or pack them away with the thought that someday you can take them out and hold them close to you and survive it.

Some people get rid of everything right away, some leave things as they were left and never put them out of sight. I chose to wait a while and finally gave them away, but to protect myself, I kept some of the things he wore the most. They were packed, along with some tears, and placed in the box.

Shoes, how hard it is to express my feelings over them. No one could ever fill his shoes. He walked through his short time on this earth in them. He stood upright in them. Now he is no longer upright, put a part of that ground he stood on. No, the shoes weren't packed away, because I knew in my heart, that never again could I bear the agony of seeing or holding them.

His dresser. Open his dresser drawers and you open his very heart. You were forced to part with him, but here are the things he couldn't bear to part with. How many times do you open them only to close them again. You find yourself totally unable to go through and sort the tiny bits and pieces of a boy's most loved treasures. The day finally comes that you give in and force yourself to do it.

A report card, years of hard work. His baby picture, you turn it over quickly. Pictures of his friends. A bicycle lock. Telephone numbers. A screwdriver and some old nails. A few coins he didn't get to spend. Old eye glasses. A pocket knife. A prayer book and rosary. Medals. A holy card from his grandpa's funeral. And the list goes on and on. Some things are really junk but not to you anymore. They become important because they are his treasures, his memories. All the cards we ever gave him and signed "With all our love, Your Mom and Dad." They all go in the box along with more tears.

How can you give away any of this, I couldn't. It all goes in the box. I pack an ID bracelet with his name engraved on it. He never got to wear it. I'm packing away a boy's life and a part of my life and love.

How great it would be if I could pack my sorrow in a box and someday be able to take it out when it becomes more bearable.

In my life there are now three sealed boxes. One in my heart, one in my basement, and one in a cemetery. Two can be opened someday, one can never be.

Vera Babb

*Reprinted from the newsletter of the Ventura County, CA
Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Suggestions for Coping with Your Child's Days

Two days of each year stand out as the pits for most bereaved parents - the anniversary of their child's death and their child's birthday. Over and over parents ask, "How do you get through these two painful times?" The response is the same as the question "How do porcupines make love?" - "Very carefully."

I read somewhere that even if your mind forgets the anniversary of traumas you have experienced, your body remembers. Pneumonia was the final cause of our daughter's death in September 1974. Each September and each February (her birthday month) I developed pneumonia, although I had never had it before in my life and was not consciously thinking of having it. The year our TCF chapter started I broke the pattern and I haven't had it since.

Knowing you will remember, here are some practical suggestions garnered from reading and listening to others talk. Sometimes the anticipation of how awful the day will be adds to the torture. Plan something away from home, a shopping trip, a business trip. You won't forget, but distractions can help from focusing on agonizing memories.

Seek out a special friend who will let you share your memories and distress, who will permit you to cry if you must. Talking and crying are cathartic and a part of healing.

Think of something you can do for someone else in memory of your child. Give a pie, a book, a bouquet of flowers or a visit to a person who is lonely (another kind of debilitating pain). You don't have to tell the person you are doing this in memory of your son or daughter; the thoughtful act can be a secret between you and your child. You are passing on some of the love you shared.

Take flowers to the cemetery and talk with your child. Does this sound like lunacy? I hope not because every time I go to the cemetery I talk with Tricia. Whether we admit it to others or not, don't we all talk to our deceased children at times? If someone sees my lips moving at the cemetery visit and fails to understand, that is his problem, not mine.

Say thank you aloud or as a silent litany during the day to God (or whoever), and to your child for the beauty of his/her life, for the enriching opportunity to experience the unique being that was your child.

If you stay at home with your grief then, by gosh, wallow in it if you want to. Suffer your misery to its depths, cry rant, rave, be resentful - make yourself sick if you have to. We are brainwashed with "look on the bright side" and the power of positive thinking. I personally believe that periods of very negative thinking often release a residue of emotions and feelings, which makes eventual positive thinking possible. Even Jesus had Gethsemane. As with a physical wound, pain is a part of healing; pain signals that your body is still alive and is working on this affront to its mental and physical health. Later when your wound is healed or getting better, part of your pleasure at the release comes from being able to remember how much it hurt.

For ten Septembers I have not been able to erase Tricia's death day from the calendar, but each year I face it better. Sometimes I still have a tightening in the chest and a lumpy, leaden knot in my stomach or I permit myself to ask a few sad, unanswerable questions. Allowing myself to feel whatever my true feelings dictate, I have finally learned to flow the sting of grief instead of denying it or fighting it. Her birthday has become a time of happy remembering. Often I wear something of hers on that day and let my love flow out to her, wherever she is. I'm so thankful I had her, even in the face of loss.

How do you get through these anniversaries? You simply live through them as best you can, sometimes using them as a yardstick for measuring your personal healing. Maybe you can say, "Last year I cried all day, but this year I cried only a few hours." The death day may never be a good day, but we can't remove it from the 365 any more than we can bring our child back to life. And that, of course, is why the anniversary days are so painful; they intensify our great longing to erase the death. Each anniversary faced can be a step in acceptance and healing.

Elizabeth B. Estes, TCF Augusta, GA

My Birthday Gift to T.J.

I know our children will always be the same age as when they died. This is the last memory we have of them. Today Travis J. Washington, my son, would be 30 years old. This is my CELEBRATION to him.

This isn't about T.J.'s life; it's about his presence, what he left with so many of us. The present I am giving you today, T.J., is simply to say thank you. Without these special friends of yours & mine, I simply could not have survived. I know I was truly blessed with the people that passed through your life, T.J. They have filled my life with kindness, love, friendship, family.

Each night I try not to focus on the heartache from your absence; I thank God for blessing me with you for 24 years. When I remember my heart aching so much, I truly know what the term "broken heart" means. Today I feel the warmth of your love, the kindness of our friends, and the strength you give me daily, all mixed in with the tears that still fall. I guess they all go hand in hand.

Everyone has to get through grief in his or her own way. The truth is that as time goes on, it may not get better, but it will be different. What you do with that time is very important. TCF can help you bring pieces of your life back together. I wish everyone who comes to a TCF meeting could know how important they can be in someone else's life. Sometimes I may not want to go to a meeting, but what is more important than giving the gift of two hours of my time in the memory of my child? I want to thank all the members of my chapter for simply being there, whether you come once, or if you are still there five, ten, twenty years later. A special thanks to the chapter leaders who give us their support & guidance. We can grow if we just learn how to reach for the meaning of what our children have left behind.

If you are reading this, then I know you are at T.J.'s birthday celebration. It is my gift to him to let you know how much you mean to me. I hope your lives continue to be blessed with the love and kindness you have given to me. Thank you, T.J., and Happy Birthday!!!

Love, Mom

*Kay Domini-Washington, TCF Wyndotte County, KS
Reprinted from the April 2003 newsletter of the
Kansas City, MO/KS Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

To Noah

Not to be
my tiny son
wrapped skin to skirt
held at my breast

Not to be
our loved ones near
to aid my work
and share your birth

Not to be
your brother, sweet
to hold you near
and kiss your cheek

Not to be
as I had hoped
not ours to keep
not mine to hold

Not to be
with us then
you taught so much
I love you, child

You were to be
a teacher, still
to teach us more
about life and love

Thus, living still
I know this much -
You always will
be part of me



*Cindy Hood, TCF Eugene, OR
Reprinted from the April 2006 newsletter of the
Pueblo, CO Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Joe's Easter Basket

I got out my Easter decorations, it took me back to happier years when my kids were small, and the Easter Bunny was still "real." Joe was the youngest of our four children and when he died, I felt as though it was time to put the Easter baskets away. I asked my other kids if they minded if we skipped the baskets from now on. They agreed, they were too "old" for the Easter Bunny, but it was impossible for me to put away Joe's. When I got Joe's basket out the first year after his death, it still had a few jelly beans, etc. in it and a small surprise for me...

The year before Joe had seen commercials on television for a new spiral handled toothbrush. He bugged the daylight out of me to buy him one. I was very stubborn, telling him they weren't worth the money. I used the excuse that he was a "big kid" and should be using an adult sized toothbrush. The battle went on each time he was with me at the store, or he saw the commercial on television. It was fun to "ruffle" his feathers and heckle him; he took it so well.

For Easter that year, I bought him a spiral handled toothbrush. I remember buying it at the store and laughing to myself about how Joe would react when he found this silly toothbrush hidden in his basket. I knew he would say, "I knew I would win." And he did.

My "surprise"... in the bottom of his basket I found the box from that crazy toothbrush. I cried, then I had to laugh remembering the fun I had picking on him. I wondered to myself. Why he hadn't thrown the box away? Why was it tucked down under the grass? It was as if he wanted me to find it and to have just one more chuckle over that silly toothbrush!

Yes, his toothbrush is still in the bathroom, as I reminded myself - my other lads have moved out, and yet their toothbrushes remain - so why not Joe's?

Everybody wonders what to do with the Christmas stocking, my dilemma was what to do with the Easter basket? As I looked at the Easter basket, I decided then and there to use it. I now use it to decorate my kitchen table.

I also use it to take snacks along to a gathering. A nice seasonal touch and a small quiet reminder of my wonderful son, Happy Easter, Joe! 6/01/80 - 8/21/94

*Janet Keller, TCF South Dade, FL
Reprinted from the April 2000 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Spring is Coming

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your "first" spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring - the new life and the feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year. During my "first" year, I expected that spring would cheer me up, and make me feel lots better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days as life seems to burst forth everywhere, I was "in the pits."

When a friend said to me, "Doesn't a day like this really lift your spirits and make you feel better?" I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day; that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed.

The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature's process will continue, and that can offer us hope.

I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun's warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, and forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don't expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

*Evelyn Billings, TCF Springfield, MA
Reprinted from the March-April 2008 newsletter of the
Greater Providence, RI Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Just A Sec

"Just a sec, Mom."
Those words would
often irritate me.
Why couldn't he come
when first I called?
Now he never comes at all.

"Just a sec, Mom."
If only I could hear
those words again,
My torn heart would be mended
and the spark in my life rekindled.

But, no, those words
are lost forever.
Sealed within a crypt
Where my precious son now lies.

Now, instead, I hear him call me.
How I wish I could answer,
"Just a sec, Son."
I feel him call within my heart.
Oh how I long to answer his call
and join him in his resting place.
For then, and only then, could I
find the peace for which my heart aches.

*Elsie McKenzie Swilley, TCF Atlanta, GA
Reprinted from the May 1989 newsletter of the
Portland, OR Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

A Part of Me

You were not just my brother, but
You were my friend as well.
You were supposed to be here always
Or 'til the world came to an end.
I know that we argued and
Seemed to disagree,
But I could always count on you
To be there for me.
You may be gone from this world I see,
But you will always be a part of me.

*Donna Montville, TCF Gardner, MA
Reprinted from the April 1996 newsletter of the
Portland, OR Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

My Sister

The things I love are very dear,
Beth Ann was one of the best of those
I can't believe she's gone.

We'll always have the memories
To dwell upon each day
The things she left behind for us
Remind us of her happy way.

She always was a fighter,
She fought it to the last.
She put her faith and trust in Him.
The struggle is now past.

She lives within our hearts and minds.
We think of her each day.
Her way was simple, just, and kind.
With always something nice to say.

Years will come and years will go
Along the road of life.
I may someday reach the age
At which I'll take a wife.

But though the day ahead of me
Be long and fraught with pain
Or full of joyous happiness
(Perhaps 'twill be the twain).

Through all the coming times ahead
I'll ever dearly miss her.
You never know until she's gone
How much you love your sister.

*John Barnes, TCF Toledo, OH
Reprinted from the April 1996 newsletter of the
Portland, OR Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Who We Are...

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

We gather to listen, to share, and the support each other in the resolution of our grief. You need not walk alone, we are the Compassionate Friends.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends of Northern Nevada

How Can I Tell Them?

How can I tell them
The grief they feel today will fade
With the merciful, steady march of time?
They won't, nay can't believe –
As I did not when I was told.
Shall I say to them
"While memories never die,
the sharp and bitter edges blur?"
And there will come a time to them,
As it has come to me,
When happy memories transcend the bad
And life again is good.
I know as well the hurt they feel,
And also know that each of us
Must find his own way out.
No matter how deeply friends may care,
It is a private struggle they must wage
I can only hope they know I'm there.

Mary N. Moore, TCF Toms River, NJ



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