



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NORTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER

Carson City, NV

March/April 2013

Chapter Leader's Message

We are coming into the season of SPRING. This is the season things seem to grow. The trees get leaves, grass turns green and the flowers pop up out of the ground. We like the warmer days and the sun coming up sooner. Most people are happy that the cold winter is over.

If only grief was like this and we could notice that big change. We shall never forget our loved ones and will always remember their life.

Hope to see you at our meeting March 26th for helpful hints. Thank you Rita and Georgette for giving me a helping hand last meeting.

*Forever in our hearts,
Delores*

I Celebrate

I celebrate the dust that has grown between the cracks of my shattered heart
I celebrate my brain, which has dulled the pictures of your tiny arms wrapped around my neck
I celebrate the incessant busyness of life, which has diverted my obsessive, morose longing for you
I celebrate my friend, who has planted tulips in your honor on this day for fifteen years
I celebrate my own strength, the depth of which I never fathomed or tapped
I celebrate my need to be a mother to my son, who was equally wounded
I celebrate the love of my husband, who was drowning in tears next to me
I celebrate the three short years that you graced and enriched our lives
But most of all I celebrate you—overflowing with love, tenderness, and generosity
Happy 19th birthday, Elena.

*Patricia Oppenheim is a child psychologist from Bellevue, WA,
who will forever be Elena and Ian's mother.*

*Reprinted from the winter 2011/spring 2012 issue of We Need Not Walk Alone,
the national newsletter of The Compassionate friends*

SPECIAL DATES

March 26th Carson City Meeting

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

April 23rd Carson City Meeting

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

May 28th Carson City Meeting

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

June 25th Carson City Meeting

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

STEERING COMMITTEE

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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.

March Birthdays

Shara N. Capron	Grandparents: Petra & Dave Wilson
Eric Scott Jahn	Mother: Bonnie Jahn
Jason Marshall	Parents: Jean & Phil Marshall
Frank Eugene Medina	Mother: Ethel Medina
Jeff Poy	Parents: Myrna & Robert Poy
Danica Marie Silva	Parents: Dan & Cathy Silva

March Anniversaries

Nicholas Clark	Parents: Teri & Jerry Clark
Jared Roy Dillon	Mother: Connie Dillon
Devon Lane Mondragon	Father: Dan Mondragon
Mark Robert Schafer	Parents: Robert & Cheryl Schafer
Sharie Jean Swenson	Mother: Kay Kessler
Michael Thomas Whalen	Father: Tom Whalen



The Conspiracy of Silence

Does anyone know what to say to us,
When our loved ones die?
Losing them to suicide
Now that's the crowning blow!
There seem to be no words to help,
No pat or easy answers.
Instead, there is either silence,
Or talk of anything else.
I guess we need to say it first,
To talk about our loss;
And connect ourselves back to a world
Of loving, but imperfect people.
But, will you listen?

Carol Bredberg

*Reprinted from the April 1999 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

April Birthdays

Kelly Barr	Mother: Linda Barr
Amber Black	Mother: Mary Anne Black; Aunt: Laurie Herrera-Cassar
Benjamin Brown	Mother: Joann Ignatich
Robert Bugajski	Parents: Andrzej & Teresa Bugajski
James Falconio	Mother: Rose Falconio
Nova Gibbons	Mother: Roberta Begley
Ethan Harmon	Parents: Ken & Duana Harmon; Grandparents: Chuck & Shirley Evans
Austin Hawk	Mother: Jackie Hawk
Elise Marie Lowe	Mother: Stephanie Snyder
Eric Steven Marchant	Parents: Larry & Cindy Marchant

April Anniversaries

Andrew Beldon Clark	Mother: JoAnn Herdt
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
Anna Lytle	Mother: Irma Jay
Joseph Mall	Mother: Laura Mizrahi
Alexis Dae Melendrez	Mother: Natasha Gibson
Colton James Melendrez	Mother: Natasha Gibson
Brandon Painter	Mother: Mary Painter

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.



Love Gifts

Ruth Pintar in memory of her daughter
Catherine

Stephanie Snyder in memory of her daughter
Elise

Betty Kalicki in memory of her daughter
Kara

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

From A Parent Who Lost An Only Child

Perhaps, I had my child longer than you had yours, but thirty-eight years does not seem long. Perhaps, there are more memories to hold in my heart, but I know yours are just as dear to you as mine are to me, even if your memories are memories of only one or two days.

Your dreams for your child are gone. So are mine. Never did I imagine that I would have to deal with my child's death instead of him having to deal with mine. In thirty-eight years there was time to give me a legacy of three grandchildren. This was a very special blessing and one that I do not take for granted.

My child died from a terminal illness that is not one of the “acceptable” diseases. My child died of alcohol and drug addiction. The tools of remission of this disease are placed in the hands of the treatment centers; the recovery was not to be.

One day at a time my recovery is taking place. The pain, after two and one half years, has gone to a place where it can be tolerated. My mission is to sustain the relationship with my granddaughters, who now live three thousand miles away from me.

My story and my age may be different from yours, but the bottom line is the same: My child has gone to a place where I cannot go, and I miss him so much. The pain of grief is still there, but I am living life one day at a time, enriched because my son came through my body into my life.

Helen Goodwin

*TCF Orange Park, Jacksonville, FL
Reprinted from the April 1995 newsletter of the
Carson City, NV chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

“Thomas Is Out”

At a monthly meeting of the Charles County Group of the Southern Maryland TCF, a young couple whose baby died at birth shared this story:

At dusk one evening, their four year old nephew was at the window pointing to the sky and saying “Thomas is out,” “Thomas is out.” The couple could not figure out what their nephew was talking about so they asked his mother. She replied that she did not know how to explain to her young son and daughters about the baby's death. So she told them that Thomas was now an angel and he comes out in the evening as a star to be with them. She told them that the brightest star was the first to come out each evening -- and when they saw the first star to pop through -- they would know it was Thomas.

So now the whole family gathers each evening to wait for “Thomas” to pop through so the first to spot him can say “Thomas is out.”

*Reprinted from the April 1999 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

A Walking Around Napkin Ring

Many people have said to me, "You ought to write a book about Rick. His suicide and what you are going through. It would help others who are attempting to cope with the pain and sorrow of a loss. You know, books like *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler* by John Claypool and those written by parents who have experienced the same tragedy. They seem to come to the rescue."

And I reply, "I don't think I would be able to express my emotions yet." If I could write one that would hearten grief-stricken people, I certainly would, because now I know how much nourishment they need. But it's impossible to do so just now. Writers must write about what and how they feel, and I can't feel. I'm numb.

There is a clone of me out there going about the daily activities of my life, but it isn't I. Those routines which keep me busy are helping the minutes pass. They say that in time the agony will recede.

I am a walking-around napkin ring with a big hole in the middle. I look around and inside for the missing pieces, but they are nowhere to be found. That's because what's missing is my beloved son.

Perhaps someday I can write that book. Meantime the search for bits and pieces to fill the space must continue. There will be found fragments of love, faith, joy, and hope along the way. Yet in my heart I know these scraps will never fit together the right way and that the chasm will not be filled. The best to hope for is to be patched up enough to function like a real person again. If "All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty together again," then how can I do it all alone?

I wrote those paragraphs a few months after my son died, when I was wandering through life like an accident victim with limbs tom off, all cut and bruised -- a thick coat of defensive armor holding me together. Inside was the empty pit. If ever I had allowed myself to experience the reality of his death, there would have been an explosion and never would they have found all the pieces. "Give yourself time," my friends had been quick to say, and I knew they were right. Gradually my limbs have become reattached and the cuts and bruises have healed. The armor is still clamped firmly into place, but pieces of it fall away slowly. "How have you lived through such a tragedy?" they ask.

There are no simple explanations to this question. I'm not really sure that I will ever know all the ways in which I have been helped.



My faith brought to light paths of healing. Old friends and new opened their hearts and their arms, giving me a beautiful gift. They listened with patience and concern while I talked about my pain. Deep, meaningful relationships grew, and new ones were created which intertwined to form a warm cloak of love. Gradually I became aware of ways in which I could bare my anguish to help others. One was writing. It has comforted me. How grateful I am to be able to pour out my heartache on paper. It makes me feel close to people I don't know but who, like me, are struggling with grief. The pain is always there, and when it surfaces it strangles me.

I have become one of the millions of Christians the world over who say, "I want to be worthy of Thy love. Let me know Thy will."

And He smiles -- his patient, kindly, loving smile.

Nancy Feldon Doss, Houston, TX

Reprinted from the spring 1993 issue of the newsletter of the Yadkin Valley, NC chapter of The Compassionate Friends

When Mourning Comes

It is not unusual, in the newness of grief, to think, "If only I had not had this child -- I wouldn't have had to go through this." Think again.

A Greek legend tells of a woman approaching the River Styx where Charon, the ferryman, would take her to the region of the departed spirits. He told her she could drink of the waters of the Lethe to forget the life she was leaving.

She liked the idea saying "I will forget how I have suffered." He replied "Yes, but you will forget how you have rejoiced." "I will forget my failures," she said. Charon rejoined, "You will forget your victories." "But I will no longer remember how I was hated." Charon countered with, "And, also, how you have been loved."

After thoughtful consideration, the woman decided not to drink the potion. To forget the hurt, the loss, and the suffering, she would have to forget the joy and love.

If you could make that choice would you be willing to forsake your memories of love, laughter and tenderness in order to be free of the pain? I don't believe you would.

TCF Nederland, TX

Reprinted from the April 1992 newsletter of the Kansas City, MO/KS chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Grandparents

In our involvement in the grief over the death of our child, we fail to realize that grandparents also grieve. Although not in the same way or to the same extent we do, they do grieve. Their grief is two-sided, one for the child who is dear to them and the other for their own child who is suffering.

Just as the parent does, the grandparent loses his future. One of the joys of grandparenthood is the knowledge that through grandchildren they achieve immortality. It is expected that their name will be carried on through them. At the death of their grandchild, that branch of their family tree is cut off. What should have been will not be. In cases of an only child, there will be no future generation. Just as for the parent, the family of the grandparent will never be complete again. They, too, feel the empty place at family gatherings.

Feelings of guilt can be strong for grandparents. Survival guilt is the strongest. It is never expected that a grandparent will live longer than the grandchild. Grandparents usually feel that they have lived a long and full life. The dead child was denied that. "Why not me?" is a phrase most have uttered. The fact that they are still alive while a young child or young adult is dead is difficult for many to bear.

Grandparents feel anger just as parents do. They can be angry with God for taking the child, or even for not taking them. They can be angry at the doctors or nurses, feeling that they didn't do enough for the child. They can be angry at the person they feel is responsible for the child's death.

Sometimes the death of a grandchild brings back memories of their own child who has died many years in the past. This can be a painful revival of the grief they felt was over or that they had buried. This is a fairly common experience for grandparents since the deaths of children occurred more often before the days of advanced medical technology.

In addition to the grief over the death of their grandchild, there is the sadness and pain at seeing their own child in such torment. Seeing one's child in pain and not being able to ease that pain is extremely difficult for grandparents and leaves them with feelings of helplessness and frustration.

Many try to take over necessary tasks, such as cooking or caring for surviving siblings. These chores may seem so mundane to grandparents that they do not perceive themselves as being helpful to their suffering child. If grandparents are sick or incapacitated and cannot be of help to their child, they may feel guilty. In today's mobile society, many times grandparents must travel great distances to be with their child. If that travel is not possible, this can also be a source of guilt.

Many times grandparents feel that by not showing their grief they are providing physical and emotional strength for their child. This is a mistake. Suppressing their grief can be as damaging for grandparents as it is for parents. This can lead to grief and create problems for the grandparents. In addition this may be seen by the bereaved parent as a lack of concern.

We bereaved parents must consider the needs of the grandparents and at the same time be open and honest with them about our needs. We must let them know how they can help us, but at the same time we must be aware that they, too, need help. Mutual sharing of feelings between bereaved parents and grandparents will be helpful to both in the recovery process. The sharing not only of painful feelings but also happy memories of the child with grandparents can be helpful for both, and it can also create a deeper relationship in the family.

*Margaret Gerner
TCF St Louis, MO*

Four Years Later

Today is June 12, 2012 -- four years later, and Evan's death, at times, seems to be getting somewhat distant. At the same time I am determined to keep his memory as fresh as possible, even to my grave.

Attending bereavement sessions can sometime make things worse for me, yet I still feel a need to attend, hoping for something positive to take hold. This is my dilemma, searching for anything positive while feeling a terrible sadness. Is continued sadness a need in my life?

As I look for the positive from this tragedy I continue to be unusually sensitive to other people's tragedies. When I see a bald child in a cancer ward I look away and still cry. It continues to hurt to look at Evan's pictures. Why can't I look at his picture albums and get a positive feeling from those memories? When I look at Evan's picture next to pictures of his younger brother Ethan and sister Julia, I can't help thinking that if my grandson were alive how well they would get along and how the love would flow among these siblings. Yet, even this positive feeling hurts whenever I muster up the energy to look.

Four years later I don't know how much, if any, the hole in my heart has closed. Is there anything positive for me on the horizon? Can the positive moments spent with Evan those 4 1/2 years ever supplant the sadness I continue to feel? In the future will I be able to smile when I look at all the pictures I took of my grandson?

Will a smile ever come to my lips before a tear comes to my eye?

*Harold Zaroff
TCF Carson City, NV*

Comfort is Service

I have found comfort in doing -- in visiting those who have been struck down, the children and the parents, in thinking that through Mary's [her daughter] death perhaps she and I were destined to have a little part in the final victory. I have learned ineffable gratitude for the Scriptural commandment to love thy neighbor as thyself. Now at last I know the solace that comes from its meaning. Once I thought it old fashioned, empty, but it now shines with a new radiance out of the depths of its truth and simplicity.

Before I had only loved myself. My aim was to make others love me. It wasn't selfish or mean, but I had never known what it was to love others myself. I will not say that my world has been made whole again -- it never can be -- but there has been acceptance, even happiness, in giving and doing. As Pearl S. Buck has so knowingly written, "For there is an alchemy in sorrow. It can be transmitted into wisdom which, if it does not bring joy, can yet bring happiness."

Helen Hayes

Last Moments

Last moments...
Snatches of conversation
That echo across all decades...
Priceless words
Indelibly etched on the heart.
Sometimes
Thought were never spoken
But unexpected sentiment -
A quick embrace, a silly smirk,
Or joyous laughter -
Reaches through the pain
And warms the heart.
We came too soon to understand
The folly of harsh words
Or neglected touch,
For who can know which
Taken-for-granted event
Will become
A last moment.



Diane Fields

TCF Westmoreland, PA

*Reprinted from the April 2003 newsletter of the
Kansas City, MO/KS region 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 to support each other in the resolution of our grief. You need not walk alone, we are the Compassionate Friends.

Newsletter Items

Newsletters are published bimonthly. Please submit your stories, poems and pictures for our newsletter. Newsletter items are free of charge, but donations are welcome to assist with printing and mailing costs. E-mail your newsletter items to editor@TCFcarsoncity.org. You can also mail your items to: 1111 Liberty Ct, Carson City, NV 89703. Or bring to a meeting and give your item directly to Georgette.

All submissions must be received by the 20th of the month to be included in the next month's newsletter. Photos sent via e-mail must be in a .jpg format. If you have not been receiving the newsletter whether it's by e-mail or postal mail, please let Kathy know so that we can update/change postal or e-mail information.

This newsletter is now available online. Visit our website www.tcfcarsoncity.org and click on "Newsletters." You can download PDFs of previous newsletters or subscribe to receive monthly newsletters via email.

Many people seem to think that science has somehow made "religious ideas" untimely or old fashioned. But I think science has a real surprise for the skeptics. Science, for instance, tells us that nothing in nature, not even the tiniest particle, can disappear without a trace. Nature does not know extinction. All it knows is transformation.

Now, if God applied this fundamental principle to the most minute and insignificant parts of God's universe, doesn't it make sense to assume that it applies also to the human soul? I think it does.

And everything that science has taught me, and continues to teach me, strengthens my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death. Nothing disappears without a trace. Nature does not know extinction. All it knows is transformation. Nothing disappears without a trace.

Werner Von Braun

*Reprinted from the April 2003 newsletter of the
Kansas City, MO/KS region chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

For Steve

Our cherry tree wept
The week you died.
Pink blossoms brimming
With light and hope.
Even deer bounding through the forest
Paused in seeming wonder
At the brilliance of your life,
And birds came singing at your window.
So much achieved,
So much promise still unfulfilled,
Left cold by cruel, unblinking fate.
And yet, our son, you've lived
To give your soul to those you loved,
To family and countless friends,
To those you could not even name.
Generous spirit, great heart, Golden boy.
Singer of a thousand songs.
We love you and will mourn you
As we celebrate your life,
Till our time ends.

From Dad

*Hershel Brown, in memory of his son Steve,
TCF, Burlington County, NJ
Reprinted from the April 2003 newsletter of the
Kansas City, MO/KS region chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

A Prayer for Spring

Like Springtime, let me unfold
and grow fresh and anew
from this cocoon of grief
that has been spun around me.
Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine
and renewed life,
as my bones still creak from
the winter of my grief.
Life has dared to go on around me.
And as I recover from the insult
of life's continuance
I readjust my focus to
include recovery and growth
as a possibility in my future.
Give me strength to break out of
the cocoon of my grief.
But may I never forget it as
the place where I grew my wings,
because of my loss.

*Janis Heil, SHARE
Reprinted from the April 2000 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Twenty Five Commandments

*Hundreds of books have been written about loss and grief.
Few have addressed the aftermath of suicide for survivors.
Here again, there are no answers; only suggestions from
those who have lived through and beyond the event. I've
compiled their thoughts.*

- Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
- Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why," or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
- Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
- Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy -- you are in mourning.
- Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
- You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
- Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will have to act on these thoughts.
- Remember to take one day at a time.
- Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
- Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
- Give yourself time to heal.
- Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
- Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. You may only be experiencing a remnant of grief; an unfinished piece.
- Try to put off major decisions.
- Give yourself permission to get professional help.
- Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
- Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
- Set your own limits and learn to say no.
- Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
- Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as The Compassionate Friends, or Survivors of Suicide groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
- Call on your personal faith to help you through.
- It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, i.e., headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, etc.
- The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
- Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go.
- Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and go beyond just surviving.

*Iris Bolton
Reprinted from the February 1997 newsletter of the
Alameda County, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Marriage: After a Child's Death

Losing a child is heartbreaking enough without your being told a false statistic often quoted by well-meaning but misinformed people. The false statistic is this: 75 percent of parents divorce within months of their child's death. In the 1970s, an author who wrote about the death of her child tossed out that number as pure guesswork. Since then, it's been quoted as fact -- although no well-conducted studies support that figure. So what is a more accurate percentage? I'd like to address that question and offer some suggestions on how you and your spouse can keep your marriage strong after your child's death.

The Real Story

A little more than a decade ago, Danette Carroll, a student in an Introductory Sociology class at the University of Montana Billings, asked her professor, Mark D. Hardt, Ph.D., if there really was a relationship between a child's death and divorce. Her daughter had died in a car accident, and her counselor told her she had a 75 percent chance of being divorced within a year. In Carroll's case, that prediction came true.

When Carroll first asked Dr. Hardt to confirm the 75 percent statistic, he could find no good studies that would allow him to respond accurately. So he and Carroll embarked upon their own study. They surveyed more than 200 parents who had lost a child. The results? Only 9 percent of the parents divorced following their child's death. Another 24 percent had considered divorce -- but hadn't gone through with it.

A 2006 survey conducted by The Compassionate Friends reached a similar conclusion. This survey showed a divorce rate of only 16 percent among bereaved parents -- far lower than that of the general public! This, as Dr. Hardt and Carroll pointed out in their study, could mean that losing a child actually decreases the risk of divorce.

Yet the fact that some people did divorce and others considered it shows that in some cases, a child's death can strain a marriage. Here are suggestions on how you can strengthen your marriage after the death of your child and ways you can support each other through your grief.

Realize He May Not Have Bonded

In Dr. Hardt's study, couples who had lost a child shortly after birth experienced an increased rate of divorce. If a child dies shortly after birth, it's natural for a mother's grief to outweigh the father's. If the mother resents the father for not feeling that same bond, it can taint the relationship between the two of them.

"A woman carrying a child develops a bond with the child while it's in the womb," said Dr. Hardt. "If she loses the child shortly after birth, the husband's response often is: 'We can always have another child.'"

During research for a book I wrote about couples who have faced traumas (*The Indestructible Relationship*), I interviewed a couple named Tasha and Richard, whose baby, Faith, died two weeks before the due date. Richard was grieving, but his grief wasn't as intense as Tasha's -- and she never resented him for it.

"He was very respectful of my grieving process, which was much bigger than his, because I grew her inside me and he didn't," says Tasha. "I don't think he suffered the way I have just because he didn't have the physical connection with her."

Accept Each Other's Grieving Styles

When we choose our spouses, we often do so based on common values and interests. But grieving is often the first time you experience a significant difference between the two of you, especially since men often grieve differently than women do. Meryl and George Muller's son Danny died of heart failure at the age of 11. On the day Meryl discovered Danny had died in his sleep, her first reaction when standing over his bed was to reach out and wrap him in the blanket, tucking a pillow under his head.

While Meryl mourned in her own way, anger simmered inside George. Before he could stop himself, his fist slammed against the bedroom door, smashing a hole in the wood.

Meryl realized George needed the physical pain to counteract the emotional agony. She gathered her husband into her arms and wept.

Women also share their emotions more easily than men do, so women are more social and talkative about their grief. When your husband mourns silently, it's tempting to think he's not mourning at all, when in reality his pain is as deep as yours.

Respect Your Partner's Grieving Pace

Different people grieve at different paces. While losing a child is a wound that never closes completely, you may find that your partner is letting go of the most intense grief faster than you are.

About a year after Danny's death, Meryl wanted to visit his grave every week. George felt they should visit less often. At first, Meryl would become irritated at him. But as they shared their feelings, Meryl and George compromised. They now visit the grave every other week or every third week.

"It was a part of letting go," Meryl says. "But I get a little crazy if it gets longer."

Tasha, meanwhile, appreciates how Richard never tried to rush her grief.

"Some men run away or get angry or ask, 'When are you going to get over this?' But he never once has said that," says Tasha. "He's just totally accepted my feelings. If my husband said to me, 'Get over it!' or 'Not this again!' or 'Can't you stop crying?' I would have started to shrivel away and certainly not share anything that I felt."

Continued on page 9

Marriage: After a Child's Death *(Con't)*

Avoid Blame

Blame can take the form of holding your partner responsible for some aspect of your child's death ("You're the one who let him stay out late with his friends"), or it can even mean simmering with anger at some outside entity, such as God. While some anger after a child's death is normal, ongoing anger is hard for others to endure.

Patricia knows this firsthand. Her husband, Joe, after the death of their son Jimmy in a car accident, blazed with anger. He never blamed Patricia for Jimmy's death, but he told her, "Your God killed my son." And when Joe wasn't upset with God, he blamed the road crews for not sanding the road on time. His anger prevented him from realizing their daughter, Jimmy's sister, was grieving, too, and needed her parents' help.

Patricia, on the other hand, coped with their son's death differently. Often, she told friends, "There are a lot of things worse in life than having a son in heaven."

Patricia begged Joe to help their daughter through the grieving process, but he was too angry to listen, and Patricia left the marriage.

Resolve Guilty Feelings

Sometimes we don't blame other people -- we blame ourselves. After a son dies in a car accident, a mother might feel as if she didn't teach her son to be more careful. Or, after a wife has a miscarriage, the husband might feel as if he didn't pay enough attention to her during pregnancy. Dr. Hardt found that in bereaved couples who divorced or considered divorce, guilt was an important factor. If the husband is beating himself up for what he falsely believes to be his fault, he may turn to self-destructive behavior, such as alcoholism or working long hours at the office, which can affect the marriage. Counseling can help resolve feelings of guilt.

The bottom line: Losing a child is a bittersweet bond between the two of you. It's not a foregone conclusion that your marriage will have problems after the death. In fact, keeping in mind the suggestions above will likely mean your union will ultimately grow stronger.

Kimberly Pryor, author, The Indestructible Relationship

Reprinted from the summer 2011 issue of We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends



Numbers

Yesterday this woman spoke to me
About a lady whose son had died,
Killed. Traffic. Fifteen.
"When?" I asked.
The woman threw back her head
And pondered the simple question.
"Twenty-seven years ago."
And I thought back four
To a three year old. "Funny," I said,
"There doesn't seem to be much difference
In numbers."



*Susan Borrowman
TCF Kingston, OH*

*Reprinted from the April 2000 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Remember Me

Remember me in quiet days
When raindrops whisper on your pane
But in your memories have not grief
Let just the joy we knew remain.
Remember me when evening stars
Look down on you with steadfast eyes;
And when your thoughts do turn to me,
Know that I would not have you cry;
But live for me and laugh for me -
When you are happy, so am I
Remember an old joke we shared;
Remember me when spring walks by;
Think of me when you are glad,
And while you live, I shall not die.

*Lyn Bryant (sibling)
TCF Baytown, TX*

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.



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love, to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

Somehow, somewhere, and someday

Each one of us finds the key

That helps us to rise above

Our personal tragedies.

When that day emerges,

Peace of mind transcends.

***Gloria Gersten
TCF Miami, FL***

*Reprinted from the April 1999 newsletter of the
South Bay/Los Angeles, CA chapter of The Compassionate Friends*