



The Compassionate Friends NEWSLETTER

Manhattan Newsletter

HOLIDAY 2017 Vol. XXIX No. 4

(LESS THAN) GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Life after losing a child is an ongoing coming to terms with missed expectations. It never ends. No matter how many years pass, no matter what else happens (good or bad), there is always that thought...what might have been.

Growing up, I had many dreams. They seem so simple now. I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to find love and marry. I wanted to have lots of children. I dreamed of living in a house with a garden. I hoped I would do something lasting that would benefit mankind. Simple every day dreams. I always expected I would be able to accomplish them.

Calamity and misfortune were never a part of my thought process. It's not supposed to be. Anticipating those possibilities would have been and continue to be paralyzing. Knowing then what we all know now, would we have taken the chances we did and dreamed the dreams that made us all what we have become?

Early on, I began to learn that life might contain a series of missed expectations. Becoming a teacher was the first big disappointment. School just couldn't hold my attention and when I accidentally landed an exciting job in the fashion industry, I rebounded totally and enjoyed an amazing career that took me around the world.

Love and marriage was a realized dream. Having a lot of children was another story. After seven years I was preparing to come to terms with being childless when, happily, we discovered Peter was on the way. Joy quickly erased the growing panic that preceded that anticipated disappointment. Adapting to being childless would have

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A PAIN IN THE EAR: TEN YEARS LATER

by Nora Yood

Ten years ago, I gave myself an uncharacteristic gift: a tiny diamond stud winking slyly from the cartilage just below where the curve in the ear begins its descent toward the lobe. The earring was discrete, a bit of bling, barely visible unless my hair is pulled back in a ponytail, which it rarely is. It provided a pin point of light just large enough to provoke an occasional comment or query, a fashion response I usually try to avoid. This modest accessory, however, was not about jewelry.

A few months earlier, my son had died. His death trashed every assumption I had about how my future would unfold. I was drowning in an ocean of grief, an unmoored, pitiable, creature, exiled forever from normalcy. I was a tragic figure, a mother who buried her child. I needed some kind of outward manifestation of the radical transformation that recalibrated my entire existence. But what?

My son died in the summer. His absence was still a raw wound. As the winter holidays approached, the fact of him being absent at family gatherings --the empty chair syndrome-- loomed ominously as the days grew darker and colder. That first year, even the word *thanksgiving* was an affront, a verbal slap in the face of reality. Shopping for gifts, impossible to contemplate. Yet in mid December, I found myself in the mall, meandering aimlessly, when I bumped into a kiosk called Pagoda Piercing. A eureka moment ensued. I would get a cartilage earring, just on one ear, located at the most tender spot along the rim.

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TELEPHONE FRIENDS - When you're having the kind of day that you feel only another bereaved parent or sibling can understand, we are willing to listen and share with you. Don't hesitate to call our Manhattan Chapter phone for meeting information (212) 217-9647. However, if you need to speak with someone please call one of the following volunteers: Jacquie Mitchell (eves) (347) 414-1780 jacquienytcf@gmail.com.

SIBLINGS: Jordon Ferber, (917) 837-7752 beatniknudnik@yahoo.com

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MEETINGS are always the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church,

55th and 5th Avenue. Enter at 7 West 55th street.

We start PROMPTLY at 7:00PM.

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. We are a group of bereaved parents who are seeking support in our grief or are able to give it. Among us, your religion, your race, your politics, your job or social standing are not important. We care about your grief --the tragedy that each of us has shared-- and how we can grow through it, not back to the person we were but to the person we can become.

WHAT DO PARENTS LOSE WHEN A CHILD DIES?

by Barbara D. Rosoff from "The Worst Loss"

*A child's death is a dark stone dropped in the pool of your life.
Ripples spread everywhere, no part of you is spared.*

The Loss of a Piece of Yourself: Our time, our efforts, and our hopes - these are our most precious commodities, the materials of our selves. We invest them lavishly in our child. How much of ourselves we have invested is not measured by how many months or years the child lived. A stillbirth or the death of a newborn is as great a loss as the death of a young adult. As Linda Edelstein reminds us, "the death of a child is an event that occurs in the (parents) inner and outer worlds." To take the measure of your loss, we must appreciate the unique place your child occupied in your inner world. Your child's death robs you of a central piece of your self, part of what is most you.

The loss of illusions: Our belief that we can protect our children too often turns out to be an illusion. We elaborate other illusions as well: "If I behave right and play by the rules, bad things won't happen to me." "Cancer happens to other people." "This is a good neighborhood; my kids are safe." These ideas sit in the back of our minds, seldom invoked, yet powerfully reassuring. When you cannot protect your child, you lose the canopy of illusions that sustained you. Your child's death delivers a staggering blow to your self-esteem. Your job as a parent was to protect your child, and you could not. No matter what the circumstances of his death, no matter how impossible to prevent or beyond your control, you hold yourself responsible. If what happened to your child happened in another family, you would not hold those parents responsible. Yet you hold yourself to a different measure.

With any disaster - earthquake, death, car accident - the trauma arises not only from the event but from its power to rip away our illusions. We stand pitifully exposed to our own helplessness: all that we have done right, all the good we've been has not availed us. When parents whose child has died talk about what they have lost, they always mention the loss of their powerful illusions. These sustain us, and they are a lot to lose. Life goes much harder without them.

The loss of order in our universe: Parents are older, children are younger. Children will grow up. Parents will grow older and die, and their children will bury them. The order of the generations is deeply embedded in our thinking. It is how things are, the way they ought to be, natural and inviolable. A child's death violates this order. Every parent who has lost

a child feels that violation. Age offers no statute of limitations.

The loss of the Future: A child's death robs you of your future. Your child is woven through the tapestry of your future, an integral part of the design. When death rips your child from the tapestry, the design is changed, damaged beyond repair. You lose the pleasure and pride that comes from watching her life unfold and her potential flower. You lose the pleasure of her company. Holidays and birthdays turn into hollow, exquisitely painful reminders of her absence.

When your child dies, you lose simultaneously on so many fronts. You lose the embodiment of your special hopes, and you lose your second chance. You lose someone who loved you and whom you loved, perhaps more extravagantly than anyone else in your life. In your own eyes you have failed, because you could not protect your child. You lose a job and a piece of whom you know yourself to be. You are cheated of the natural order of time and generation. The tapestry of your future has been torn and forever altered.

THERE IS NO WORD

They call a man a widower
when he has lost his wife.

The woman is a widow
when her man does lose his life.
And orphan is the word perhaps
for most of us one day.

For it is normal losing
Mom and Dad along the way.
But you can look both high and low
and then look far and wide
and never find a word for one
who's had a child who died.

So is it then so rare a find for
lexicography?
And, like some unfound jungle plant,
there's yet no word for me?

Or could it be a word that's just
too difficult to choose?
And God forbid, a nightmare curse
too horrible to use?

So, at a loss to tell our loss,
we call ourselves bereaved.
For there's no word to tell of pain
that cannot be believed.

~Ken Falk, TCF Northwestern CT

A LOVE GIFT is a donation given in memory of a child who has died, or sometimes as a memorial to a relative or friend. It can be in honor of a happy event that you would like to acknowledge. Your contributions can be in any amount, are tax deductible and are a source of income for our chapter that helps us to reach out to bereaved parents and siblings through books, programs, meetings and this newsletter. In this issue we want to thank and acknowledge the following for their generous support of our chapter and especially, our newsletter. Note, on advice from our National office, because of concerns about identity theft we have changed our format and eliminated years from birth dates and anniversary dates.



Renee & Hervey Sande	In loving memory of Caleb Sande , forever 6 years old
Evelyn Rabi	In memory of her daughter, Yvonne Laurice Adjake , forever 23
Edith Dunfee	In memory of her daughter, Ethelynn Kotchenthal , forever 49
Claudette Hannibal	In memory of her son, Troy O. Myers , forever 33
Irma Schubert	In memory of her son, William E. Schubert , forever 34
Leah Peskin	In memory of her son, Gavin Peskin , forever 35
Jacquie & John Mitchell	In memory of their sons, Kareem Edwards-Mitchell , forever 15, and Kevin Mitchell , forever 12
Doris & Martin Zablidowsky	In memory of their son, David Zablidowsky , forever 38

THE GOOD FIGHT

Before our son's death turned our lives upside down, I cannot recall spending any time in cemeteries. One of two elderly relatives, who had lived out their span, are in cemeteries now, and their loss is felt at holiday gatherings. When I was a child, our Sunday School class took a tour of the pre-Revolutionary War cemetery behind the historic old church I attended. I remember being shocked at the number of tiny markers for the very young who, our teacher said, were so susceptible to diseases in those colonial days. We were simply told that people had large families then because they knew illness would take some of the children. We were never exposed to the notion that this was a tragedy to these real people so long ago.

Many years later, when my grandmother was in her 80's, she told me that the child born before her had died at the age of three. At the age of 13, Grandmother was stunned to find her mother caressing this child's clothing and weeping in the attic of their home in the rolling hills of Kentucky. I was a parent then and I thought, "well, of course Grandmother's mother was sad, but she had other children". I didn't know, did I? Who among us did?

Now, when I go to my son's marker, I examine the other headstones carefully. Did everyone in the family live to an acceptable age? When I find one that clearly indicates the death of a child, I study the parents markers closely. How long did they have to live without their child? Sometimes the number of years takes my breath away. I am to learn from this. Others 'made it'. So can I. Without Compassionate Friends I wouldn't have had a clue as to HOW they made it, and probably would have given up the effort.

I read the inscriptions on these older markers to see if they provide any clues as to what helped those before me carry on. I found one that summed it up. It read:

"LIVING YOU MADE IT GOODLIER TO LIVE
DEAD, YOU MAKE IT EASIER TO DIE"

So -- we are to endure. We do know what it was to live, but now we have the added dimensions of courage, love and steadfastness. And, though we no longer hope for our own death as a release from the pain, we, unlike most "other people", will not fear it when we have finished fighting the good fight.

~ Pat Kuzela, TCF Atlanta

'Twas THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

~FOR BEREAVED PARENTS~

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days
that I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
in hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making their holiday plans,
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.
I had lost my dear child a few years before,
And I knew what my holiday had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The sight that I saw took my breath away,
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.
The message they brought was my holiday gift,
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,
One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
Our children are with us - they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
A message of hope - a message so dear.
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
"To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"

~ by **Faye McCord**, *TCF Jackson, MS*

A MOTHER'S LOVE

by Bev Dennison

I answered the phone, and heard your voice again
but this call was different, I could hear your pain.
The words that you spoke haunt me to this day.
I thought that I could love you enough to make you stay.

I tried to encourage you with loving words a mom should say.
How could I have ever known you would end your life this way?

Your world held everything, or so it seemed to me,
but the pain and the hopelessness were all part of your misery.

I was sure you could cope with whatever came your way,
never doubting that a mother's love could make you want to stay.
True love, a home and happiness, all these belonged to you,
but behind your brilliant smile more despair than anyone knew.

Waiting for a call from you through long hours the next day;
sure that I could love you enough to make you want to stay.
When I heard three car doors slam, my feet hit the floor.
Three officers were on the porch knocking gently at my door.

Their words were so surreal all I could do was pray
and look to God for answers for why you couldn't stay.

"Go fast - take chances", that's how you used to live,
eager to take everything that this life had to give.
But somewhere life turned sad, and you couldn't face another
day.
How will I ever understand why you couldn't stay?

Memories unfulfilled loving words left unsaid,
all of these realities spinning 'round my head.
I watch your friends get married, I hold their babies, feel their
love,
knowing that you see all of this from your new home up above.

I miss your bear hugs and your smiles, and I ache to hear your
voice.

Yes I know that in your heart you felt you had no choice.
And, as I am still grieving, getting through day by day,
loving you, somehow accepting, I could make you want to stay.

from January 2011 Grief Digest

SIBLING CREDO: *We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. Other times we will need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brothers and sisters; however, a special part of them lives on within us. When our brothers and sisters dies, our lives changed. We are living a life that is different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.*

SIBLINGS

“Hey Joyce, where ‘ya been?” my classmate casually asks. He doesn’t realize that simple question is the most difficult for mw to answer, “My brother died.” At twenty-five years old, Raymond overdosed on drugs. I look away.

Can you tell how I feel by the look on my face? Can I tell you with words? Would you listen? I’m nineteen years old. I Get to live – how come he didn’t? Look at all he is missing – do I have the right to enjoy all this – concerts, dancing, a walk in the park – LIFE! Do I have a right to smile when he isn’t here? Was there something I could have done to help him? I’m angry! I suppose I shouldn’t be. After all, he was so sad and so sick. How can I be mad at someone who died?

The rest of my family speaks of him as if he was a saint, yet I am filled with rage. How could you

destroy our family? How could you be so selfish? I hate you! I feel ashamed to say these words, but I can’t bear walking around like I am choking. The tears come out sharply, and yes, it hurts, but the clenched fist in my heart is beginning to open. I pray that I will not be bitter. I will try to go on because I love life, and I know God wants me to live.

Seventeen years later, I enter Compassionate Friends where I can tell my story without shame – uncensored. I have come to realize I was powerless over my brother’s addiction. I will always feel the sadness of this loss, but I have the right to a full and joyous life even though my brother didn’t survive. And so I am grateful to experience the meaning of the word – compassion.

Joyce Raimondo, TCF Manhattan

It’s the Music that Bonds the Soul

The room you once lived in
Doesn’t look the same.
The people who used to call you
Never mention your name.

The car you used to drive
They may not make anymore;
And all the things you treasured
Are boxed behind closed doors.

The clothes you set the trends by
Are surely out of date.

The people you owe money to
Have wiped away the slate.

Things have changed and changed
Since you went away,
But some things remain the same
Each and every day.

Like the aching in my heart –
A scar that just won’t heal.
Or the way a special song
Can change the way I feel.

Brother, you must know that the music
Bonds us and will keep us close;
Because secretly I know in my heart
It’s the music you miss the most.

So let the world keep turning,
Time can take its toll.
As long as the music is playing
You’ll be dancing on my soul.

Stacie Gilliam

TCF, N. Oklahoma City, OK

REFLECTIONS

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations that life isn’t always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best 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 the 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 a productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people who 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 Compassionate Friends*

been an almost insurmountable disappointment. I can remember my growing despair at the thought. Even now, it brings on an almost palpable ache in the pit of my stomach. I think about that feeling a lot these days.

The next missed expectation came upon discovering Peter would be an only child. That was a difficult time too. But it wasn't long-lasting. After all, we did have Peter. It wasn't like we were childless. Like now.

We had Peter for 22 years. Coming to terms with the missed expectation of having him for the rest of our lives has become an ongoing, relentless pursuit; chasing after some impossible resolution that is clearly an exercise in futility. Life without Peter is one disappointment for which there is no resolve. This missed expectation requires total reinvention.

For ten years now I have worked hard at grieving and surviving. The first year was so very hard. But the second year was worse. You see, I expected (there's that word again) to feel better after the first year. But I soon discovered that the dreaded first anniversary did nothing, changed nothing and therefore, meant nothing. I was as miserable as ever and Peter was as invisible as ever. To this day, I don't know what I was expecting but, whatever it was, I didn't get it.

For ten years now, I've expected to achieve some resolution to the grievous pain of life without my treasured child. I've never really understood what "resolution" meant but I figured if I found it, I'd know.

As the holidays approach once again, I think perhaps "resolution" is the ability to function again as a seemingly "whole" person even when you're not. To be able to enjoy people and events again even when you're permanently sad inside. Life has become a strange collection of contradictions. Dis-belief is a constant. Can it really be ten years I wonder? I have a friend who also wonders is it possible that it is 21 years!? We marvel that we are still here. Another missed expectation. We both thought we'd be following our kids sooner rather than later.

So here come the holidays again. My expectations are changing. I've learned to expect very little. I expect I will manage to enjoy a little Thanksgiving with friends. December will be filled with music, lights and the laughter of little children. I will smile at all the festivities and quietly wonder once again, what would it be like now, if Peter were here.

Holiday 2003

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM

I am flesh and blood, torn mind,
and broken heart.
I feel at times like a wise old woman -
but then in the next moment like a small child.

I admit total confusion.
I look in the mirror and see someone I'm not sure I know.
I want an answer; I want a solution - to a problem that has
neither on this earth.

It seems that nothing matters anymore and yet at the same
time I have learned that everything does.
That there are millions of people on this earth.
When one of them dies, it matters.

I ache to a degree that only another who has crossed this
bridge could gauge.
And only they can for a moment understand my torment .

Do you know who I am?
I am a bereaved mother - the last thing I ever thought I
would be.
My child has died before me, the most unnatural
thing in the world.
And my continued being seems the next
most unnatural thing.
A portion of my heart, spirit, and dreams - and all thoughts
of total peace, are with Ryan,
never to be recovered to make a whole until I can see him
again.

The tears I cry are not for me, but for the beautiful life that
ended far too soon.
And the utterly helpless frustration of not being able to do
anything to change that.

~Deborah Wiseman TCF of Nashville, TN

*People in mourning have to come to grips with
death before they can live again.
Mourning can go on for years and years.
It doesn't end after a year, that's a false fantasy.
It usually ends when people realize that they can
live again, that they can concentrate their energies on
their lives as a whole, and not on
their hurt, and guilt and pain.*

~Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

PAIN IN THE EAR... (continued from page 1)

The earring would be a physical, visible symbol representing the loss of my brilliant, shining son. The piercing professional was not encouraging.

It will be painful, she warned, and for quite a while.

Perfect, I thought to myself. A pain in my ear that would reflect the pain in my gut, throbbing, palpable, constant. My body and my soul in sync.

For months, the earring hurt so good. I couldn't sleep anyway, and the pain in my ear made my discomfort something concrete and objective. When asked about the earring, I was able express that I wore it to honor my son who had died. Before the earring, I could not find the words to talk about his death. When I felt especially vulnerable, a victim of cruel fate, I fingered the metal nub, and was reminded about how much I hurt, but also that I was still alive and able to feel pain. Standing in front of the mirror, if I noticed the earring, I felt quirky and unconventional, qualities that defined David and made him the charismatic, creative person he was. After a while, the pain in the ear began to lessen. It would only bother me if I happened to turn a certain way in my sleep, or poise the hair drier in an awkward position. People stopped commenting about the earring. Still, I would check on it from time to time to make sure it was in place.

This July was the tenth anniversary of my son's death, a watershed event in the evolution of my grieving. I have accepted that my son is no longer physically involved in the routine of my life. I will mourn this truth and miss him as long as I remain in the land of the living. But for this second decade, I have chosen to enter a new relationship with him. During the earlier years, I could not wrap my head around the concept that I would never see or speak to him again. I kept imagining he would reappear at my door, or that he was one of the tall, slim, handsome young men that passed me in the street. After this long, difficult decade, the bitter reality has sunk in. Now his presence feels internalized, inhabiting a niche in my broken

heart to teach me compassion; occupying a corner of my consciousness to help me identify with the sick and suffering and displaced; invading my rational thought processes to reinforce the sobering truth that I don't have the answers to many questions that challenge and flummox me.

I am his mother, but he has become my spiritual guide, teaching me wisdom about love, life, human frailty and resilience in ways that I never dreamed of until I have learned to pay attention to messages I have come to believe he sends me as his legacy. The earring, too, became less of behavioral coping mechanism for negotiating my identity as a bereaved parent and more of a metaphorical monument to the miracle of having survived the surreal decade following David's death and gratitude for the gift that has allowed me to understand that he is with me always, continuing to enrich my life and enabling me to experience the eternal power of love.

And then a few weeks before Thanksgiving, as was my habit, I did a quick, casual cartilage check. The stud was missing! How could it have fallen out without me realizing it? Had I been negligent, irresponsible, careless?

A critical, guilty refrain flared up, threatening to overtake my recently acquired, budding spiritual outlook. Negative feelings seem to be dormant in my psyche, like vestigial organs, and can become be easily resurrected. I was determined not to give in to them. Perhaps the message to learn that the missing earring has served its purpose and I need to cultivate new methods and actions to reflect the consistency of the presence of my son in my life. Perhaps this holiday season I'll buy myself two new studs. One will be a symbol of the light and beauty he brought those who loved being around him. The other will be an expression of my commitment in the next decade to find ways to insure that his memory remain a source of compassion, healing, acceptance and optimism for all those who love and cherish and miss him.

DID SHE KNOW

The smell of pine trees in the air
Carols heard this time of year
I feel the difference deep inside
Christmas time is almost here

My thoughts begin a journey
As I ponder stories told
Of another bereaved mother
Whose son did not grow old

I wonder now, was she aware
at the time her son was born,
the limit on his earthly stay,
life's fabric would be torn?

She was so young, how could she know
when cradling him new,
that love could not protect them from
the pain that they'd both go through?

I hope 'twas not within her mind,
the nightmare she would live.
When his death would leave her empty
with nothing left to give.

These thoughts of her are new to me
struggling with this test.
of facing Christmas once again
since he was laid to rest.

~Georgia A. Cockerham,

TCF Northwest Coast from her book, *Why? Why? Why?*



CLOSED FACEBOOK PAGES

TCF – Loss of a Child

Moderators: Kelly Coccia-Stanczak, Jennifer Dixon, Janet Ferjo, Donna Goodrich, Eileen Nittler, Rebecca Perkins and Goody Tendall

TCF – Loss of a Stepchild

Moderator: Babe Muro

TCF – Loss of a Grandchild

Moderators: Debbie Fluhr and Jennifer “Sue” Hale

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

Moderators: Tracy Milne Edgemon and Keith Singer

TCF – Multiple Losses

Moderators: Karen McCormick and Bettie-Jeanne Rivard-Darby

TCF – Men in Grief

Moderators: Gary Odle and Mark Rambis

TCF – Sudden Death

Moderators: Carol Ladouceur, Bettie-Jeanne Rivard-Darby and Dana Young

TCF – Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Barbara Allen, Karen Colangelo, Mary Lemley, Carol Wiles, and Karen Zaorski

TCF – Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Barbara Allen, Kristy Flower, and Andrea Keller

TCF – Loss to Suicide

Moderators: Donna Adams, Donna McGrew Anderson, Leanna Leyes, Barbara Reboratti and Mary Ann Ward

TCF – Loss to Homicide

Moderators: Rebecca Perkins and Dawn Wassel

TCF – Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

Moderators: Michelle Arrowood and Robin Landry

TCF – Loss to Cancer

Moderator: Rita Studzinski

TCF – Loss of a Child with Special Needs

Moderator: Donna Reagan

TCF – Loss to Long-term Illness

Moderator: Debbie Gossen

TCF – Loss to Mental Illness

Moderators: Sherry Cox and Annette Swestyn

TCF – Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth

Moderators: Libby Hall and Kelly Kittel

TCF – Infant and Toddler Loss

Moderators: Julia West and Deanna Wheeler

TCF – Loss of a Child 4 -12 Years Old

Moderators: Heike and Brian Mayle

TCF – Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children

Moderators: Becky Barch, Joannie Kemling, and Tonja Knobel

TCF – Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren

Moderators: Diana Marie

TCF – Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues

Moderator: Rita Studzinski

TCF – Crafty Corner

Moderators: Gail Lafferty and Kathy Rambo

The death of a child is a fire in the mind. The mind burns with alternatives that never come to pass, with fantasies of remarkable recuperations, with dreams of adult accomplishment. If we let this fire burn compassionately within us, the grief of the mind, the fantasies, the burning of the spirit, begin slowly to melt away and the child comes more into our heart. Our anguish can be used to open more fully, to enter as completely as we can into this final sharing. And then, as Rabindranath Tagore wrote in the final lines of his poem, The End, “Dear Auntie will come with presents and will ask, ‘Where is our baby, Sister?’ And Mother, you will tell her softly, ‘He is in the pupils of my eyes. He is in my bones and in my soul.’”

Steven Levine —From Who Dies

FINGERTIPS

By Cliff Kasden

As more than four years separate
Our Neill from life's embrace
The tears inflicted by his fate
Bring scars we can't erase.

His mother seems to suffer less.
Disguised by medication.
Her smile conceals unhappiness
Futility, frustration.

Last night I entered briefly.
She was lying on his bed.
Her fingertips pressed gently
On the wall beside her head.

She looked at me with trembling lips.
Resigned to tell it all.
"I make believe his fingertips
are just beyond the wall."

"Our souls remain united
I will never let him fall.
My fingertips are on this side.
My son lives past the wall".

My own head crumpled on her chest.
I wished her hopes were true.
Then suddenly I realized
That her eyes were always blue.

You see, our days were marred by rain
When all of us were here.
Compassion eased our rage and pain
Our loneliness, our fear.

I guess I'd better stay a while.
There's so much more to teach.
'Till broken hearted mothers smile
And fingers always reach.



The Compassionate Friends

Worldwide Candle Lighting

Join us on December 10, 2017

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting® unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left 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 19th 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. TCF's WWCL 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.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

our Manhattan Chapter will join the Worldwide Candle Lighting

at

THE STEWART HOTEL -

31st Street at Seventh Avenue.

Doors will open at 5:45 and our program will begin promptly at 6:45 so that candles will be lit at 7PM.

There will be an ongoing slide presentation of all of our children.

You are invited to submit two photos

a "sunrise" (young) photo and

a "sunset" one taken shortly before his or her anniversary date.

Photos should be emailed in .jpg format to:

photosmtcf@gmail.com

PHOTOS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 15TH

Refreshments will be served.

Be sure to bring a framed photo that can be displayed
in the ballroom during the event.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CHAT SCHEDULE

The Compassionate Friends National Office
 P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
 Toll Free (877) 969-0010
 www.compassionatefriends.org
 email:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

We Need Not Walk Alone
 TCF National Magazine
 1 yr. subscription \$20

Deadline for Newsletter article submissions:
 Fall: August 1st Spring/Summer: April 1st
 Winter: February 2nd Holiday: October 1st

Mark Your Calendars!
 Our next Chapter meetings are Tuesdays:

NOV 14	DEC 12	JAN 9	FEB 13	MAR 13
NOV 28	DEC 26	JAN 11	FEB 27	MAR 26

EDT	9:00-10:00AM	8:00-9:00PM	9:00-10:00PM	10:00-11:00PM
MON			General Bereavement Issues & Grandparents/Stepparents	General Bereavement Issues & Men's Chat
TUE			General Bereavement Issues, Bereavement over 2 years & Pregnancy Loss/Infant Death	General Bereavement Issues & Pregnancy Loss/Infant Death
WED	Newly Bereaved		September 11 Families & Siblings	General Bereavement Issues
THU		No Surviving Children	General Bereavement Issues & Siblings	General Bereavement Issues
FRI		Suicide	Special Needs Children	General Bereavement Issues
SAT				General Bereavement & Siblings
SUN	Siblings		General Bereavement Issues & Siblings	General Bereavement Issues & Siblings

OUR COMPASSIONATE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS						
Babylon	1st Friday	(516) 795-8644	Medford	2nd Friday	(631) 738-0809	
Bronx	2nd Tuesday	(914) 714-4885	Rockville Centre	2nd Friday	(516) 766-4682	
Brookhaven	2nd Friday	(631) 738-0809	Rockland County	3rd Tuesday	(845) 398-9762	
Brooklyn	3rd Wednesday	(917) 952-9751	SmithPoint/Mastic	2nd Thursday	(631) 281-9004	
Flushing	3rd Friday	(718) 746-5010	Staten Island	2nd and 4th Thursday	(718) 983-0377	
Manhasset	3rd Tuesday	(516) 466-2480	Syosset (Plainview)	3rd Friday	(718) 767-0904	
Marine Park, Bklyn	3rd Friday	(718) 605-1545	Twin Forks/Hamptons	3rd Friday	(646) 894-0317	
			White Plains	1st Thursday	(914) 381-3389	



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