



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**Miami  
Valley  
Chapter  
Newsletter**

TCF Chapter No. 1732, P.O. Box 292112, Kettering, OH 45429 (937) 640-2621

Nov-Dec 2016

Website: <http://www.miamivalleytcf.com>

E-mail: [miamivalleytcf@gmail.com](mailto:miamivalleytcf@gmail.com)

### **TCF ANNUAL CANDLE LIGHTING!**

On the 2nd Sunday in December, The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of our daughters, sons, brothers, sisters and grandchildren gone too soon. As candles are lit at 7pm local time, thousands of persons honor the memory of all our children who have died. Believed to be the largest mass candle lighting in the world, this 20th annual event, a gift to you from TCF, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in 1997 as a small internet observance, it has swelled in numbers as word has spread. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and many more informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died but will never be forgotten.

Our chapter participates in this event uniting families and friends everywhere with a beautiful program of music, readings, and lighting candles to honor the memories of our children, siblings and grandchildren. Afterwards, we'll gather for light snacks — bring something to share if you like, but it is not required!

***Sunday, 12/11/2016, 7pm  
Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church***

***Please arrive early for music before the program and plan to be seated by 6:45. We start precisely at 6:59pm!***

We create a lovely slide presentation of our children's photos for the program:

***Submit a photo of your child (JPEG format, please):***

to our chapter e-mail at [miamivalleytcf@gmail.com](mailto:miamivalleytcf@gmail.com)

***OR send us an actual photo:***

Miami Valley TCF Chapter #1732

PO Box 292112

Kettering, OH 45429

***Deadline for photos is November 16th!!***

Please include his/her full name as you would like it read. If your child's photo has been included in recent Candle Lightings, no need to resubmit — unless you'd like to replace the one we have with another. If you haven't attended in several years and are planning on coming, check with us to be sure we have your child's photo.

If you like, bring an actual photo along for our memory table.

THANK YOU!

**Chapter meetings are on the  
third Wednesday of the month  
at Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church  
Corner of Bigger Road & Wilmington Pike  
Kettering, Ohio**

**Directions:** from Rt 35, exit at Woodman Drive,  
go south approximately 4 miles to Wilmington Pike,  
turn left, church is about 1/2 mile on right

***OR***

from I-675, exit onto Wilmington Pike (Exit 7),  
go north 2 miles. Church is on left, just after David  
Road

#### **Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Topics**

**Wednesday, November 16th, 7pm  
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

**Wednesday, December 21st, 7pm  
Surviving the Holidays**

#### ***In case of inclement weather on meeting night...***

Check our website <http://www.miamivalleytcf.com>  
or call our phone line (937) 640-2621 for  
a cancellation message.

No message? We'll be there!

#### **Wintersong**

Season of lights, season of love and peace,  
Season of shadow, season of memories,  
Season of warmth and joy, season of secret tears:

Give us the courage to laugh again.  
Give us the vision to hope again.  
Give us the power to love again -

For all our new seasons  
And all our new years.

~Sascha Wagner  
Mother of Eve and Nino

## *Thank You for your "Love Gifts"* *in remembrance of these loved ones ...*

- ♥ Ruth Ann Williams, in memory of her son Reggie's September birthday
- ♥ Les & Debbie Gambrell, in memory of their son, Justin
- ♥ Susan Bierlein, in memory of her son, Marcus Bowling
- ♥ Tammie Spence, in memory of her son, Shannon Mason

*And thanks to ALL who gave anonymously!*

*(Please contact us if we have made an error  
or if we accidentally omitted any love gift)*

**As we approach the end of the year, please consider supporting TCF through our holiday appeal. Every donation we receive is greatly needed and equally appreciated and is used to further our vision, "That everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped."**

**We know that during these busy times, requests for your financial assistance are many, and there are only a few, or maybe even just one, organization that will benefit from your support.**

**TCF needs your assistance to help continue to keep our beloved organization helping those who are coming behind us.**

**Do it in the name of your son or daughter, brother or sister, grandchild, niece or nephew, friend — for all children gone too soon.**

Please send your "Love Gifts" (tax deductible) to  
**The Compassionate Friends, Chapter # 1732**  
**Karen Brown, Treasurer**  
**P. O. Box 292112**  
**Kettering, Ohio 45429**

**Chapter financial reports are available at planning meetings.**

**If you'd like to designate your gift for a particular use, such as a newsletter mailing, or towards an event such as the Candle Lighting, please let us know!**

**Donate to our local TCF Chapter via your Kroger Plus Card**  
(We're enrolled in the Kroger Community Rewards© Program, FREE to you! Sign up your Kroger Plus Card at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) and our chapter gets a percentage of what you spend. Use NPO Member# 44991.)

**AND**

**Your United Way contributions can be designated to our local Miami Valley TCF Chapter #1732!**

The Compassionate Friends  
Miami Valley Chapter #1732, Dayton, OH 937-640-2621

Chapter Support Meetings  
3rd Wednesdays, 7pm, Sugarcreek Church

Planning Team Meetings  
(all are welcome!)  
2nd Thursdays, 7pm, LaRosa's  
2801 Wilmington Pike near Dorothy Lane

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Other Nearby TCF Chapter  
Miami County TCF, West Milton, OH  
Contact Barb Lawrence 937-836-5939  
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### Other Local Dayton Area Support

- \*Miami Valley Hospital Perinatal Loss Hot Line, Pregnancy Loss/Infant Death ..... 937-208-6363
- \*Oak Tree Corner, Grief Support for Children 937-285-0199
- \*Survivors of Suicide ..... 937-226-0818  
..... [www.suicidepreventioncenter.tk](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.tk)
- \*Hospice of Dayton Grief Support ..... 937-256-4490  
..... 800-653-4490
- \*Crossroads Hospice Grief Recovery ..... 937-312-3170  
..... 800-603-6673
- \*HEALing Together, Franklin, OH Miscarriage, Infant & Toddler Loss, Parent/Grandparent Support 513-705-4056

### Other Resources

- \*Alive Alone, Support for Death of Only Child or All Children  
Kay Bevington, VanWert, OH: [alivalon@bright.net](mailto:alivalon@bright.net)  
419-238-1091, [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)
- \*American Association of Suicidology  
[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

### Websites to check out:

- [www.thegrieftoolbox.com](http://www.thegrieftoolbox.com)
- Tom Zuba [www.TomZuba.com](http://www.TomZuba.com)
- Paula Stephens [www.crazygoodgrief.com](http://www.crazygoodgrief.com)
- Paul S Boynton [www.beginwithyes.com](http://www.beginwithyes.com)
- Lexie Behrnt [www.scribblesandcrumbs.com](http://www.scribblesandcrumbs.com)
- Dr Joanne Cacciatore [www.facebook.com/joanecacciatore](http://www.facebook.com/joanecacciatore)
- Clara Hinton [www.clarahinton.com](http://www.clarahinton.com)
- Megan Devine [www.refugeingrief.com](http://www.refugeingrief.com)

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DID YOU KNOW ... The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of closed Facebook Groups, moderated by bereaved parents, siblings or grandparents, established to encourage connection and sharing among those grieving the death of a child, sibling or grandchild. See [http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Find\\_Support/Online-Community/Closed\\_Facebook\\_Groups.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Find_Support/Online-Community/Closed_Facebook_Groups.aspx)

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The Compassionate Friends national magazine "We Need Not Walk Alone" is available free through an online subscription at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) - click on "sign up for national publications". If you do not wish to subscribe, you can still view the magazine in the archive once the next issue has been published.

# how to withstand the holidays: root yourself in love

Megan Devine

teacher, speaker, licensed psychotherapist, author ("Everything Is Not OK"), [www.refugeingrief.com](http://www.refugeingrief.com)

With Halloween behind us, we now begin the difficult slide into the holiday season.

Whether this is the first one without your love, or you've survived several, the holiday season is almost always difficult. At the very least, it has some tender spots.

Before we get there, though, we have All Souls' Day in the Catholic tradition, which happened over this last weekend. This day has its roots in many traditions, including those pre-dating the Judeo-Christian calendar. On All Soul's day, you send out love and prayers for the benefit of your own dead, wishing them well on the journey, whatever that journey might be.

Rooting yourself in your love for the one you've lost, wishing them well in whatever form or formlessness they might be in now, can give you an anchor any time of year, but it seems especially nice to start off this season with a day dedicated to wishing them well.

## **Leaning into that love can help you too, if even only a little.**

If you have to endure the holiday season, and let's face it — most of us can't completely avoid it, it really is a kindness to give yourself as many tools as you can for getting through with even a little bit of peace. Remember, there isn't a lot you can do to make grief "better," but it certainly can be made worse. Not having any tools at all, not being able to find any anchor point in the swirling chaos of pain, well — that often makes it worse.

## **So how would you even do this? How can the love you have for them, even in their absence, be a balm for you?**

Please consider this an experiment, my readers. If it brings you any sense of comfort, great. If it doesn't, please discard the tool itself, but do keep looking, keep experimenting. Anything that brings you even the slightest steadiness of heart is a good tool.

Let's get back to that rooting into the love you knew then, and the love you still know now.

## **I think you can do this whether you believe in any kind of afterlife or not.**

To start, take a few deep breaths, as deep as you can. You might even set a timer for a few minutes so you can let go of watching the clock.

See if you can find your expansive love, the actual feeling of loving your person. This may be painful, yes. But it can often be that pain that comes attached to a deeper place — hard to describe, but when you drop into it, it's just... different. It's like there's pain, then there's suffering, then there's pain that has this companioning presence. That's the one we're going for: pain with a companioning presence. You want to access that deep channel of love you carry. We all carry it, sometimes just below the surface, sometimes needing a bit more work to find.

Call up the one you love in your mind and heart. Root yourself there in that love.

Imagine sending that love out, you're sitting inside it too.

Do you feel a shift as you do this? As you drop into your love?

## **That's your center. Where that love is, that's your *home*.**

Placing yourself there, deep inside your love, is sort of a fall-out shelter. It's a protected zone. Finding that place now, in such close orbit with All Souls' Day, can help you set an intention for the coming season — one of love and shelter for yourself. One of turning yourself back towards that love when things get rough.

If we can find ourselves there, rooted in that love, the difficult moments of the holiday season become — well, not "good," but maybe just slightly more bearable. It's like finding an anchor in a storm, or a focal point when the rest of the world is swirling.

## **Whatever happens in the outside world, whatever chaos looms, love is the anchor that can keep you grounded. Love, seating yourself in that love, gives you a small still point inside a wobbly universe.**

I've thrown out a lot of images in just these short paragraphs, so take whatever works: love as a fall-out shelter, an anchor, or a still point. When everything else has gone hazy, finding your love for the one who has died can act as all of these things.

In the days to come, draw on that love. In the days to come, send out that love.

## ***Root yourself there.***

# Healing Holiday Grief

Paula Stephens, Crazy Good Grief, [www.crazygoodgrief.com](http://www.crazygoodgrief.com), November 2015

Look for Paula's forthcoming book, "From Grief to Growth"!

No one gives you a map on how to navigate the holidays, a season when expressing anything short of overwhelming JOY makes people look at you like you're some sort of pariah!

Here are my 10 tips for Healing Holiday Grief:

## 1. Make a list of the events/traditions you are most concerned about

Often much of our angst comes from not knowing what's going to happen or how things are going to be different after the loss of a loved one. In the flurry of activities you are the only one who knows what traditions are important to you and which ones worry you the most. Take some quiet time to think through what specific traditions you are most concerned about. The best way to do this is to find some time to sit quietly and connect with your breath. Once you've centered yourself, ask yourself the question, "What events or traditions are creating the most anxiety for me right now?" Your inner knowing has the answer and you might immediately be pulled to an event or activity. Notice how your body feels, the sensations and energy around the activity. If nothing comes up immediately then begin to bring your thoughts to various holiday activities. Check in with each one – how does it feel, what comes up?

Keeping it simple, you have 3 choices: 1) Keep the event/tradition the same 2) Modify it to fit where you are now 3) Scratch it for this year

## 2. Consider which events/traditions you want to keep

Be open to the idea that some traditions you will want to wrap in love and keep, while others will need to be shelved for a while (and maybe forever). Recognize the traditions you keep will never be the same, but keeping them honors the love you feel for the person you lost. Every year is going to be a little bit different and what feels right this year might not feel the same in the coming years. Grief is a process and you must be willing to evolve with it. Always be open to what will help you move forward in your grief... and sometimes we have to go back to go forward! Get out your list from the previous tip. See if you still feel the same about the events/activities on this list. Now, let's take the next steps.

- \* Which events do you want to keep this year? (remember we only have to decide for this year)

- \* Which events are too painful this year and don't feel right?

- \* What or how can you modify an event?

- \* If you are undecided on some, come back to your list again later or sit with the idea of doing that event and see what comes up.

(I know we can't always control everything about the holiday seasons with family, etc – but don't worry, we will touch on that in another tip. Right now you are checking in and getting clarity.)

## 3. Brainstorm ideas of how you want to honor your loved one

Even if you decide to escape the entire holiday season and fly away to Hawaii for the holidays (done that) it's important that you take time to honor your loved one. It could be with a donation of time or money, or creating a sacred space or new tradition. No matter what you decide, be mindful about setting time aside to actively honor your loss. What would you like to do this year to include your loved one in the holiday season?

## 4. Cry

Quite simply—Cry. Don't be the tough guy (or girl) who pretends it's all good. It's not! You're going through a season or anniversary without someone who was a very important part of your life. By yourself or with your besties, it doesn't matter, just let it happen. Another way to look at this is, are you checking in with yourself to know what's going on emotionally and physically? Are you filling your days with activity in an effort to disconnect from the emotional heartache you would feel if you had a moment of downtime? Do you need a good cry?

## 5. Tell friends and family how you are feeling about upcoming events

Your friends and family might know you're going to have a hard time, and generally speaking, want to support you. But you are the only one who knows what you need and how you are feeling—don't make it harder for them (and yourself!) by expecting them to guess what this is like for you. We all experience grief differently. Share your fears, concerns and desires. Express what's important to you or how you would like to handle a specific event. It doesn't mean you will always get what you want or need, but it means that you have given voice to your grief. Have you connected and shared with the people who can support you?

## 6. Prioritize your self-care

There is no more important time to laser-focus your energy on self-care than during the holidays. Lack of sleep, poor food choices, increased alcohol consumption, decreased exercise, increased stress all add up to a **massive grief hangover**. Your emotional self is already on over-drive and this will leave your immune system susceptible to illness and your physical body exhausted. Make hydration, sleep, whole foods, stress management and exercise a priority leading up to and including these seasonal events. List all the ways you need to care for yourself, like eating a healthy breakfast, drinking more water, going to bed 30 minutes early, journaling, being outside, skipping that 2nd or 3rd drink at a party.

(continued from previous page)

### 7. Manage your energy

This is a continuation of Tip #6 on self-care. Even if you are taking care of yourself, notice when your tank is getting close to “E”. This is especially important if you are the type of person who likes to stay busy to keep their mind off things. Exhaustion (physical and emotional) is often the root cause of emotional meltdowns. And, as you know, grieving is emotionally exhausting by itself, then you add the emotional stress of the holidays and your tank is already half empty!

### 8. Prioritize work/social events that are the most important

The holidays are an especially busy time of year for extra parties and events—work, neighborhood and family are examples. Take time now to choose only 1-3 events that are really important that you attend. These might be required for your job or you just simply don't want to miss. Be mindful about your selection and take your time to RSVP. For social events that you might have attended with your loved one, ask yourself if you are ready for that situation—imaging yourself in that environment before you say yes. Write down events that can't be missed and events you want to attend. Remember, every year may be different, you only have to decide for this year right now.

### 9. Build in time for you

As you are planning your social events put “ME” time on the calendar. Whether that is to get out into nature and hike, get a massage, read a book, take a bath, it doesn't matter—just build in time to recharge your batteries. This could also include making time to be with close friends or family that help you feel connected and loved. Be sure to reach out to these people and let them know you might need some support during the holiday season. List people that you can connect with and/or activities that soothe your soul. And again, since people aren't mind-readers, let people know you are taking care of yourself by scheduling time to reflect and recharge.

### 10. Be grateful and GIVE

So I'm going to keep it simple and honest. The more we are grateful for what we have, the more full our lives will be. And the more we can do to extend our reach to be healing vessels of change, the better. Unexpected loss and tragedy cultivates so much anger, fear, selfishness and isolation and that's just the opposite of what needs to happen. Reaching out, connecting, creating communities, asking for support, giving support to others, being vulnerable, holding space with someone who is hurting... that is what we need to focus on. How do you actively step outside of your own suffering and positively impact other's lives? *Giving to others, without judgment or attachment to the outcome, is the quickest way to make us feel better.*

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Courage doesn't always roar.

Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying

I will try again tomorrow ...

~Mary Anne Radmacher

What cannot be said,  
will be wept.

~Sappho



If only we could write a different ending to this story. It would be one of joy and happiness. Death is not the right ending to a child's life. Children should live long, healthy, happy lives and it is us, as the parents and grandparents that should be buried by them. When death does happen, it is a devastating loss, a pain that is so deep there are no words to describe. Surrounding ourselves by others that understand and those that will let us tell our story and share our children is most helpful. We are thankful for those friends and family around us that allow us to do so.

~Karen Cantrell, Frankfort, KY—TCF

**National TCF**

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(630) 990-0010

Toll-Free Number: 1-877-969-0010

TCF web site:

<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

**TCF Regional Coordinator for Ohio**

Dean Turner

Email: [Edean234@aol.com](mailto:Edean234@aol.com)

or phone: 614-402-0004

**Miami Valley TCF Chapter Leaders**

Tom Gilhooly and Richard Miller

937-640-2621

<http://miamivalleytcf.com>

Tom and Dick honor their sons,

Ryan Gilhooly and Brad Miller,

through their service.

**JOIN US!**

**Sunday, December 11, 2016  
Annual World-Wide  
Candle Lighting Ceremony**

**See inside for details**

**(it's a lot of info—please read carefully!)**



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**

*Miami Valley  
Chapter  
Newsletter*

TCF Chapter No. 1732  
P.O. Box 292112  
Kettering, OH 45429

*The Compassionate Friends— A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child of any age, from any reason.*

Nov-Dec 2016