



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC. International Organization
Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents
MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870
MAR 2017 NEWSLETTER Vol. 26 No. 2

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BITTERSWEET MEMORIES

By Vickie Van Antwerp

One of the most precious things to a parent who has lost a child is the memories. Without them, it would be as if their child never was. With them, it is so bittersweet that it can make a parent laugh and cry, rejoice and anguish, touch the sweetness to the lips and taste the salt from the tears.

Memories keep the heart from crushing under the weight of sorrow. They give a parent the chance to be with their child again. They can walk through their memories like they were a movie. When the memories are so vivid, you can almost feel them, touch them, hug them, and kiss them. It is so bittersweet when the reality comes and you realize it is just a memory, a thought, and you are reminded of what you have lost.

If you asked a parent if they would give up the memories so they did not have to feel the pain of knowing their child is gone, they would tell you no. As painful as it may be, not having the memories or feeling their presence, is just as unbearable as losing them.

There is no happy place to go to, but there is a place to be with your child. You know before you step into that realm that it will be painful, but you know that it will be joyful too.

So as we let the memories take us to a time that our child was safe with us, just rest a while until it is time to go and the next time try not to think of what is gone but what is still in your heart and will always be.

Vickie lives in Brevard, North Carolina, with her husband, Larry, and son Larry Jr. She is a freelance writer and newsletter editor of her local Brevard, North Carolina, TCF chapter. The couple lost their son Craig Van Antwerp in August 2006.

March Meeting—March 23, 2017

7:00 P.M.

Nashville United Church of Christ

4540 W. St. Rt. 571, West Milton, Ohio

Meetings are held in the basement of the church. Please park in the lot on the west side of the building. Enter the building Through the door facing the west parking lot.

Topic: "Stages of Grief" **Guest Speaker, Brad Reed**

Director of Community Resource Development at the Tri-County Board of Recovery and Mental Health Services.

February Refreshments:

Jeff & Jackie Glawe (Memory of Jordan Elizabeth)
Barb Lawrence (Memory of Susan)

Thank you for February Refreshments

Darlene Brown (Memory of Denise)
Cathy Duff (Memory of Shaun)

Don't think of him as gone away--

His journey's just begun;
Life holds so many facets--
This earth is only one.
Just think of him as resting
From the sorrows and the tears
In a place of warmth and comfort
Where there are no days and years.
Think how he must be wishing
That we could know, today,
How nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.
And think of him as living
In the hearts of those he touched...
For nothing loved is ever lost--
And he was loved so much.

Unknown

Recognizing Unsuccessful Grief

All of us who have searched for healing following the death of a child, grandchild or sibling know the roller coaster of emotions that are part of our grief process. We know there is no "quick fix" that magically lets us get on with our lives, and grief can be physically exhausting. We cannot go back to what was! And time, in and of itself, does not heal.

Although there is no set schedule for grieving and there will always be a hole in our hearts, many of us in TCF have found that within a year to 18 months, we are beginning to make some progress—granted the progress may seem minute to the bereaved. Grief therapists have learned that if death is from prolonged or serious illness there is grieving during the illness. The second year of grief may be as intense or even more emotionally devastating than the first year.

However, no two people have the same grief timetable. If we feel that we are not making progress, is there some way to determine whether or not we may need professional help or evaluation or at least reassurance? The following considerations may help you decide:

- ⇒ • Extended withdrawal from the world around you and prolonged inability to accomplish normal tasks or participate in everyday activities.
- ⇒ • Self-imposed isolation where you do not want to be around anyone—friends, family or others.
- ⇒ • Becoming too scared to be alone. You must have someone around all the time.
- ⇒ • Anger or guilt that (a) is out of proportion, (b) does not fit the circumstances, (c) extends for a long time without retreating, or (d) may be directed toward or imposed on others close to you.
- ⇒ • Depression that is exaggerated, unremitting, prolonged and occurs in original intensity years after the loss.
- ⇒ • Anxiety that interferes with going away from home.
- ⇒ • Dependence on alcohol or medications to cope or forget.
- ⇒ • An emotional "logjam" resulting from an accumulation of losses over the years.
- ⇒ • Contemplating or attempting suicide to "get away from it all" or to join your child.
- ⇒ • Self-caused illness or physical health problems that do not go away, or the inability to separate the real from the imagined. This kind of illness is different from the ailments that most of us experience during the anniversary of our loved one's death.
- ⇒ • Placing your child on a pedestal and forgetting his/her imperfections; or being unable to redirect your activities or to shift your focus, so that you can honor your child in a positive way.
- ⇒ • An absence of grief or a numbness, anxiety, sadness, or

any kind of overall attitude that negatively affects others around you, including over-protectiveness of your loved ones.

- ⇒ • Converting all emotions into one or two favorite or "safe" emotions—like anger, boredom, or
- ⇒ despair—which become all you are feeling, taking the place of grief.
- ⇒ • When talking does not seem to help or there is no one able to listen.

Libbyrose D. Clark

TCF, Deep East Texas

*From information provided by Vera Baron, LPC,
and Ray Johnson, CSW*

FIND THOSE LOVING PEOPLE

Understanding Your Grief

By Elaine Stillwell

When you are grieving, it takes ten times the amount of energy to get through a day. So, you don't have extra energy to spar with relatives or friends who attempt to put you on a time schedule or give you very definite directions on how to mourn. It's hard enough to get up in the morning, much less march to a drummer that is "foreign" to you. So, pamper yourself, be good to yourself, do what you need to do; not what others demand or pressure you to do. Listen to your heart. Learn that in pampering yourself, it's not out of selfishness, but out of wisdom. You are no good to anybody, including yourself, if you are a mess. So take care of yourself. A little step at a time. Do as much as you can do and don't feel guilty.

When my two eldest children, 21 year old Denis and 19 year old Peggy, were killed in an automobile accident, I had to learn how to make a new life without them. The most helpful lesson I learned was to surround myself with loving, compassionate people who did not try to "take my grief away," but rather were "just there" caring about me and not pushing me. My heart said, "I don't want you to fix my sadness. I only want you near me."

When you feel comfortable and relaxed with people, you can be yourself and you can give yourself permission to cry. You can talk about your loved one, look at pictures, share stories—all important steps in grieving. Your whole body feels a sense of peace when you are surrounded by loving people who give you time to walk through your grief and to heal.

You don't have to "disown" relatives and friends who are hard to deal with right now, no matter how well meaning they are; Just wait until you feel stronger to be in their presence, when you can tell them what you need. It takes time to learn what you need; and strength to inform others what you have learned. Grieving is an education and not everyone had studied GRIEF 101!

Continued on bottom page 3

For your
Thank you
love gifts!

- ♦ Don & Kitty Bernard for the Love Gift in memory of Don's son, Jeffrey Bernard, 11/1967 -- 01/1992 and Kitty's infant grandson, Charlie Monnon.
- ♦ Barb Lawrence for the Birthday Love Gift in memory of her daughter, Susan Eileen Lawrence 03/1979 -- 06/1987.

Love Gifts should be made out to:

The Compassionate Friends and mailed to Barb Lawrence, 4031 Wolcott Place, Englewood, OH 45322. Please send your donation by the 15th of the month prior to the month you want your child remembered in the newsletter.



Most people feel satisfied when they have paid you a visit, attended the wake or funeral, sent a Mass card, a sympathy card, or a note, sent flowers or food, or a donation to a desired fund or charity. They don't realize that the pain goes on and on and that you really need "follow-up". Friendly notes, -cards and phone calls help us grieving folks as we put one foot in front of the other, walking through the "Valley of the Shadow." Sensitive people can give your heart a lift when you're having a down day or a rough season. The mailman can brighten your day, when you know someone is thinking of you. "Unexpressed words or quiet thinking of you thoughts" do little to lift your spirits when you need a boost.

When my children died, a total stranger wrote to me to express her sympathy on my tragic loss. She never missed sending little notes for each "Hallmark" holiday and in between, not only to me, but also to my daughter, Annie, my one remaining child who had just gone away to college. Although Catherine never knew my Denis and Peggy, she never forgot their birthdays and anniversaries, or Mother's Day, always remembering them with her beautiful words and special masses and telling me she feels she knows them. We have become best friends and I am walking testimony that a caring person can hasten your healing.

CHAPTER NEWS

Steering Committee Meeting Date to be announced.

The Chapter Steering Committee will meet in March to schedule upcoming topics and for planning our Annual Picnic and Butterfly Release. Anyone interested in assisting the committee may contact Kim Bundy for further information. Kim may be reached by phone 573-9877 or email kbundy.tcf@gmail.com.

"Compassionate Friends Offers Grief Related Webinar Series"

The Compassionate Friends is expanding its outreach to bereaved families by offering a series of free online grief related seminars on various grief topics, presented by well-known experts in the field.

Webinars have included such topics as "Handling Grief Through the Holidays," "Getting 'Stuck' and 'Unstuck,'" "Caring for Your Health While Grieving," and "Coping with Guilt During Bereavement." These webinars were recorded and are available to view on demand on TCF's national website.

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

A listening ear is sometimes the best medicine.

Kim Bundy (suicide)	573-9877
Lori Clark (organ donation)	233-1924
Pam Fortener (cancer death)	254-1222
Sheryll Hedger (siblings)	997-5171
Lora Rudy (infant death)	339-0456
Cathy Duff (auto accident)	473-5533

The Gifts of Grief

-By Chris Mulligan

The Gifts of Grief? What a crazy title for an article. How could anyone see anything positive in grief? Grief is painful, overwhelming, always unwelcomed; and is unfamiliar territory until you enter it. So how can anyone identify gifts in grief? A gift usually denotes a present or surprise-an unknown, unexpected benefaction or offering. However, that is precisely what the gifts of grief are; while experiencing grief, we have absolutely no idea that there might be positive outcomes in such a devastating situation. But how can that be? It appears to be a contradiction in terms. How can one imagine living through life's most devastating trauma and expecting a result to be anything positive, useful, or beneficial? My response: We need to focus on the world behind our eyes; we need to view life from the eyes of the soul. From this perspective, we are responsible for planning it that way. Each of us has our own life, and we know the life lessons we need to learn and therefore expect to learn them through our life conditions. However, how could we know that?

Perhaps we could look to our higher self; our soul if it is too difficult a concept to grasp. Grief is a major juncture where faith can enter or solidify in our life. Faith doesn't have to be God if one doesn't ascribe to that concept but can be embraced as a force beyond this life, the source, creator, the universe-but something greater than us that knows of a grander purpose-a significant reason why situations, life events, circumstances "happen to us" in our lives. Faith is the ability to step into that unknown. Faith is open-ended and does not require proof.

Although I never carried the reputation of a religious extremist during my lifetime, my spiritual beliefs became stronger after my son's death. Was I angry with God? Absolutely. Was I depressed? Positively. Did I suffer from PTSD symptoms and guilt? Definitely. Yes, I experienced the deep pit of initial despair and trudged through the early grief period. However, I cannot imagine my grief journey without acknowledging the part my faith played in recognizing my growth through that process. With time, as I trusted my newly evolving life, my faith strengthened, my beliefs solidified, and the heavy burden of moving through the days lifted. I have difficulty understanding how anyone can move through grief without faith. Faith helps me reconcile the stillborn birth, the toddler who succumbs to leukemia, the traumatic accidental deaths of young children and teenagers. Often we feel isolated in our grief and cannot comprehend it alone. With faith there is the possibility of a greater reason and the potential for understanding that there is logic in life experiences.

I would not have acquired the awareness and growth in my life without experiencing a trauma of this magnitude. We can-

not visualize the "gift" portion of our grief until we accumulate a history of charting our internal world's journey. Early grief distress fogs our perceptions and makes mindfulness impossible. But as we allow ourselves to move through the pain and devastation of grief and loss, we can revisit and review the life we have survived and perhaps recognize the hope and promise that seeing life through different eyes exposes. It is through this hope and faith that we are able to recognize the possibility of any positive aspects of our pain. Faith and acceptance allow us to discover blessings in the plan of our journey. We are not, nor will ever be the same person we were prior to our child's death. We need to allow ourselves permission to move through our process on our own timetable. Individual grief processes cannot be compared, rushed, or avoided, and one cannot imitate someone else's journey.

Although our journey can be a treacherous icy road filled with detours, obstacles, hills, and valleys, each of us chooses how to navigate and view our path. While tossing about in this sea of emotions is not a rare human experience, we still feel alone. But before choosing to live again, the bereaved must come to grips with the death, and the timeline for accomplishing that varies. One's new life story unfolds as the result of the growth that occurs through the following process:

Embracing the Pain

The emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual pain after a death dominates one's life for months or years. It is a time of pain and confusion and it must be ... for a while. Hopefully, after time, this anguish is transformed so the pain can be replaced by remembering and honoring the loss.

Decision to Change

Life is choices, but the important choice for bereaved parents is to open their heart to love again. In early grief decision making is impossible, but time allows our focus to move from body and mind to feeling grace and peace entering our heart because of our daily decisions.

Creating a New Inner Balance with no End Points or Expectations

Life will not be stable, and one must find their own methods for creating balance to calm the tornado of inner feelings. Rituals, reading, support groups, therapy, refocusing energy and/or time, and journaling are options to fill the hole in the griever's heart. A new normal life can be built on a foundation of honoring the negative and positive of one's internal world and making decisions from the heart, not the head.

Exploring Our Assumptions About Life

Loss can be a catalyst to becoming more of who we were. Loss is learning to reflect on our true reality and that which makes up our vast consciousness. Identification of and thinking clearly about our beliefs and values creates who we really are, (a clear mind can be a gift to yourself). Sometimes de-emphasizing physical life to concentrate on spirituality is necessary and often,

because it's unfamiliar territory, guidance is necessary along this new path.

Learning New Ways of Acceptance

Acceptance cannot be taught or learned from another griever as individuals need to create their own new reality. The many steps of acceptance will be experienced through the cognitive and emotional domains and will involve an indeterminate amount of time. Switching from the sorrow of loss to living with the loss is often recognized with a corresponding shift in spiritual acceptance. Although there is no specific identification of acceptance, one's perspective change usually occurs when compassion in one's heart is reactivated.

The gifts one can discover through grief are:

- ◆ Deepened and prioritized physical and emotional needs
- ◆ Strengthened trust and faith
- ◆ Awareness of one's world and growth
- ◆ Understanding hope and faith
- ◆ Solidified beliefs
- ◆ Holding, maintaining, and knowing one's truth
- ◆ An opened heart
- ◆ Life perspective based on grace and gratitude
- ◆ Attained deeper meaning of life
- ◆ Enriched life purpose

Guiding one's attention from the eye of the storm to the center of the heart encourages a perspective from behind the eyes. The eyes of the soul help one understand that grief will not continue forever and encourages acceptance and strengthens beliefs, trust, and faith.

Grief is overpowering but survivable. Sibling loss obliterates one's past, parental loss forfeits one's history, and child loss shatters the whole being. Grief is about death, while the gifts of grief are about healing and living differently. Death can be a catalyst for recognizing the mystery of life, which helps identify and re-birth a new purpose for living beyond the grief. Embracing these gifts can re-create the new you. Noticing the gifts of grief can offer you comfort and solace. I hope you meet both in your journey.

Chris Mulligan authored Afterlife Agreements: A Gift from Beyond and presents the Gifts of Grief workshops at TCF conferences and other organizations. Although retired as an adoption social worker, she maintains involvement with her TCF chapter in Salem, Oregon, and her hospice volunteering; as well as her husband, two dogs, and four grandchildren.

If You Could See Where I Have Gone

If you could see where I have gone,
The beauty of this place,
And how it feels to know you're home,
To see the Saviors' face.
To wake in peace and know no fear,
just joy. beyond compare.
While still on earth, you miss me yet,
you wouldn't want me there,
If you could see where I have gone.

If you could see where I have gone,
had made the trip with me,
You'd know I didn't go alone,
the Savior came with me,
When I awoke, He was by my side,
and reached out His hand,
Said "Hurry Child. You're coming home,
to a grand and glorious land,
Don't worry over those you love,
for I'm not just with you,
And don't you know, with you, at home,
they'll long to be here too".

If you could see where I have gone,
and see what I've been shown,
You'd never know another tear,
or ever feel alone.
You'd marvel at the care of God,
His hand on every life,
And realize He really cares,
and bears with us each strife,
And that he weeps when one is lost,
His heart is filled with pain,
But oh! the joy when one comes home,
a child at home again.

If you could see where I have gone,
could stay awhile with me,
Could share the things that God has made,
to grace eternity.
But no, you could never leave,
once Heavens' joy you'd known,
You couldn't bear to walk earth's paths,
once Heaven was your home.
If you could see where I have gone,
you'd know we'll meet someday!
And though I'm parted from you now,
that I am just away.
So, thank you Family, thank you friends,
for living for the Lord,
For teaching me to love Him,
to trust Him and His word,
And now, that I'm at home with Him,
secure in every way,
I'm waiting here at heaven's door.
to greet you some sweet day.

Unknown.

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

March Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Ava Nicole Lisky - Kathy Russell
 Bill Meadows - Fred & Pat Meadows
 Kyle L. Bryan Jeanette Bryan -
 Michael David Rhoades - David Rhoades
 Taylor Davis - Barbara Davis
 Susan Eileen Lawrence - Barb Lawrence
 Jordan Elizabeth Glawe - Jeff & Jackie Glawe
 Kaitlynn Ariana Yvonne Preston - David & Michelle Preston
 Claire Landis - Matt & Chelsea Landis

March Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Erika Leigh Wetzel - Susan Wetzel-Philpot
 Jacquelyn Elizabeth "Jackie" Ahlers - Bob & Peg Ahlers
 Ryan Patrick Gilhooly - Constance Gilhooly
 Cassandra "Cassie" Campbell - Dawn Duff
 Jerrid Younker - Susan Cole
 & Frank Younker

Their souls shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all...for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

-Jeremiah 31:12-13



We all know how difficult those "Special Days" can be - birthdays and death anniversary days. Please remember these parents on their special days and let them know that they are not alone; someone cares about their pain and their grief. It means so much to be remembered!

Every effort is made to publish accurate information regarding the birth and remembrance dates. Please let me know if there is an error in the listing, in order to correct our records. If you receive this newsletter and you have not given us the name and dates for your child, but want them listed here, please contact me. - Editor

NOW for book review....Jackie Glawe

"HEAVEN'S LESSONS" By Steven Sjogren



One day in heaven followed by hundreds in agony forged a deeper and stronger faith than Sjogren could have crafted on his own. In Heaven's Lessons, Sjogren shares his experiences and the life-changing ways they have affected his perspective on success, suffering, and the mysteries of God.

"CHILDREN OF THE DOME" by Rosemary Smith

A collection of true stories of families who have lost children. These families have learned to survive and work through their grief, and many of them have been transformed professionally and spiritually by the experience. The author lost two sons to a car accident.

*Both of these books are available in our chapter library.

To Turn Back Time

-By Rebecca Harris

Christopher Paul Cattaneo

You're not only my brother, you're my inspiration,
my hope, and my best friend,
You're my hero, buddy, and pal with your love that will
never end.

I remember when we were little, repeating our ABC's,
reading a short story, and counting our 123 's.
We began to grow up, but our bond stayed tight,
we agreed on everything, had maybe one or two fights.
Finally your dream came true, and you were in a successful
band,
I went to all of your shows. I was your biggest fan.
Your lyrics were amazing, and your voice was better than
ever,
you were magnificent on the mic; a vision I'll always re-
member.

Suddenly it was time for vacation, and we were anxious to
get away,
everything was perfect, until the traumatic day.
You were on one jet ski, while I was on the other,
we were having so much fun, trying to splash one another.
You were coming way to close, with a smile on your face,
and once our jet skis collided, it became a memory unable
to replace.

As I saw you floating in the water, head and legs down,
my whole body became weak, and my head was spinning
all around.

I would do anything to see you just for one more day,
there are so many things I want to tell you,
so many things left to say.

Dedicated to my brother, Chris; my hero and role model. I feel honored having such an amazing angel on my shoulder every day. I would also like to dedicate this poem to my mother, a strong woman who has made it through the toughest times of life and whom I look up to in every way possible. I love you both very much.



Dr. Heidi Horsley, PsyD., is a bereaved sibling, as well as a psychologist. She is the executive director of the Open to Hope Foundation, cohost of the Open to Hope program, and an adjunct professor at Columbia University. She will be answering your questions related to loss, grief, and recovery for siblings.



Please send your question to:

Dr. Heidi Horsley
c/o Catherine Patillo, WNNWA
P.O. Box 526194
Salt Lake City, Utah 84152-6194
E-mail: catpatillo@comcast.net

Q: My six-year-old wants to celebrate my three-year-old's birthday in a couple of weeks although she passed just six months ago. How can I do this without it getting out of hand or giving him false hope that she might be there with us?

A: I think it's a testament to you that your six-year-old feels comfortable enough to ask if he can celebrate his sister's fourth birthday. It sounds like you have created a safe and supportive environment, where he can talk openly about his sister. The party can be an opportunity to celebrate the life that they had together as siblings, by looking at family photos and discussing positive and funny memories, while at the same time educating him in an age-appropriate way about the permanence of the death. Children lack abstract thinking skills that allow them to appreciate death as final. It is not uncommon to have a child ask repeatedly when their sibling is coming home. Answering these questions openly and honestly will help children to eventually grasp the permanence. I certainly understand your concerns and would suggest that you also use this as an opportunity to reassure your son that he still lives in a safe and predictable world. Each year on my brother's birthday I look back on family photos, say a toast to him, and give thanks to the 17 years he was in my life. Although our siblings are gone, they live forever in our hearts and in our memories .



The Compassionate Friends

Miami County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

9665 W Covington Gettysburg Rd
Covington OH 45318

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

What is The Compassionate Friends?

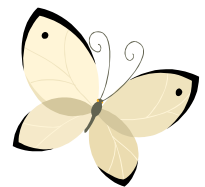
The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

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

MISSION STATEMENT ... The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

If you are receiving our newsletter for the 1st time, it is because someone told us that you might find it helpful. To find out more about The Compassionate Friends, please call our Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy (937) 573-9877. We cordially invite you to our monthly meetings held on the fourth Thursday of each month. Nothing is ever expected of you. You don't have to speak a single word. Parents who do attend, find comfort, support, friendship and understanding from others who have also lost a child. You do not have to come alone - bring a family member or friend with you.

**You need not
walk alone!**



IF YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER, AND WISH TO HAVE YOUR NAME REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE CALL (937) 473-5533 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE.

Thank you.