

We hope to create a library of informative, comforting books available for checking out. We have bookplates (a label to put on the first page indicating the donor and who it is in memory of.) They *do not* have to be new books.

Love Gifts

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends. Your voluntary tax-deductible donations are our only source of funds. All proceeds given to our chapter are used within our Community for outreach and support bereaved families. Forms for donations are available at each meeting. All gifts are welcome and greatly appreciated.

We will be emailing newsletters to our parents and sister chapters who have email addresses. Please let us know your email address if we don't have it. Those with no email and not attending meetings will continue to receive them by mail.

Love Gifts

Love Gift from Genevieve L. Mahoney in memory of her loving daughter Patricia (Pat).

Candles for our tables from Sarah Cook in memory of her loving brother Karl.

Love Gift from Sarah Cook and Chris Gascon in memory of their brother Karl.



Holidays are Special Days

Holidays are Special Days that hurt so much more than other days. But somehow - through the sadness - comes the satisfaction of knowing that "this too shall pass." And I shall be a stronger person. . . and perhaps a better person. . . than I have ever been before.

Shirley Melin
TCF, Aurora, IL



♣ Our Children ~ Loved and Remembered ♣

Let us remember the children
who have left us too soon.



Think About This

You have to make your own music, sing your own song, feel your own joy and excitement, love your own peace and create your own harmony.

Happy days, happy thoughts, happy feelings are decisions made by you. All that you see and feel and think is decided by you. Happiness can happen in the middle of difficulty, in the storm of life and in moments when going on is a real strain.

It is a personal decision not to let disappointments whip you, not to let other people's decisions break your heart. There will be tunnels others will make for you to walk through, but if you hang on and decide everything is going to be all right, it will!

Joyce Sequichie Hifler
TCF, Fort Wayne, IN



When you grieve

You're like a tree hit by a tornado.
Some of your roots are pulled up.
You're twisted and bent.

Your leaves have been stripped.
Your bark is loosened.
And worst of all,
one of your big limbs has been brutally
broken off.

You will never be the same.
Eventually, slowly, your roots grow back.
You experience a new growth of leaves.
You straighten up and reach out again.
But the limb never grows back.

It becomes covered with a natural scar tissue.
Forever after, you will be aware of the tornado
and the tremendous change it made in your life.

Joy and Dr. Marvin Johnson
From "A Centering Corporation Resource"

The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents, a New Year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually, we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives ...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our

memories sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us. So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day, you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

From the Rochester Chapter Newsletter
of The Compassionate Friends



In Time of Sorrow...

May you see God's light on the path ahead
When the road you walk is dark.
May you always hear,
Even in your hour of sorrow,
The gentle singing of the lark.
When times are hard may hardness
Never turn your heart to stone,
May you always remember
when the shadows fall —
You do not walk alone.

From the web site

"Irish Blessings and Prayers
Irish words of encouragement. . ."



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.

**Margi DuBois for TCF
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