



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November 2009 Newsletter

Volume II; Issue 3

WNY Chapter #2303, Batavia, NY 14020

THE MISSION

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.

We are pleased, yet saddened, to have you join us at our meeting of The Compassionate Friends. We hope sharing your stories of the aspects of your journey through grief will enable you and your families to find a "new normal" in your life. We wish that you would eventually reach a state of peace where the wonderful memories you have of your children are more in the forefront of your heart and mind than the pain of your loss.

Upcoming Meetings

October 15, 2009

November 19, 2009

December 17, 2008

6:45 PM at Richmond Memorial Library
19 Ross Street, Batavia, NY 14020

National: The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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www.compassionatefriends.org

The Compassionate Friends of WNY

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Visit our local web site: www.tcfofwny.org

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again."

—Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends

To include your child or children on our web site, bring a photo along with a short story about them to the meeting. Pat will forward the information to our Webmaster so that your child or children can be remembered.

Our Birthday Table ~ Parents/Grandparents: you may bring photos and other mementos to the meeting during your child's birthday month. You may also bring a birthday cake or your child's special treat to share with those attending.

The chapter is here for everyone. Please let us know what you are struggling with at this time. We will use that as our topic for the next available meeting.

If you know of someone who has suffered this ultimate loss, please let us know. We will send them our newsletter and invite them to share their grief with those of us still walking that path.

**We Need Not Walk Alone.
We Are The Compassionate Friends.**



Our Children ~ Loved and Remembered

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

November Birthdays

- ♥ Donna Brister, adult daughter of Rita Cone
November 1
- ♥ Edwin Joseph, infant son of Vicki Becker
November 5
- ♥ Randiene Jo, infant daughter of Vicki Becker
November 7

November Remembrance Days

- ♥ Edwin Joseph, infant son of Vicki Becker
November 5
- ♥ Randiene Jo, infant daughter of Vicki Becker
November 7
- ♥ Jeremy Daniel Orban, young adult son of
Mel & Guy Brunner
November 11
- ♥ Let's also remember the following families:
 - ♥ Catherine Horton and Martha Horton
 - ♥ Chuck & Karen Shisler
 - ♥ Jean Jajackowski
 - ♥ Donna Fidanza

Please contact Margi DuBois if any of your child(ren)'s information is incorrect or missing. Phone 343-2590, email her at margi_d@yahoo.com or mail her at 3233 Pratt Rd., #7312, Batavia, NY 14020

There are no dues or fees to belong to **The Compassionate Friends**. Your voluntary tax-deductible donation is our only source of funds and is used within our Community for outreach and support of bereaved families. All gifts are greatly appreciated. They may be given at the monthly meeting or mailed to Treasurer Margi DuBois, 3233 Pratt Rd., #7312, Batavia, NY 14020.

TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The **Compassionate Friends** national web site offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "Men Only Sharing Session," "No Surviving and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

After October

and if there be a perfect month,
for me, it is October...
with days and nights like laughing fauns,
with mornings bright and sober.
when wind will dance in sudden glee
to do the autumn-sweeping
or cloud and fog and wistful rain
can move a heart to weeping.
and in October You were born,
four days before November...
and four years later you were gone,
my little son, my only son,
I love you.
and remember. . .

sascha

Halloween

It is here, this day of merriment and children's pleasure.
Gremlins and goblins
and ghosties at the door
of your house.
And the other children
come to the door of your mind.
Faces out of the past,
small ghosts with sweet, painted faces.
They do not shout.
Those children
who no longer march laughing
on cold Halloween night,
they stand at the door of your mind—
and you will let them in,
so that you can give them
the small gifts of Halloween—
a smile and a tear.

—WINTERSUN by Sascha

LOST POTENTIAL

Last year I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent one thing stuck in my mind. He said that if you ask a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But, if you ask a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh, he would be five this year and just starting kindergarten," or, "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college." You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

Chris Anderson
TCF, Walla Walla, Washington



The Elephant in the Room

There's an elephant in the room.
It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get
around it.
Yet we squeeze by with, "How are you?"
And, "I'm fine" ...
And a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.
We talk about the weather.
We talk about work.
We talk about everything else — except the
elephant in the room.
We all know it is there.
It is constantly on our minds,
For you see, it is a very big elephant.
But we do not talk about the elephant in
the room.
Oh, please, say her name.
Oh, please, say "Barbara" again.
Oh, please, let's talk about the elephant
in the room.
For if we talk about her death,
Perhaps we can talk about her life.
Can I say "Barbara" and not have you
look away?
For if I cannot, you are leaving me
Alone ...in a room...with an elephant.

Terry Kettering

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain—
it's called "Longing."
I long for what was,
and what might have been
I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.
I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.
I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.
I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons, too.
I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.
Will they?

*By June Williams-Muecke
TCF, Houston West Chapter*



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
Encourage your mothers, daughters, sisters
and other female relatives to see their doctors
for their mammograms.

A Fitting Tribute

Came the darkness of new winter
We huddled together in frozen disbelief
Lowering your precious vessel into cold unfeeling earth.
No bird sang nor shone the sun to cast mocking
shadows on our despair.
A light went out in the world that day
Leaving us to shiver in the blackness of your absence.
Four seasons of our sadness have passed since that
bleak day.
And now we return to put cold stone above your head.
It does not seem a fitting monument for a man of joy.
Too many tears have been shed,
I can weep no more.

Others may not believe
But every day your spirit comforts me.
Your voice still speaks within my heart.
And while I may long for the warmth of your hands on
my shoulders,
I can feel your workings in God's plan.

I believe with perfect faith that no loss is forever.
Today I come to bury my grief
Tomorrow may we rejoice that you have lived and
loved us
Erecting a monument of joy in life's celebration
Singing a eulogy of love for the broken-hearted,
Lighting an eternal flame of hope for those in despair.

In your loving memory let us seek to perfect the world
And in so doing, perfect ourselves.
I believe with perfect faith
That you are forever.
Your body may lie in this sorrowful ground,
But your spirit soars with the eagles
Still rages at injustice
Reaches out in loving kindness
Dances with the ecstasy of life that never ends,
And laughs deep in the belly to cleanse us of our mortal
sadness.

By Judy Gradford ~ TCF, Rochester NY

I here's this place in me where
Your fingerprints still rest,
Your kisses still linger
And your whispers softly echo.
It's the place where a part of you
will forever be a part of me.
Gretchen Kemp

Progress Check

It's usually around this time of year, when summer is nearly over and fall is around the corner, that I like to take a close look at the progress of my recovery. Maybe it's the seemingly endless "back-to-school"; sales that suddenly end, or the return of the yellow school busses with children carrying lunch boxes that causes me to feel a need to take a look. This is one of those times of year that some of us find difficult to deal with, and checking where we stand during rough times is always a good idea, especially if it helps us find areas in which we can improve. As a possible bonus we may even find areas of real progress that may boost our awareness of the positive steps we have made. It usually is difficult to notice the steps we make, particularly early in recovery, unless we make a concerted effort to notice them.

So the first step should be to look closely at your beliefs concerning what you will find. If you believe your recovery is going poorly, it probably is or it's likely not going as well as it could. We tend to see what we believe we will see and we tend to miss what we believe is not there. Dr. Wayne Dyer's book, *You'll See it When You Believe it*, covers this topic very well and I recommend it along with any of his other books as excellent recovery reading material. The quality of our recoveries, as well as our lives, is determined by what we believe.

If you develop an attitude of positive expectation about your recovery you will begin to see your progress more easily. What you need to do is adopt a belief that you *can* find something positive about your recovery no matter how small the positive may be if you look closely enough. The trick is to convince yourself that noticing the smallest of positives is worth the trouble. It is worth the trouble; your life depends on it. Noticing the smallest of positives can enable you to make a necessary positive mental attitude shift that is required for good recovery.

Having a positive mental attitude is not the same thing as positive thinking. It doesn't mean that you pretend that everything is okay when it isn't. Positive mental attitude means that no matter how bad things are we can at least learn something of value from even the most horrible things that happen to us. I'll use an extreme example to make my point. Early in recovery the very best positive we may be able to come up with is, "well, at least I believe there is hope that someday I will feel better than I do now." Admittedly, when our child has died, even this small positive may be difficult to believe, but let's say you do believe it, or you're willing to believe that you will *someday* believe it. As weak as this positive may seem to you it still is strong enough to begin the process of causing a positive mental attitude shift.

The shift will be small and probably not noticeable to you, but it will nevertheless occur. With this shift you will be more likely to notice other positives, for example, you are reading this newsletter and are therefore obviously taking a positive step to see if this article has some value to you in your recovery. Even if it didn't, the fact that you are reading it alone is a positive recovery step if you choose to see it as such. We often choose to see our small steps as insignificant. This judgment alone is enough to slow our recoveries to a crawl. Each step no matter how small is required to complete the journey. The sooner you accept even the smallest recovery step and celebrate each and every one as it occurs, the sooner you will benefit to the greatest extent each step offers.

So how do you do this? There are several ways. My favorite is to ask three questions. Early tomorrow morning, as soon after awaking as you remember, ask yourself the question, "What can I do today to improve the quality of my life?" It doesn't matter what you come up with, but be sure you keep it simple - make sure it's something you can easily do. Tomorrow evening ask yourself, "How did I do?" Write your answer in a notebook or journal. Then answer the question, "No matter how small, what positive recovery steps have I taken today?" Do this everyday for at least ten days. Each day come up with different answers. At the end of ten days, you will know if it is beneficial to your recovery to continue. If so, by all means do so. If not, you may find it helpful to do a progress check on your recovery by asking yourself these questions for a few days every month or so. Give it a try, you'll only know if it's a positive for you if you do.

By Pat Akery, TCF, Medford, OR

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.