



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER NO: 167

AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2018



Let us honour & recognize
ALL Fathers this Father's Day

The ones who raise their children here on Earth.
The ones who carry some if not all of their children
in their hearts and the ones who yearn just
to father a child.

www.carlymarisprojectheal.com

YOU WILL NOT FEEL THE 'ALONENESS' OF YOUR GRIEF SO ISOLATING, IF YOU REACH OUT TO ANOTHER BEREAVED PARENT

RETURN ADDRESS
52 SUNRISE DRIVE,
SEAWARD BUSH,
INVERCARGILL
9812
NEW ZEALAND

TO

OUR CHILDREN

Children's names appear in this column if parents ask when they complete their annual donation form. You are also able to e-mail, write or phone me to have your child's name included.

This column includes names of those children whose anniversary or birthday occur in the months that the newsletter applies for.

You are also able to contact me if you wish to have a poem or piece, with or without a photo of your child included.

Once again, this is generally used for children whose birthday or anniversary occurs during the months of the current newsletter. I apologise for any omission or mistakes which I may make and ask that you contact me if this occurs.

Please contact me on 03 4326004, or TCF, Lesley Henderson, 76 O'Neill Rd., 17 D R.D., Windsor, Oamaru or by e-mail tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz



Our Children ... Remembered with love

Forever Young

Forever Loved

Forever Longed For

Brian Thomas Booth	Born 4/8/57	Brian Thomas Booth	Died 26/8/58
Sashi Coulter	Born 6/8/91	Jason Bradley Burford	Died 25/8/13
Michael Barry Duke	Born 25/8/68	Christopher Burke	Died 22/8/00
Kirsten Jane Maydon	Born 26/8/68	Andrew Meldrum Cox	Died 15/8/68
Stefan David Maydon	Born 14/8/72	Henare Wiremu Fielding	Died 2/8/02
Trinity Lea Taylor	Born 31/8/82	Sharyn Maree Jones-Sexton	Died 29/8/01
Eddi Te Arihana Tutaki	Born 1/8/74	Hayden Ivan Pope	Died 11/8/08
Peter Gregory Warren	Born 31/8/62	Brendan James Vass	Died 8/8/05
Dan Wells	Born 13/8/86	Haydon Ross Whitaker	Died 19/8/04
Terry Barnfather	Born 3/9/1953	Greg Burns	Died 21/9/2004
Richard Craig Bell	Born 11/9/1987	Sashi Coulter	Died 6/9/2006
Jason Bradley Burford	Born 25/9/1993	Michael David Cox	Died 20/9/1996
Christopher Burke	Born 12/9/1998	Quinntin Albert Jason Crosswell	Died 22/9/2004
Bevan Andrew Hookway	Born 9/9/1990	Nicholas Evan Hood	Died 23/9/2004
Greg Holley	Born 12/9/1978	Hollie Jay Kirk	Died 11/9/2012
Erica Kewish	Born 11/9/1995	Anthea Gail McDowell	Died 2/9/1987
Hollie Jay Kirk	Born 11/9/2012	Logan Scott O'Hara	Died 28/9/1999
Gordon Legge	Born 22/9/1976	Georgia Rose Poplawski	Died 2/9/2005
Pauline Anne Newall	Born 10/9/1962	Thomas John Poplawski	Died 2/9/2005
Cameron Smith	Born 25/9/1999	David Massey Reid	Died 13/9/2000
Gary Brendon Thompson	Born 27/9/1968	Cameron Smith	Died 23/9/2015
Ryan Ashley Thompson	Born 30/9/1985	James Wing	Died 6/9/2000

Dear Friends,

“Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.” Charles R. Swindoll

As our Fathers face another Fathers Day filled with sorrow and grief and missing their beloved child/ children I think this quote is worth thinking about, especially for those people who feel stuck in their grief, who are having trouble taking that next step, who don't know where to go from here. I remember many times especially in the first couple of years after Ben died where I thought 'this is just too hard,' 'I can't cope,' 'it's not fair'. And sometimes at those times I would lie in bed, certain that things were never going to get better and feeling more and more miserable. And it wasn't until I forced myself to get up, to contact a friend or supportive family member, to get out some bach flower remedy or perhaps go out to my garden, that I started to feel better and feel that perhaps I would get through. Most bereaved parents have these times and if there is one thing I have learned over the past 15 years it is that travelling this journey is long and hard and that to continue to live and to live a full life takes hard work. People find their own ways to work through it, be it talking and attending support groups, reading or accessing supportive on-line help or even helping and supporting others. If you haven't yet found that 'something' which can help you, please keep looking because sitting back and waiting for life to improve, without any input and hard work from you is only going to make it so much more difficult to achieve, once again, a life worth living. And we do know that this is what our children would want for us.

To all Fathers I wish you peace and love on fathers Day and beautiful memories of your child/ children.

Lesley Henderson.

Father's Day Grief

September is always remembered as Father's Day month. Here is an exercise to do in your group or individually.

Think of words starting with these key letters. Or write a sentence describing a Dad's sorrow starting with each letter.

F

A.....

T.....

H.....

E.....

R.....

S.....

G.....

R.....

I.....

E.....

F.....

Keren—Wanganui



Under your umbrella

There is a word in the Bible that says
"the rain falls on the just and the unjust".

My Mum used make me laugh when she adapted it to the quote.....

"The rain it raineth every day upon the just and unjust fella.

It raineth more upon the just because the unjust has the just's umbrella"

Well, it has certainly been raining a lot lately and umbrellas have been a necessary item to take out. I tend to prefer getting wet as by the time I have manhandled my broolly, I am usually sodden anyhow.

I was thinking of how an 'umbrella' can give us shelter from the rain of pain and sorrow we experience daily.

"Pop up your umbrella".

Maybe friends and family are our 'umbrella' protecting and covering us. That rain keeps coming down. Maybe as a spring shower maybe a wintery stormy blast but we can take shelter under the love our broolly holders show us.

There are times we cannot hold up the umbrella ourselves.

Maybe when heavy rains come we don't need to ask for lighter rain but a stronger umbrella.

Also I think we don't want to become dependent on the 'umbrella' covering us. We can miss the beautiful sunny moments that pop up in our lives.

Keren Marsh Wanganui TCF August 2018



Book Reviews—if you have read a book which has helped you on your grief journey, or you feel may help someone else, please send a review so we can share with others.

Cry heart but never break

Death and grief are not a topic one expects to find in children's picture books. I recently read one that copes with the concept in a gentle and sensitive way and will help children and adults alike accept life and death.

Cry, heart, but never break by— Glenn Ringtved : published by Enchanted Lion New York 2016 - translated from the Danish ; isbn9781592701872

I recently read this aloud to our Wanganui TCF Coffee Group and there was a stunned silence at the end and then discussion followed.

Four children are aware their grandmother is dying and decide to keep "Death" from taking her away. But Death does arrive all the same, as it must. He comes gently, naturally. The children ply him with coffee to distract him. He makes time to share a story with the children about two brothers, Sorrow and Grief, who wind up marrying two sisters, Joy and Delight. After a long life together, all four died on the very same day, because they couldn't live without each other. Death uses this fable to show children that life needs both light and darkness. *"It is the same with life and death... What would life be worth if there were no death? Who would enjoy the sun if it never rained? Who would yearn for the day if there were no night?"*

And his last advice, after the Grandmother dies, is the title of the book: *"Cry, heart, but never break. Let your tears of grief and sadness help begin new life."*

"Cleo : How an uppity cat helped heal a family" by Helen Brown.

Published Allen & Unwin 2009 : isbn 9781741759075

A family experiencing the death of their 9 year old son and brother get help in an unexpected quarter from a small black kitten. This is a warm and often funny book about love and loss and the little cat Cleo who helped mend a family's broken hearts.

"Lifting the cloud : Enjoying life grief and all" by Beth Dixon.

Published by the author 2009 : isbn 9780473155773

Beth Dixon is an experienced counsellor with a big heart. This book is a collection of 52 articles written for a weekly column called "Good Grief" in the Wanganui Chronicle 2008/2009. The idea of the column was to provide an alternative and helpful perspective plus light and comfort in challenging times Practical and clearly written help for the grief experience and how to approach it in everyday life. Chapters cover What is Grief? : Managing Grief : Personal and Family & Wider issues : Children and Grief : Getting Older, Some of topics are :becoming stuck in grief; unwritten rules; grief and eating; death hurts; overhelping and letting go. Also animals and our shared grief - like Cleo

Keren Marsh TCF Wanganui

It's okay.
 It's okay to miss them.
 It's okay to say their name.
 It's okay to cry.
 It's okay to laugh.
 It's okay to breathe deeply.
 It's okay to smile when you think of them.
 It's okay to function.
 It's okay to have days where you can't function.
 It's okay to be angry.
 It's okay to be thankful.
 It's okay to love again.
 It's okay to remember.
 It's okay to hope.
 It's okay to be honest.
 It's okay to trust again.
 It's okay.
 It's okay.
 It's okay.

SCRIBBLES & CRUMBS

Father's role in the loss of a child

While many fathers may put on an outward display of strength, inside they are as heartbroken as any parent would be over the loss of a child. They experience the same stages of grief as anyone else, even if they do not always express it. However, society often focuses on the mother and meeting her needs, but fathers need support as well in order to heal from the loss of their child, and they need to be allowed to grieve on their terms.

HOW MEN GRIEVE

While women are generally open with their emotions, men often keep theirs bottled up. A father may not outwardly show any sadness over the loss of his child, either because of societal pressure to be strong or the feeling that he must be there to support his wife.

GRIEVING SILENTLY

Many men have been taught that they should not share their emotions or reach out for support. They are raised to be strong in times of trouble, thus they often grieve silently. This does not mean he is not grieving - it just means he is doing it differently.

GRIEVING PHYSICALLY

Men often express their grief physically. A grieving father may throw himself into work or projects around the house, or he may take up a hobby to keep himself occupied and avoid dealing with his emotions. He may turn to physical activity, such as playing basketball or going to the gym, to get the anger out. He may avoid contact with his wife because he doesn't know how to deal with her emotions on top of his. Whatever form his grief takes, a father must be allowed to process his feelings in his own way.

HELPING A GRIEVING FATHER

Society often neglects to care for the grieving father, showering all its support on the mother. Yet fathers need support as well, and he may not wish to turn to his wife for support, who is working through her grief. If you know a father who has recently lost a child, here are some suggestions for helping him work through his grief:

- Be supportive: He may need help with funeral arrangements, including driving him to the funeral home, picking out a casket or selecting flowers.
- Don't pressure him: If the father refuses to talk about his child's death, don't try to force the issue. Let him know that if he needs to talk, you'll be there to listen.
- Listen: When he is ready to start talking, just listen. Tell him how sorry you are for his loss. Use his child's name. Do not throw clichés at him, such as "Your child is in a better place", or "Now you have an angel to look after you". Not only are these not helpful, but it may make him feel that expressing his emotions is making you uncomfortable, which may cause him to stop talking about his grief.
- Help him with daily tasks: Find out what needs to be done, show up and just do it if you ask if he needs anything, he will likely say no. Tell him you will be at his house at a specific date and time to do the laundry or mow the lawn, or that you are dropping off dinner. If he has other children, offer to take them to the movies or the park to give him and his spouse some time alone.
- Invite him out: He may decline, but keep inviting him. Even if he never accepts, sometimes just knowing the invitation is there and that somebody cares is enough to get through a bad day. Often friends fade away after the loss of a child because they don't know what to say. He needs to know that you will not abandon him.

SUPPORT

If you know someone who has lost a child, or if you are a father who has lost a child, take time to get some help. There are many organizations devoted to helping parents through the loss of a child, and many have local chapters with support groups for mothers, fathers, and both parents. Many of these organizations also have online forums specifically for fathers to go and talk about their grief with other men who have been through the same experience.

- Center for Loss in Multiple Birth (CLIMB) is an organization aimed at parents who have lost one, both or all children in a multiple birth, whether at birth or later in life. They have a page on fathers and grief.
- MISS Foundation is a volunteer-based organization that provides counseling, advocacy, research, and education services to families experiencing the death of a child. Their website has a page dedicated to fathers, as well as an online forum for dads called "Man of Courage."

RESOURCES Oftentimes the best comfort comes from reading about others who have been through the loss of their child and survived. Books written by fathers who have lost a child can help eliminate the feeling that nobody understands your pain. Look for these books at your local bookstore, library or at Amazon.com.

PATH TOWARDS HEALING There is no one way to grieve and no quick answer to the pain a parent feels after losing his child, regardless of the circumstances. Grief is a process, and it's important to let each individual experience that grief on their own terms. Grief counseling is often helpful for people who are struggling through the loss of a child as well. Written by Amy Newman Lifted with thanks from TCF Queensland Chapter Newsletter

Dad's Dog House

A dog house is a place where a dog will usually feel safe, and at times it is where he serves out a punishment. I have been known to get myself into the latter proverbial "Dog House." I expect it started way back before I ever got married to my wonderful wife, Gloria. Usually, I was aware of my predicament and at other times not so much.

When our son Carson was about 9 years old he received a puppy. Rusty was a German Shorthair Pointer who stole our hearts but at times found himself in the proverbial "Dog House." When Carson died, our world shattered like a glass Christmas ornament being smashed with a sledge hammer. Rusty wasn't immune to Carson's death. When Carson finally lost his battle to depression, he shut Rusty in a bedroom before he took his own life. It was, in a sense, a safe dog house for Rusty. He undoubtedly knew something was wrong when he heard the gun shot, smelled death filter through the house, and heard the horrific screams and yells when Gloria and I would later come home to find our son.

I believe Rusty felt his own grief; not long after Carson died, he was diagnosed with cancer. He was only given 4 - 6 months to live. All of us grieved the best we could. While my heart ached, I would find myself giving Rusty a long hug, missing my son and loving his dog at the same time. I was consciously aware that Rusty was a living connection to our son and that he wouldn't be with us for very long.

These hugs were usually when we were alone because Rusty wouldn't tell anyone about the depths of my pain. Perhaps it was the Grace of God, or the love Rusty received, or his awareness of how much we needed him after Carson's death, but he stayed with us for over two and a half more years.

Gloria and I will always grieve our earthly loss of Carson and will support each other the best we can. There are times when I want to grieve by myself. I am more willing to fully let go, to yell, to cry, when I'm not worrying about what others might think or having to appear strong for my wife or anyone else. It is much like being in my own proverbial "Dog House," but this dog house isn't because I've done or said anything wrong, it is because I want a safe place to grieve and heal.

I think everyone needs their own proverbial "Dog House," a place where we feel safe to grieve. I feel this is especially important for men as we are, more often than not, unwilling to fully allow ourselves to grieve around others. Hopefully we can find that place, a bathroom, garage, man cave, or our dog's dog house, where we can fully grieve, because grieving is necessary to heal. I still seek my dog house, but not as much as I used to — a sure sign of healing and growth. Now if I could only stay out of that other dog house.

John Jordan TCF Minneapolis, MN

Lifted with love from Minneapolis Chapter News



A Gift From Another Father

Like most men I know, I was raised to be “strong,” and when things became difficult, you either dealt with it on your own, headed to the bar or a combination of both. I subscribed to this way of thinking for most of my life. I can honestly say I never saw a grown man cry while I was growing up. I’m sure they did, but they did it when they were by themselves out of fear of being perceived as “weak”.

As a result of this, I had always fought off the temptation to cry during sad times. Even after the loss of my first child, I tried to fight it off every day and when I couldn’t hold it in any longer, I would let my emotions breakdown when I was by myself. About eighteen months after the loss of our first baby, my wife and I lost another baby. I couldn’t hold in the pain, and I couldn’t be “strong” anymore. I had become a broken man.

I was at the point where the burden of carrying so much pain became too much for me to manage. I began thinking I had something physically wrong with me. I was having various physical symptoms that were unexplained. I would wake up crying, having feelings of dread, nervousness, headaches and loss of interest in things I used to find intriguing. I decided to make myself go to my doctor to tell him about my conditions to see if he could run some tests on me to find out what was going on.

As soon as he closed the door to his office and asked me how I was doing, I started to bawl. I couldn’t get my words out and it took me a minute or two to compose myself. I told him about all of the physical symptoms I was having and asked him what he thought it might be. He responded with a word I never thought I would ever hear as a description of me. “Depression.” I told him I didn’t believe him, and I wanted to have him run some blood tests on me. On my way out of the office he gave me a card for a counselor and told me to call them while he ran the blood tests on me. The blood tests came back normal. I made a call to the counselor’s office for an appointment the following day.

I remember the sense of embarrassment I had the first time I walked into the waiting room of the counselor’s office. I didn’t make eye contact with anyone sitting there out of fear of being recognized by someone I knew. I didn’t want anyone to think that there was something “wrong” with me. Even though I knew that there was something desperately wrong going on inside of me. I didn’t tell anyone other than my wife how I was truly feeling.

It took several months of weekly meetings before I had the courage to tell someone other than my wife and the counselor how I was doing. I was starting to see a correlation between telling my story over and over again and the fact the anxiety was starting to lift. I cried every time I told my story. I even got to where I was telling strangers, but I noticed a compassion from others. I wasn’t looking for sympathy, but I realized some people were more than willing to listen—truly listen.

Once, when I was meeting with a woman who owned a small public relations business, we started just talking about things we had been going through. She was dealing with a very bad divorce and a child with special needs, while I was dealing with the loss of two children. We shed tears as we told each other our stories, and she asked me if I minded if she gave my name to a group of men that did yearly weekend retreats for men dealing with difficult circumstances. I was hesitant, but she assured me she thought I would really benefit from the event. Reluctantly, I agreed.

A few days passed and I had forgotten about her offer when I received a phone call and an official invitation to the event. Within a couple of weeks I found myself gearing up for it. I had no idea what to expect and was a little uneasy about spending a weekend with a bunch of guys talking about their “feelings”. The event was held at a local church, and that also made me uneasy. Was it going to be a bunch of men sitting around all weekend reading the Bible? The thought of going away for a weekend retreat at a church was a little outside my comfort zone. However, I had made a commitment to go, so I went.

That weekend, I met other guys who were dealing with all types of issues, and I realized I wasn’t alone in my emotional pain. I decided to attend weekly meetings in order to start preparing for the following year’s retreat. During that time, I was asked to be a facilitator and presenter at the next retreat. For an hour, as the opening presenter in a room of about thirty men from all walks of life, I told my story of heartbreak at the loss of my two beautiful babies. There were times I sobbed but, to my surprise, I noticed many of the men wiping away their own tears.

When I finished my presentation, I left the room and walked into a vacant room next door where most of the refreshments were. I walked over to a window that was open to get some fresh air and compose myself. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see that someone was rapidly approaching me. An elderly man grabbed both of my hands as he stood sobbing, tears streaming down his face. He said, “You’ve been to hell and back haven’t you?”

I just shook my head and said, “Yeah.” There it was; a gift from another father acknowledging what I had been through. He wasn’t telling me that I would get through it, that everything would be fine, to toughen up or to hang in there. He wasn’t trying to run from the uncomfortable discussion. He engaged me in the conversation. He was being human without societal rules on how you should converse with another man. He was simply acknowledging the pain and the journey I had traveled and survived.

What he gave me that day was the gift of acknowledgement, empathy and compassion. I suspect it had something to do with the fact that he had lived many years and had figured out that since we do not have to travel difficult journeys alone, we shouldn’t let others do it either.

Kelly Farley Grief Digest, 2010

Kelly Farley is a bereaved father who has experienced the loss of his two children over an eighteen-month span. He lost his daughter, Katie, in 2004 and his son, Noah, in 2006. During that time, he realized that there is a lack of support available to fathers suffering such a loss. As a result, he is working on his first book as a resource for grieving dads. He is on a mission to bring awareness to men’s grief and provide hope to the many men who often grieve in silence due to societal expectations.

Reprinted from Winnipeg Chapter news

The Anticipation of Spring

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter. It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we’d drive down the road. That’s the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing. And then . . . IT happened. Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed. My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world. The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with “spring.” If H.G. Well’s time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring. As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn’t fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn’t go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It’s much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis. A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn’t going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

Pat Loder, TCF/Lakes Area Chapter, MI

Lifted with thanks from Winnipeg Chapter News

Men and Grief By Rick Belden

Male Grief: Invisible, Misunderstood, Unwanted Grief is an inevitable part of every human life, regardless of gender. It is also one of the great isolating forces in the lives of men. Male grief is all too often invisible, misunderstood, and unwanted, which leaves many men in the difficult position of having to deal with their grief on their own, if they deal with it at all. Most men (myself included) routinely reject vital aspects of themselves and their histories because they do not want, or do not know how, to feel and move through the grief that is bound up and waiting inside them. The fear of being shamed by another when most vulnerable, of being stripped of one's masculinity by women as well as by other men, is a powerful motivation not to feel and express one's grief.

The requirement to go into that grief all alone, in secret, for lack of understanding, trusted support is another prime and completely understandable reason for avoidance. There is a deep and profound loneliness in knowing that one must do such difficult, intense work alone, without witness, and it's no wonder so many men don't want to do it. I fight that battle myself all the time. Today I'd like to share excerpts from three posts I've seen recently on the subject of male grief that shine some light on this important and severely neglected aspect of the masculine experience. My hope is that, in some very near future, the dialogue about male grief can become far more common and open than it is today, so that men who are grieving can come out of the shadows and men who need to grieve, but haven't felt the freedom and support necessary to do so, can begin.

What Women Should Know About Male Grief

The first selection, written by Mark Mercer, is called "What Women Should Know About Male Grief". Mark, who has been a hospice bereavement director and counsellor for 18 years, says, "Men grieve far more than we show or discuss." I would certainly agree. Here's an excerpt: We almost never cry in front of other men. If we feel that a woman is "safe," we may cry with her. But most of our tears are shed when we are alone, perhaps while driving our vehicles. In all too many cases, our hot tears become a deep-freeze of anger or rage. Most very angry men are very sad men. Mark also makes some important points about the often neglected fact that there are different ways and different styles of grieving. For example, some men find physical activities (such as vigorous manual labour) to be a healthy means of channelling and expressing some of the energy associated with grief. You can read Mark's entire post [here](#).

For additional thoughts on how women can create safe emotional space for men who are grieving, see my companion post "What If He Cries?" [here](#).

Teen Boys - Grief and Loss The second post, written by Earl Hipp, is called "Teen Boys - Grief and Loss". Earl has been involved with groups and organizations that focus on men's issues and development for over thirty years. In his post, Earl talks about learning, as a boy and young man, how he was supposed to deal with grief and loss: The absence of any support, or even positive role modelling around dealing with loss and grief, communicated a pretty clear message: You're on your own, just deal with it. I did ... and became a kid who was emotionally bound up, pressurized, and lived with a thick veneer as a shield over all that anger and sadness. On the top I wore an "I'm OK" mask. I know that story all too well, as do countless men. Earl's focus, as always, is on using his own experience as a starting point to help succeeding generations avoid the traps and pitfalls that have caused, and are still causing, so much pain for so many boys and men, and he devotes the majority of the post to that task. You can read Earl's full post [here](#).

Book Review: Tom Golden's The Way Men Heal The third and final post is a reader review by Andy Thomas of the new book *The Way Men Heal*. The author of the book, Tom Golden, has been exploring, writing, and speaking on the subject of male grief for many years. In his review, Andy shares a personal experience that illustrates how the taboo against male grief is often enforced, not only for the man who is grieving, but for any other man or boy who might be watching: The day after my Dad died, I was speaking to a friend of his when I broke down and cried briefly — I was interrupted by a woman who had known my father, but who did not know me. She asked, what would my 4-year-old niece think if she saw me crying? while handing me a tissue I did not want. Had I been a woman, no doubt she would have put her arm around me, but as a man I was politely told to "man up" — my pain was embarrassing her. As someone who has a certain awareness of society's different expectations for men and women, this experience came as no great surprise to me. For young minds, such experiences are painful however, and quickly teach young boys that "real men don't cry." They learn how to keep their pain to themselves. Again, this is a story that will no doubt resonate powerfully and personally with a lot of men. You can find out more about Tom Golden's book, *The Way Men Heal*, [here](#). Male Grief: No Longer an Alien Concept?

I hope these excerpts will encourage you to read the full posts and learn more about the male experience of grief in all its aspects. I recall being quite mystified 30 years ago when I was first introduced to the subject via the work of Robert Bly, John Lee, and Dan Jones. They all emphasized the critical importance of a man's awareness of his own grief, his conscious relationship with it, and his ability to feel it and to allow it to move through him so that his natural energy and innate masculine power would not be blocked and withheld, both from himself and the world. At the time, all that talk of grief mystified me. I didn't have any idea what it was. I was keenly aware that I was angry, frustrated, lonely, sad, depressed ... but I had no sense of any grief. I didn't really understand what grief was or how it might feel. It seemed completely abstract to me, completely foreign. Perplexed, I wrote the poem "grief" (found in my book *Iron Man Family Outing*) one day as a way of trying to figure out what this grief that I kept hearing about might be.

After many years of hard work, I understand. I'm far from fully comfortable with my own grief, but it's no longer an alien concept to me. I hope to see the day when male grief is no longer an alien concept to other men, and to the women around them, as well. This post is part of *Common Grief*, a *Healthy Living* editorial initiative. Grief is an inevitable part of life, but that doesn't make navigating it any easier. The deep sorrow that accompanies the death of a loved one, the end of a marriage or even moving far away from home, is real. But while grief is universal, we all grieve differently. So we started *Common Grief* to help learn from each other. Let's talk about living with loss.

If you have a story you'd like to share, email us at strongertogether@huffingtonpost.com. Follow Rick Belden on Twitter: www.twitter.com/rickbelden

Lifted with thanks from TCF SA Chapter Newsletter

AM I STILL ME

Am I Still Me? How satisfactory is your life right now? I think that this is one of the important questions grief may force us to address. Whether your loss was recent or years ago, if grief is left to itself, there may be times that the pain of loss will show up in how you handle relationships, work, and other parts of your life. The precarious road to this question can be painful as a result of your grief. Your loss creates chaos, sadness and craziness. How can you go on without your loved one? It wasn't supposed to be this way. Life is changed. Horribly changed. Life is not the same. Nor will it ever be. Grief hits us with an unknown future and it painfully challenges us to find the hope and faith we need to cope with a new future.

So, Who Am I Now? I have asked myself many questions many times but even more so recently: What am I passionate about? Who do I want to be later? What defines me? What matters most to me? For us, within the first few weeks, Cathy and I knew we wanted to be happy again, to find happiness, to shine our happiness to others like we used to. We made a statement of fact to each other that we wanted to find some description of peace and happiness again in our lives. During these last (almost) 7 years we have had many days/weeks of sadness and despair but we have managed to find lots of optimism also. I often hold onto this happiness so I can stay pragmatic when I have a bad hour/day or week. I know that I have had a bad day but that tomorrow is another day and that I didn't choose this road of loss, but I do get to choose which way to go. This type of thinking has not come easily and during those first few years I wasn't even close to 'pragmatic' thinking. Your answers, like mine, to these questions may move in contrasting directions and so along the way you may still feel as if you are losing your mind. Being happy is not easy either. I find it one of the greatest challenges to face in the midst of my tragedy and can sometimes take all the determination, persistence and self-discipline I can find.

Cathy and I try each day to create a new identity in the midst of all the pressures of grief and the struggle of daily life. It is almost like growing up again like we did at school. A great deal of time must be spent in sorting through feelings to discover how you feel about life and evaluating your worth. Working out what does and doesn't define you (if anything specific even does).

Now What? If we take away the clichés and numerous books on the topic of grief, what remains? Insights and learnings? With insight comes a choice: Do nothing, do something. What is your next step on the journey? For me, it's about creating a new present as I certainly can't change the past. We're all travelling through time together and one of my passions is to do my best every day. Important for me is being at peace with my situation. Being thankful for what I have now is what matters.

Finally, I remember reading, "What is happening to you is too important to be ignored, too valuable to be left behind. Make it a part of who you've been and who you are right now. And allow it to influence who you are becoming, a deeper richer person." I can relate to this saying immensely... I hope you can too!

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Love to you all, Ian, bereaved father of Lauren-Kay Lifted with thanks from TCF Victoria AU



Happy
FATHER'S
DAY

FATHER'S DAY



Father's Day For Dads Who've Lost A Child: This Day Is Still Ours By Barry Kluger

I imagined I would always be a father, and that I would use every opportunity to parent, maybe not my child but someone else's, through being the kind of person I am. Dads like us love, nurture and never stop being what we are. We are fathers.

That day in April 2001, I joined a club. It's very select. They don't have dues. They don't have a clubhouse. They don't have a secret handshake. They don't have a membership card. But the cost to join is high, and while everyone can afford it, no one wants to be inducted.

It's 2010, and another Father's Day is upon me. I still struggle sometimes to find my way back to "normal," whatever that means. And while the people mean well, they say stupid things like "she's in a better place." Well, if it's such a great place, then that's where you should go when you are 80, not 18. We know what to do when we lose a job. We know what to do when we have a flat tire. We know what to do when we see someone in trouble. We don't know what to do when we lose a child. Nothing prepares us for what we have to do, or feel. Sometimes, we don't feel at all, and we feel bad when we don't cry. And when we do cry, we feel it's not enough. Nine Father's Days later, there are still a lot of things I don't understand. I don't understand a lot of the things I am feeling, or not feeling. But I do know I miss Erica. I loved her more than I can ever say. They say a father's love for his daughter cannot be described in words. . . . I cannot find the words. The love is in my smile when I will think of her, in my tears when I think of her, in my laugh when I think of her. I will forget when the dishwasher is not emptied and wonder why Erica forgot to do it, and then I will stop and remember why. And give anything to have her back. And for the rest of my life, I will have to make sense of this jumble of emotions. When we are young, we know all the answers. When we get older, we know all the questions; we just don't have all the answers. I wish I knew the answer to "Why?" I will remember Erica forever, and I ask that you do the same for all the Ericas of dads out there today. To the dads, for whom the pain will always be there: Don't let people tell you it will take time. We should not let time heal all wounds. We have all been wounded, hurt and saddened, and if we let time heal, we will forget these people - and that is something we must never do. I ask of all of you reading this for Father's Day to do all us dads a favour. Walk down the hall and hug your kids goodnight, or if they are away at school or living on their own, pick up the phone and tell them you love them. We need to know that. If you know a dad who lost a child, call and tell him you know Sunday will be a difficult day, but you were thinking of him. We need to hear that. And if you are out and about, stop and give a moment's recollection of the children who are gone. Believe me, wherever we are, we dads will feel that. And for all those moms and dads and others out there who wonder if we still want to celebrate today and if this day is ours - it still is our day and always will be. Happy Father's Day.

Gratefully reprinted from TCF Johannesburg Chapter newsletter

GRIEVING AS A FATHER: <https://www.recoveryranch.com/mental-health/how-to-cope-with-grief-on-fathers-day/>

Losing a child is one of the most devastating types of losses anyone can experience. No parent expects to outlive his or her children. It feels unnatural and wrong. A parent having lost a child may feel empty, lost and as if the grief is too much to ever overcome. Some parents may feel guilty and wish they had done something differently. They may be angry, and they will probably never fully get over the loss.

Mothers and fathers grieve and feel the loss of a child equally, but often differently. Men are typically expected to keep their emotions in check, while women are allowed to grieve openly. A father is sometimes neglected in grief when it comes to the loss of a child. He may feel he has to remain stoic and strong, but on the inside he is hurting as much as the mother.

GRIEF AMID CELEBRATION For a father, facing Father's Day after the loss of a child can be extremely upsetting. This is especially true when the loss is new, but the pain of the day may never cease, year after year. If a dad has been coping with the loss in a healthy way, it will give him a leg up on surviving the holiday. Healthy ways to cope with grief include sharing feelings with a trusted loved one, attending therapy, journaling, joining a support group for grieving parents and other similar healing strategies. Here are some tips for the grieving dad in your life to help him get through the holiday: Spend time with your kids. If you have other children, spend the day with them. It may hurt to be with them and without the child you lost, but finding joy in the children with you is a powerful way to cope with those negative emotions of loss. Include a tribute to the child you lost. Just because you lost that child does not mean that you are not still a father to her. During your celebration, include a remembrance or short memorial service. Surround yourself with loved ones. The pain of losing a child is going to be strong on certain days, like Father's Day. You may want to hide away and be alone, but resist that urge. Spending time with people who care about you will be more helpful. Keep busy. Always living in a state of distraction from your grief is not healthful, but on particularly difficult days, it helps. Stay busy on Father's Day by getting chores done, working on a project or helping others. Spend the day with peers. If you do want to face the grief of the day head on, face it with other fathers. If you belong to a support group, get together to help each other on this most difficult of days. Grieving the loss of a child is an experience that colours the rest of a parent's life. You can't escape it, and on days like Father's Day, the grief may seem too much to handle. Time will never heal the hurt, but it will make it more bearable, as will these suggestions for coping on Father's Day.

Finding Joy After Loss Healing strategies for dealing with loss and grief – Jen Johnson Whether loss comes expectedly with aging or long-term illness, or unexpectedly as the result of an accident, sudden illness, catastrophic event, or suicide, it has the power to disrupt our lives or leave us feeling numb or hopeless. A number of years ago, I experienced a succession of significant losses that left me feeling numb and unprepared to navigate the grief. Determined to rediscover a sense of aliveness, I explored various paths to healing that helped open my heart to joy and aliveness again. Following are some of the things I found most useful: Practice Mindfulness Meditation. Mindfulness is awareness of the present moment with acceptance and without judgment. The tendency of the mind is to judge our experience as pleasant/unpleasant, good/bad, and then we attempt to avoid or numb out the experiences that we judge as unpleasant, such as grief. We can't selectively numb our pain without also numbing positive emotions, like joy. See if you can allow the feelings of grief to be and simply notice them with compassion. When we can open our hearts to our suffering, we can begin to thaw the emotional numbness, which makes room for us to begin to open to greater joy. Practice Mindful Self-Care. Eat healthily, get adequate sleep, and exercise your body. Get out into nature, breathe fresh air, and take in the beauty of the natural world with your senses. Try cultivating a mindful/gentle yoga practice. Schedule time for being instead of always doing. Write About the Loss. Writing can be therapeutic. Try writing about what happened and how you feel about it for 20 minutes. If it feels right, try repeating the practice four times this week, but if it feels overwhelming, then stop and do something different that feels soothing, like drinking a cup of warm tea, taking a warm bath, going for a walk, or listening to soothing music, and try the writing again later if you feel up to it. Studies show that although this practice may bring up unpleasant feelings of sadness in the short-term, it can have positive long-term effects on your health and wellbeing. Engage in Creative Expression. In addition to writing about your loss, or if you can't find words to talk about your feelings, try painting, drawing, making photographs, making collage, knitting, or other forms of creativity that express your feelings. Savour simple pleasures. Take time to experience something pleasurable with your senses, like looking at a beautiful flower or inhaling its fragrance, noticing the brilliant blue sky, listening to morning birdsong, enjoying something beautiful in nature, or listening to music. If it feels like you can't find pleasure in these sorts of everyday things, try something simple, like enjoying the feel of cold water in your mouth or warm water on your skin in the shower or bath. Take a few moments to savour the experience and notice how you feel in your body, heart, and mind. Then recall the experience several times throughout the day.

Make Meaning from the Loss. Try to find some meaning in the loss by identifying ways that it has helped you to grow or become more resilient to stress or loss. When you have moved from the depths of grief and are well on your way toward healing, explore how you can work with your own experience of loss to facilitate healing in others, in the environment, or in the world in general.

Lifted with thanks from TCF Johannesburg Newsletter





Sibling Page



You miss the hell out of them

Sibling relationships obviously vary in their degrees of closeness, love, and amicability. Some siblings may be thick as thieves, others wonder whether they're even really related. Regardless, siblings are our ties to family bonds. They have known us the longest. They understand our history and are the people with whom we have the longest running jokes. They are our bridesmaids and our groomsmen. They are our children's aunts and uncles. They bail us out when we're in trouble, they loan us money, and then we loan it back. They are the most judgemental people we know. They are the most accepting and loving people we know. Siblings can never be replaced and when they are gone we miss the hell out of them.

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/death-of-a-sibling/>

Gratefully lifted from TCF Focus NSW newsletter

Sibling Loss: When Grief Goes Unacknowledged © by Marty Tousley, RN, MS, FT, DCC [Reviewed and updated April 6, 2018]

To the outside world we all grow old. But not to brothers and sisters. We know each other as we always were. We know each other's hearts. We share private family jokes. We remember family feuds and secrets, family griefs and joys. We live outside the touch of time. ~ Clara Ortega

A reader writes: My older brother and only sibling passed away suddenly at the age of 30. This is selfish, but what I hated most during the funeral and days to follow were people telling me to: Take care of my parents. Be there for my parents. Watch out for my parents. It was weird; it was like my grief did not/does not exist. I hate the fact that sibling grief is something that is usually not acknowledged. I mean you can usually find more information on parents losing children or children losing parents or even when you lose a pet -- but hardly any information on the feelings of siblings losing siblings.

My response: I want to thank you for having the courage to share your thoughts about what you hated most during the funeral and in the days following the death of your beloved brother. I also want to assure you that your reaction is not "selfish" at all. Your reaction is normal. When we are reeling from the loss of a loved one, we are especially raw and vulnerable to the comments of others, most especially when those comments seem so hurtful and insensitive. Dealing with the insensitivity of others can be one of the more difficult and troubling aspects of grief, and I suspect that nearly everyone who has suffered a loss can recall an incident when we felt just as discounted and disenfranchised as you must have felt when these comments hit your ears. Had I been in your shoes, I would have wanted to scream, "What about me? What about my grief? How can I take care of my parents when right now I can't even take care of myself? And if I couldn't save my own brother from death, how could I possibly save my parents? For that matter, how can I save myself from dying too soon?"

While some folks really are thoughtless and don't think before they speak, it is also true that many well-meaning individuals have yet to experience a significant loss, so they really don't know what grief feels like, or how to respond, or what to say. They aren't deliberately trying to hurt us. When we encounter such people in the future, we can choose to bear with them, we can enlighten them about what we know of grief, or we can look to others who are more understanding to find the empathy and support we need -- such as the fellow mourners we would find in a grief support group (whether that is "in person" or online).

I truly believe that online grief discussion groups offer each of us a rich opportunity to share and to learn from one another what really helps and what hurts, so that through our own grief we can educate others who have yet to walk on this path -- and in the process, we can grow more compassionate toward one another. After all, none of us is immune from loss, and sooner or later we're all going to find ourselves on this difficult journey called grief, whether we want to be here or not. As my friend and colleague Deirdre Felton has written, "Sorrow is a matter of taking turns. This year it's yours. Next year it may be you setting the table for someone else who feels they cannot cope."

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross said it this way: "If you truly want to grow as a person and learn, you should realize that the universe has enrolled you in the graduate program of life, called loss."

If loss is the "graduate program of life" and we are all enrolled, may we share with one another what we have learned along the way, and be as much teachers as we are students.

Unfortunately, I don't think there is any way that we can immunize ourselves against the insensitivity we may encounter from other people when we are in mourning. It may help to know that eventually the rawness and vulnerability you're feeling right now will ease, and the day will come when the thoughtless, trivializing comments you may hear from others will not hurt as much. In the meantime, know that your deep sense of loss is a natural response to the death of your beloved brother. Your grief is a legitimate manifestation of your attachment and your love, and you don't have to explain that to anyone.

Finally, I want to acknowledge your observation that sibling loss differs in some important ways from other kinds of loss. As stated in the introduction to the online Loss of a Sibling forum that I moderate:

Special issues arise when our brother or sister dies, no matter how old we are at the time. We may feel as if part of our own identity is lost. Whatever part our sibling would have played in our future is lost as well, casting a bittersweet shadow over everything that happens to us regardless of how wonderful it may be. Because our sibling is our peer, we're suddenly acutely aware of our own mortality, and we may be wondering how many years of living we have left. We may blame ourselves for our sibling's death, or even feel guilty for being the surviving child. We may suddenly feel totally alone in our responsibilities toward our parents as they grow older - or feel somehow obligated to set aside our own grief for our parents' sake, as well as for the other family members our sibling has left behind . .

Gratefully reprinted from TCF SA Chapter Newsletter



VOICES

A book of poetry

Written by

Margaret Gillanders and Sandi Legg.

Poems which feature in our newsletter from time to time.

Margaret and Sandie have given us 100 copies of VOICES to sell

with all proceeds to go to TCF.

To order your copy send \$5 to

TCF

C/- Lesley Henderson,

76 O'Neill Rd., 17 D.R.D.,

Windsor

Oamaru

I have personally found that many of my friends and family have appreciated reading this book

as it explains so well the many feelings and emotions

I have experienced but been unable to explain.

Thank-you Margaret and Sandie.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance self-help organisation offering friend-ship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

The primary purpose is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief experienced upon death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings. The objective is to help those in their community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers and professionals to be supportive.

Do you need to talk? Our telephone friends are willing to listen.. **Telephone Friends**

DUNEDIN	Anne Lelena (Son Colin 22yrs Suicide)	03- 455 9274
DUNEDIN	Ngairie Penny (Marlene, 18yr old daughter MVA Nov '91)	03- 455 5391
DUNEDIN	Alexis Chettleburgh (22 yr old son, suicide.)	03-4777649
	Corinda Taylor (Son, 20 years, suicide)	021 2930094
CENTRAL OTAGO	Wilma Paulin (Son & Daughter, 6yrs & 3mths)	03-4493213
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Pessione (16 yr old daughter, accidental)	03-4487800 janpessione@xtra.co.nz
QUEENSTOWN	Arlette Irwin	03 4510108
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Johnson, Adult son, Neville, cancer	03 4488360
CENTRAL OTAGO	Louise McKenzie (David, 14yr, accident) Central Otago Co-ordinator	03 4486094 louise.mckenzie@xtra.co.nz
INVERCARGILL	Linda Thompson. (Ryan, 16yrs, Cardiac Failure. Dec 2001) Southland Co-ordinator*	03-2164155 027 390 9666
TIMARU	Phyl Sowerby (Son Cancer 1998)	03 612 -6402
CHRISTCHURCH	Chris Guerin	02102931357
WELLINGTON	Lorraine Driskel Son (twin) 19yrs—car accident	04 9387212 lorrained@paradise.net.nz
KAPITI COAST	Anna Upton (Son, suicide)	04 2936349
PALMERSTON NORTH	Robyn Galpin (Hayley, motorcycle accident)	06 3535929
TAUMARUNUI	Marie and Ron Summers	07 8954879
CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	(Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	
WANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yo, car accident)	06 3443345 wanganui@thecompassionatefriends.org.nz
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 atsilvester@actrix.co.nz



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