



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER NO: 155

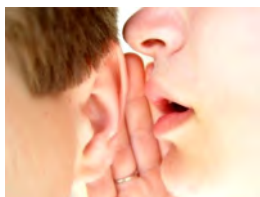
AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2016



There'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.



Sealed with a Kiss



Lifted from Spring UK Compassion

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

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

As long as it takes; that's how long it takes. It's not about forgetting. It's about hurting.

And I know that if I am alive twenty years from now, and I happen to look at a blue sky with puffy clouds and think of my son, Fred—and figure how old he'd be, what he'd be doing and what his children would be doing—I'll hurt.

And know that if I can switch my train of thought from what is not, to what was, a happy memory, I'll be able to smile through the tears.

We don't stop hurting, ever. But so many things occur each day. So many events and thoughts and happenings intervene, that our focus is shifted. The death of our child changes from the main concern in our life, to one of many.

A life may stop; but the loving goes on. To love deeply is to be vulnerable...for all our days.

Joan S. ~ TCF, Central Jersey Chapter

Our Children ... Remembered with love

Forever Young

Forever Loved

Forever Longed For

Matthew Alexander Birtles	Born 17/6/2004	Claire Benicarke (Mary Schiehsel)	Died 10/6/2004
Richard Cowie	Born 1/6/1974	Stefan Francis Cockill	Died 28/6/1994
Sophie Kate Elliott	Born 11/6/1985	Heath Neil Colina	Died 1/6/2002
Hayley Robyn Galpin	Born 29/6/1968	Matthew William Ross Dryden	Died 24/6/2005
Daniel James Gillies	Born 22/6/1986	Ian Peter Foley	Died 24/6/1987
Robbie Knight	Born 9/6/1975	Allan Stephen Hobbs	Died 27/6/1998
Claire Jillian Taiaroa	Born 25/6/1978	Callum Warwick Langley	Died 15/6/2006
Brendan James Vass	Born 30/6/1986	Keryn Sarah Langley	Died 15/6/2006
		Shaun Mataki	Died 27/6/2003
Mitchell James Beaumont	Born 13/7/1976	Jessie Adelaide Neaves	Died 5/6/2006
Heath Neil Colina	Born 18/7/1981	Claire Jillian Taiaroa	Died 19/6/1997
Te Ahu Aroha Foley	Born 2/7/1975	Melissa Jane TeHuia	Died 21/6/1998
Ben Paul Gillanders	Born 13/7/1977	Ben Watt	Died 3/06/2005
Matthew David Innes	Born 27/7/1987		
Jake Lucas	Born 10/7/1978	Terry Barnfather	Died 11/7/2000
Anna Ruth Iris Moore	Born 9/7/1974	Matthew Alexander Birtles	Died 1/7/2007
Brent Allan Stenton	Born 19/7/1974	Marcus Fitchett	Died 18/7/1996
Julie Barbara Warren	Born 9/7/1961	Te Ahu Aroha Foley	Died 2/7/1975
Timothy James Williams	Born 6/7/1980	Vicky Knight	Died 1/7/1980
		Aidan Samiel Konise	Died 23/7/2009
		Sara Loo	Died 19/7/2010
		Robert Shane McLaughlin	Died 4/7/2001
		Kirsten Jane Maydon	Died 23/7/1989
		Marie Anne O'Neill	Died 21/7/1985
		Julie Barbara Warren	Died 14/7/1985

Hello from our fair city of Wanganui

We just celebrated our 7th birthday. Not really cause for celebration!

TCF is not a group one WANTS to belong to.

Wanganui restarted in July 2011. We met for our usual Coffee Care and Chat last Saturday and seventeen of us took over the snug in the café. We had delicious scones, jam and cream and had the chance to catch up and make a memory jar. TCF is not a group where you get marks for regular attendance, but it is good to know people can come when they feel the need

How to make a memory jar :

Use a small lidded jar or bottle

* Have a collection of small items such as glass stones, gemstones, stones, hearts, shells, buttons, bling, any little item

* You can add items that bring to mind a memory for you.

* Decorate with stickers, stick on diamonds, initials, names etc

* You can put one item in the jar for each year since your child has gone.

* The Warehouse or \$2.00 shops have a range of items or you may find things at home

This reminds me of a lovely resource you can get from Skylight www.skylight.org.nz based in Wellington.

Called Memories Matter, it is a box of 50 ideas and activities for all ages. Ways to remember the special person in your life who has died.

7 ideas each in 7 themes : sensing memories : picture memories : recording memories : planting memories ; storing memories ; building new memories : ceremony and memories.

We also had a Sausage Sizzle this week at Mitre 10 to gain a little cash to tide us over with admin costs etc. As well as making \$100 plus we had a chance to tell people about TCF. Good PR.

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz

Don't forget we have a website for NZ wide TCF. If you or your TCF group would like to add anything to the site please e mail it to me at

marshkandb@gmail.com

I don't update the site but will pass any items onto our website manager. I have been a bit remiss in adding the newsletters to the site but they should all be there soon. Also I have added a general piece about the Candlelighting.

Nearer December we will put in details of our various candle lights.

You may like to put in details about an event or a brief piece of writing – maybe a poem or something that has helped you. If you have any ideas for the site please let me know.

We have had enquiries from the site from Australia, Auckland and New Plymouth, so people are finding it.

Thanks, Keren Marsh from Wanganui TCF

Central Otago Compassionate Friends

Kia ora koutou. Nga Mihi Mahana ki a koutou katoa.

Greetings to you all. Warm and kind thoughts are extended to everyone.

We are halfway through our winter (I hope!!!) It hasn't been too drastic. Because people in Central Otago are not too keen to travel at night, we held our July gathering yesterday, Sunday, as an afternoon meeting. It was held in the home of one of our members, with the fire at full blaze and gloomy rain outside, but the mood inside was warm and caring. One of our members, Bess Carbines, spoke informally to us about the death of her daughter some years ago, and also about the work that she does with the Salvation Army here in Alexandra. The range of support given is amazing. Bess says that most of the people that they support and work with have experienced severe grief and trauma at some times in their lives. It was an excellent time for us all to listen, and reflect.

Our hearts cry out to those of you who are newly bereaved. Listening to the story of one of our people yesterday was heart rendering. It is extremely difficult to know how to help relieve the pain and trauma. We love our children so much. And as everyone reading this knows, the effect of the death of your child is a lifetime sentence.

Anyway, here's hoping for some lovely clean, crisp, cheerful blue sky days. I think that the weather does make a difference!!

Arohanui,

Louise

Kapiti Coast Report.

Dear Lesley and Friends,

Recently I have been without a keyboard so I have been out of touch, however now back in business.

All is going well here in Waikanae and we are planning to have another dinner once the weather improves. I know it is winter, but boy is it cold although nothing compared with what many of you are feeling.

Keep smiling everyone and keep warm.

Love and thoughts from Kapiti Coast.

Anna

Southland report AGM

Hello Friends,

We are now well through winter and I hope that everyone has kept warm and healthy. Our first bulbs are flowering and the early cherry trees are out so spring is on its way!

Our group continues to meet every second month for a catch up but for many there have been changes and their lives are moving in different directions. So we need to be looking at where we want our group to be going.

Our AGM this year will be at my house on Tuesday 7th August at 7pm. 52 Sunrise Drive 03 2164155

Please come along and share with us what you need or would like to see within our group.

Until then please take care,

Linda Co-ordinator

Week 180 by Maria Ahern

“Mum, what on earth are you doing awake at 5 am on a Saturday morning?”

Good question son.

“Thank you. Does it have a good answer?”

Oi! Stop using my lines!

“Haha... seriously mum. Why are you awake at this silly time?”

Dunno.

“Anything I can do?”

Yep.

“Name it.”

Another metaphor for life?

“Well don’t you think so?”

Come and give me a cuddle? Make me a coffee? Toast? I don’t know James? How much of a list can I produce of things that I can’t have?

“Ok, ok Missy. No more self pity. It doesn’t suit you and it’s not attractive anyway. Man up.”

Alright Mr!! I only asked for a cuddle and some breakfast! Jeez...

“Why do you need a cuddle?”

Stuff.

“What Stuff?”

Aw, nothing. Actually, you’re right. It’s ok. I’m ok. So... I guess you know that Death has paid another visit.

“Yes mum.”

So that’s two funerals in two months James. Is this how it’s going to be?

“Well yes mum. It is. Either you leave the party early or you stay late and help clean up. That’s the choice I’m afraid. What do you expect mum? No one will live forever and no one should want to. Want some advice?”

Always...

“Remember this... the important thing is not how long you live physically. You just have to trust me on this one mum because I know it’s an impossible concept to get your head around. The important thing is how you are remembered. It’s better to live a good life and leave behind memories that make people smile, than live a long life and be remembered badly. See?”

Yes, I know James. You’ve told me that before but it’s still so sad when you lose another friend...

“Your friend has completed his life mum. And he was a lovely man who made you laugh and raised your spirits. Remember him that way and he will live on in that way.”

Yes, yes. I guess you’re right.

“There’s no guessing here mum. It’s a sure thing. Live your life well. Leave good memories and happy images wherever you go. Try to be kind, compassionate and pleasant and above all, take every opportunity to smile and say thank you. Then the rest will fall into place.”

I get the smile bit but why the ‘thank you’?

“Because if you look for something to be grateful about, it will take your mind off the negative stuff that you humans seem preoccupied with. If for example you stay stuck in the notion that I can’t give you a cuddle when you need one, you won’t get the benefit of being grateful for all the cuddles that we DID have. See?”

James, it’s 5am and I haven’t had a coffee yet.

“Haha... well off you go then. Get yourself a coffee and remember to smile when drinking it... And don’t ask me what you have to smile about. You have plenty to smile about. Just remember to do it. Now, I’ve got to go, ‘cos the new arrival needs me to show him around and get him a beer so I’m off. Smile mum. It will all be fine. Oh and one more piece of advice...”

What?

“Try and have a snooze or you’ll get over tired today and then you’ll be a right grump...”

Ok son. Thank you...she says smiling.....

“Haha... you’re welcome.”

Maria Ahern

Gratefully reprinted from UK TCF Compassion

Page 5 TCF Otago June July 2018

Creating Rituals to Move Through Grief -© Copyright 2011 by Karla Helbert, MS, LPC, therapist in Richmond, Virginia. All Rights Reserved. Permission to publish granted to GoodTherapy.org

We humans like things to stay the same. Even if we are open to change, change can be very difficult. There is nothing more disruptive than the death of someone you love, someone whose existence is part and parcel to your own. When those people die, we are left floundering. That person may be your child, your husband or wife, your companion, your friend, your sister, or your brother. The depth and breadth of your grief depends on the connectedness you feel to the person who has died—you're spiritual, emotional, or physical connectedness, and often, your perception of your very existence. The more intertwined your life with a person, the more affected you are by your experience of grief when that person dies. When someone you love dies, you experience deep, soul-wrenching pain. Your life changes. You change. Everything changes. Things are very different than you thought they would be. Yes, it hurts terribly. But there is nothing wrong with you. Grief is not pathological. Grief is normal. It totally sucks, but it is normal. Grief is a part of life—a very painful, difficult part of life. And it flat out just sometimes sucks, but it is normal. There are things you can do to help grief along its way; one thing I believe can be the most helpful is to engage in ritual.

What Is a Ritual? Rituals are actions done in purposeful ways that symbolize something much more than the acts themselves. Rituals are made up of actions that represent ideas, thoughts, myths, or beliefs about a particular thing. Rituals give purpose to action and always serve to connect us to something else, generally something greater than our own solitary selves. We may engage in ritual as we seek peace, clarity of mind, or to become more grounded. We may seek connectedness to family, a particular person, our culture, society, traditions, ancestors, or even to our own selves. We perform mini-rituals daily. Most of us have a specific routine associated with preparing for bed each night; we may wear a particular piece of jewellery or clothing for specific occasions; or we may make our beds each morning. We might repeat a particular phrase when we make a toast, or perhaps we close our texts or emails in a certain way. Whether small or elaborate, the rituals we engage in tell stories about who we are, who we want to be, and what is important to us in our lives. Your own rituals may be derived from your family, culture, ethnicity, or a particular religious or spiritual tradition. No matter what stories they tell, rituals always provide structure, meaning, and connectedness. Perhaps the most significant thing that rituals provide is a certain order to an existence that otherwise might be full of confusion and chaos. Human life is full of confusion and uncertainty and, undoubtedly, the most chaotic times in our lives are the times when we are grieving. Grief is chaos. Times of grief are when we need ritual most. Unfortunately, in our society, there are few rituals that are specifically designed for grieving people, aside from the funeral or memorial service. These are necessary and helpful, but grieving people need more than a couple of rituals to help quell the deep chaos the death of a loved one can bring.

Create Your Own Rituals Creating your own personal rituals to remember your loved ones allows you to access and work through your grief in a safe and constructive way. Some people plan rituals in honour of a loved one's birthday or an anniversary. Others choose to express their grief through small daily or weekly rituals. A ritual can be as elaborate as a public memorial service or as small as a quiet moment alone with your loved one's picture. Some examples of small rituals include: Lighting a candle at certain, special times of the day or week to remind you of your loved one (for example, at dinnertime to represent sharing meals with him or her): Creating a memory scrapbook and filling it with photographs, letters, postcards, notes, or other significant memorabilia from your life together: Spending time listening to your loved one's favourite music or creating a special mix of music that reminds you of that person: Watching his or her favourite movie: Planting a tree or flowers in your loved one's memory: Making a donation to a charity that your loved one supported: Visiting your loved one's burial site: Carrying something special that reminds you of your loved one that you can take out and hold when you feel the need: Creating a work of art in your loved one's memory: Preparing and eating a special meal in honour of your loved one: Developing a memorial ritual for your loved one on special days or whenever you wish Some people engage in the smaller, spontaneous rituals listed above on a regular basis. You may do something similar, or you might choose to create a more structured ritual. You may decide to create a special ritual only one time, or you might decide to hold your ritual (or some version of it) on a regular basis—daily, weekly, monthly, or on special days like birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, or other special occasions. When selecting activities for a more structured grief ritual, choose specific things to mark the opening and the closing of your ritual: Light a special candle used only for your ritual purposes: Light some incense: Read or say aloud an inspirational verse, poem, or prayer: Sing a song: Chant: Play a particular selection of music: Ring a chime or a bell. Clearly marking the beginning and the end of the ritual will help you transition into a different frame of mind at the opening, and it will signal that it is time to shift consciousness back to the mundane at the closing.

Remain Open: Do What Feels Comfortable to You Before starting the ceremony, take a few deep breaths to centre yourself. Remember that it is okay if you cry. This is your space and time to express your grief in whatever ways you need to do so. If all you can do is cry during your planned ritual time, most likely, that is what you need to do. Whatever happens in between the opening and closing of the ritual is completely up to you. You can have an activity planned, or you may be the sort of person who feels more comfortable planning nothing at all. Perhaps you'll choose to do whatever you are moved to do once you are in the ritual space—you might wish to simply sit quietly for as long as you need to, listen to music, spend time crying, look through photos of your loved one, meditate, pray, or read some healing literature or a sacred text. It is okay to remain open and do whatever comes to you in the moment. Sometimes you may feel the need to communicate something to your loved one. The sacred, safe space of a ritual is an ideal place to do this. When you need to communicate, you may choose to speak aloud, meditate on your thoughts silently, or write your thoughts in a letter. Consider incorporating the burning, burying, or floating of the letter that

you write in a future ritual. You may simply feel the need to release energy in your ritual space. Yell, scream, or cry as much as you need to. If you're working through feelings of anger in your grief, keep pillows nearby that you can hit, punch, or throw. Tearing and ripping paper or stomping cardboard boxes can also help release anger. You may wish to include some movement, dance, or vocal expression such as singing, chanting, or yelling. You might want to beat on a drum or play some other instrument to release energy and emotion through sound.

Consider Inviting Others You can conduct your grief rituals alone or with others. Your ritual could be an ideal time to share your grief with friends and family members grieving the same loss. If you invite others to join your ritual, you may wish to ask each person to share something about your lost loved one—a memory, story, or thought. Ask guests to bring something to read or share as part of the ritual, and invite them to participate in any ritual activity you develop, such as chanting, drumming, or letter-writing. **Continue Your Ritual as Needed** Conduct your grief rituals for as long and as often as you need to. As you heal, you may find that your need to engage in ritual for your grief will wane. Continuing to maintain some of your small rituals, such as continuing to carry your loved one's photograph or wearing a particular sentimental piece of jewellery may serve you. You're more elaborate rituals may change over time, or you may feel the need to hold them only on special occasions, such as birthdays or anniversaries. If you have created a shrine or altar that you have used in your rituals or kept in your home, you may find that you wish to make changes to it over time. This is okay, too. The changes mean that your personal process through grief is progressing, and your rituals have helped you move from chaos and pain to wholeness and stability. I hope that this has helped you think about ritual and how you might use it as you move through your own grief process. Please feel free to comment about how ritual has helped you, what kinds of ritual activity has helped you—large or small—and what your thoughts are on engaging in ritual to help us move toward healing.

Suicide – Anon

My beautiful 18-year-old son died in my arms in ICU. I have often thought about what I could have said to him, to stop him, to save him, to get through to him, to fix the broken pieces inside of him. I was with him just hours before the incident that saw him end up in that bed in ICU, with tubes and wires and flashing lights keeping him going. The torment I have put myself through, going over that last visit, is immeasurable. I cannot imagine the pain he felt, on that night, and I don't think he really understood the ripples his death would leave behind, the pain compounded. The guilt that comes hand-in-fist with grief, when death is by suicide, is like a living beast. The should-have, would-have, could-haves abound: I should have seen what was inside of his head. I would have done anything to save him. I could have fixed him, if only I had seen. My son's death is not just about my loss; it is also about the loss to the community of a child with massive potential, with endless possibilities, and with bursting enthusiasm. A child who forgot that life is about the spark of love, connection, and hope that is impossible to see, when your eyes are blackened by depression. Losing him allowed me to open my eyes to the fact that suicide is way too prevalent in our society, particularly among young men. I belong to a new club now, and have met many, many parents who have also lost their beautiful children to suicide. The abiding feeling, the thread that sews us all together, is a burning desire to make a change. We all want to save another child from an untimely death, to save another family from the suffering that death by suicide delivers. We know it, we feel it, we live it, we do not want anyone else to be in this place. I remember those days we had with him in ICU, I was manic in my desire to wash all of the black and miserable thoughts out of him, and fill him with love. His family and friends were with him in ICU, and the love and the pain and the heartache were almost too much to bear. I held my boy, as the ventilator was removed, and he died in my arms. I pushed every last whisper of love out of my fingertips and into him, as his soul flew away. My son's funeral, the best, worst day ever, echoed the love that had surrounded him in ICU. The weeks and months that followed, saw grief snapping at my heels, with unexpected flashbacks, unguarded memories, and behaving irrationally in "normal" situations. I was (and am) able to step one foot in front of another, day by day. To go back to work, to look after my daughter, to hold it together in public (and cry in the car, or late into the night) I was able to stand up at the funeral of my kids' father (he died three months after my son), and say the words I imagined my son would have spoken. I was also able to commit words in stone for my dead son (one of the hardest things I have ever done). After a year, the silent pressure began to build, the pressure that insists that the grief time is over, that the getting on with it time is nigh. I have felt terribly guilty, that I haven't been able to get over it yet, that I haven't been able to move on. Some of it comes from society's aversion to look mental illness in the face. It should be as OK for me to acknowledge depression or anxiety or grief as it is for me to acknowledge broken bones, or a chest infection, or cancer. We need to be ok, as a society to talk about mental illness, to be open about it, and to be supportive. That is the only thing that will cut through the self-imposed veil of isolation that all too often surrounds those suffering mental illness. Through isolation and negative self-speak, we lose way too many souls. I thank God for my beautiful son, and for this journey, that will deliver me to a place where I can talk, and push more fervently for change. Where I can remember that my son loved me, and I loved him. Love never dies. You are loved, my beloved boy. You are loved, you are loved, you are loved.

Page 7 TCF Otago June July 2018

Lifted with love from TCF Johannesburg Newsletter

7 tips that helped me survive loss

Everyone must deal with grief in his or her own way, but because of all that I have been through, I can offer some ideas for surviving and even thriving after great loss. In the space of a decade, I lost several members of my family, including my husband, brother and son. Some days it felt like a battering ram of grief was aimed directly at my gut; others, like I was a bowling pin, barely reset only to have another ball knock me down. As a chaplain at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas, with years of experience working with grieving families, I thought I should be able to handle this. But I couldn't— not without seeking help and spiritual reflection, as well as connecting to other people through a grief recovery group.

COMING BACK TO LIFE Here are a few things that rejuvenated my soul and helped me find my way back to living fully again.

1. **READ SOMETHING POSITIVE EVERY MORNING** It might be scriptures, poetry or just something funny, but I find that starting the day with positive input helps my perspective. Waiting until afternoon or night doesn't have the same effect. Jump-starting the day with something energizing or inspiring helps me focus on what I have, not what I've lost. I end every reading session with a prayer for strength, and that seems to help, too.
2. **MAKE SOME MAJOR CHANGES** During my recovery, I had to take some time for myself and take care of myself. In my case that meant taking time off from a stressful job and admitting I could not continue working as a chaplain focused on people near the end of life and their loved ones. It meant learning to accept that occasional waves of tears were natural healing agents to be welcomed, not avoided. It meant there were days when I would lapse back into deep sadness. Eventually, I sought out professional counselling, which proved invaluable.
3. **FIND A GRIEF RECOVERY GROUP THAT FITS YOU** I stumbled upon the book *The Grief Recovery Handbook* by Russell Friedman and John W. James. First, I worked through the handbook's method informally with a friend, then I trained at The Grief Recovery Institute with Russell Friedman to be a certified group facilitator. The method worked for me because it helped me look at all my life's losses, my patterns of dealing with them and the points at which I was getting stuck.
4. **FIND A RECOVERY METHOD YOU TRUST** Using the Grief Recovery Outreach Program method, I identified the relationship that was causing me the most emotional pain, and learned that I needed to complete any unfinished communications with that person in order to move on with my life. I was able to make peace with the suicide of my brother partly by writing a letter to him that included all my pent-up feelings about our relationship and his death. Surrounded by the love and support of our group, I read the letter aloud and felt a remarkable wave of release and pure joy. I was finally able to disassociate from the pain of his suicide, and be thankful once more for his life.
5. **SUSPEND DISBELIEF** It helped me greatly to imagine that I would stay spiritually connected to those who "lift off," as my son Jonathan described his impending death. I noticed not long after my father died that when I was feeling dejected and missing him, a cardinal would fly over or pause on a branch above me. It happened so frequently I came to see cardinals as messengers from my father. Jonathan knew about this and promised that, once he was gone, he would send a blue jay as his messenger of love and encouragement. (There are two blue jays playing in my birdbath this morning as I write this.)
6. **FIND FUN AGAIN** During my grieving, I spent several months being a morose couch potato. That could have continued indefinitely, because people assumed I might not be ready. And they were often right. But I needed to get out, and I really appreciated the ones who let me invite myself to join in whatever they were doing. For example, I put myself "up for adoption" for the first Christmas after my husband died, and I had a lovely time in Birmingham, Alabama, with a best friend's extended family.
7. **EMBRACE LIFE** C.S. Lewis wrote, "To grieve is to know you have loved and loved well." That is true, and grief is, as the *Grief Recovery Handbook* defines, "the normal reaction to loss." But living happy is, I would add, the normal reaction to life...One that is possible to achieve even during times of grief. One graduate of the grief group said it perfectly: "I learned that I didn't die—he did, and I want to live again!" I claimed his theory for my own, and life is good.

Lifted with thanks from TCF Queensland Newsletter

Reflections from the Editor

Dear Friends Yesterday was my son, Robin's birthday. He would have been 48. I sat by the fire and remembered... He died fifteen years ago and there are still times when tears come and the long-ing... Even though it was raining and very windy I went outside and filled the empty bird feeder. Robin loved sitting outside on the patio, a mug of tea cupped in his hands, watching the birds come and go. Back inside, sitting by the warm fire, sipping a hot cup of tea, I let the minutes, the hours slip by. I had a list of things I needed to get on with but still I just sat there... Some of you reading this will be newly bereaved and I remember back to the beginning of it all, the raw grief, the not wanting to go on, the wondering if there was any point left in life, what on earth was I going to do... But there is hope; all these years on the grief is quieter now and I have found hope, wonderful friends thanks to TCF and a new purpose in life.

A while ago I would have felt guilty about 'not getting on with things' but I have learnt to be kind to myself, to be gentle with myself. I no longer beat myself up about failing to do what I should be doing or to fail to be what I think I ought to be. The way I do it is to treat myself as a child who needs gentle encouragement. I tell myself it's ok to feel what I'm feeling and to do what I happen to be doing at that moment - however bizarre it might be. Then I try and encourage myself and say, OK, I needed to do that, now it's lunchtime, I'll put one foot in front of the other, gently, and go and see what's lurking in the fridge. I came across these words a little while ago: 'What ever you are doing, love yourself for doing it.' and I frequently repeat them to myself and I find this very comforting. You are your own best friend and you need this friend to love you. And thinking about the things we do, thank you to all those of you who put fingers to keyboard and wrote to me about the things that help you get out of bed in the morning, things that help to keep you going. I have been greatly inspired by reading each of your accounts and I hope the rest of you will find help and inspiration from them too. They are all in this edition. Please, please, those of you who haven't yet, jot down a few things, or just one or two and send them in. We want to know what helps YOU! And remember, be kind to yourself, be gentle with yourself and whatever you are doing, love yourself for doing it. With my love to you all, Gina Claye

Compassion UK

When should I seek professional help if I am grieving Michael E. Hirsch, MD Neurology

While the vast majority of people will pass through grief without needing professional help, you should seek treatment for serious or long-lasting symptoms of depression that interfere with daily life. Talk with your doctor or a mental health professional if you have suicidal thoughts or experience any of these other symptoms of bereavement-related depression: persistent feelings of worthlessness, which is generally felt with depression but not with healthy grief, ongoing guilt, marked mental and physical sluggishness, persistent trouble functioning, hallucinations, other than occasionally thinking you hear or see the deceased. Small studies suggest that psychotherapy, antidepressant medication, or both may ease symptoms of depression associated with grief.

Grief can entangle people in other ways, too. Sometimes people feel so mired in grief that months or even years go by with no improvement, however slow or painful. This may be a sign of complicated grief, a term mental health professionals use when grieving proves especially difficult. Also known as protracted or chronic grief, it couples features of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, which is why some bereavement experts call it traumatic grief. (The trauma in this case is an unbearable separation from someone you love.)

Complicated grief occurs more often after a death that feels traumatic, perhaps because it was premature, sudden, violent, or unexpected. It may be prompted by less obvious troubles, too, such as work problems, family conflicts, and chronic illness. Ambivalent or angry relationships can also lead to this type of grief.

Among adults who suffer a significant loss, about one in 11 experiences complicated grief.

Symptoms include:

intrusive, upsetting memories, thoughts, and images of the deceased constant, painful yearning for the deceased an inability to accept the reality of the death frequent nightmares detachment from others desperate loneliness and helplessness, anger, and bitterness thoughts of suicide and wanting to die. Other reasons to seek professional help include drug abuse or increased use of tobacco or alcohol, suffering several losses, gaining or losing a significant amount of weight, experiencing uncontrollable anxiety, and failing to feel somewhat better after a year has passed.

Gratefully lifted from TCF Johannesburg Newsletter

Page 9 TCF Otago June July 2018

Keep In Touch: how to maintain relationships after a death

<http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/how-to-maintainrelationships-after-a-death/>

Keeping in touch after a death isn't easy. You're grieving. They're grieving. Emotions are complex, sometimes the death had brought out conflict and unpleasant feelings. Sometimes you just don't have the energy to call anyone or plan anything (other than maybe for a pizza to be delivered).

Yet, ultimately that day comes that you come up for air and realize months (or years) have passed and you have lost touch with people who were important to you, or to your loved one. Or, on the flip side, maybe you try to maintain a relationship, but for whatever reason they don't reciprocate. In either case, the pain of this 'secondary loss' kicks in. You realize that you have not only lost you loved one who died, but you have lost your relationship with their family or friends as well.

If you are feeling this sort of pain, you should check out our post on secondary loss. So, what can you do? First and foremost, keep in mind the old serenity prayer: "God grant me (I seek) the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference". The following are things you can do to try to maintain relationships after a death, but keep in mind that, if the other person does not reciprocate, you can't control that. Do your best, but at some point you may have to accept that there are relationships that will be lost, even if only temporarily.

Alright, now for the concrete suggestions on how to stay in touch after a death: Plan a monthly dinner. You could do it at home (pot luck style, to make it easy) or go to restaurants your love one loved. Make use of technology. Keep in touch via email, social media, and texting. You may not be up for conversations or dinners early on, but a quick note can let people know you want to keep up a connection and are thinking of them, even if you aren't ready to get together in person. Make plans for holidays. The first holiday after a loss can be confusing, especially if the person who died was key in planning and bringing people together for holidays. Reach out to family members early to let them know you want to carry on with the same tradition, despite the loss. Create a memorial website or Facebook page. This may not seem like 'staying in touch' but it is actually a great way to create a central place where all come to post comments, memories, photos, videos or share grief struggles. Make plans for birthdays, anniversaries, and deathiversaries. These can all be tough days and, if you have lost touch with friends or family, you may feel especially alone and isolated. Don't let these days creep up on you. Instead, reach out to friends and family in advance to let them know you want to spend the day with them.

Make a list of all the things you did together with friends and family before the death. It may be Sunday dinners, holidays, vacations, or just visits here and there. Whatever it is, make plans for how you will continue those traditions. It may mean stepping into a new role as 'planner' if the person you lost was the one who always made the plans.

Make a list of the people you want to stay in touch with. This seems silly, but sometimes in our grief we are so selffocused that two years passes and we suddenly realize the good friend of our spouse, or our child's college roommate, or our mom's cousin has fallen totally off our radar. Having a list can help you remember the people you want to keep a connection with at a time in life when it is hard to remember anything! Plan a new tradition. Be it for your loved one's birthday or around any other day, plan something you will hold every year in memory where you will invite the friends and co-workers of the person who died. If everyone knows it will happen every year, they can block the day. Even if time passes and you lose touch of some of those more distant friends of your loved one, you will still have this set time to connect with them at least once a year.

As Nike has taught us, Just Do It. Sometimes the hardest part is taking the initiative to pick up the phone or to send the email when you are grieving and have no motivation at all. Pick the day that you will make a couple calls or send a couple emails to initiate contact or make plans and (this is the important part) actually follow through. Tell one of your friends which day you plan to make the call and then ask them to check in with you to make sure you really did it. We all need a little accountability sometimes.

Now, you may be thinking, I have let waaay too much time pass. It is too late now to re-establish the relationship. Guess what, it is never too late! Reconnecting with someone you miss or regret losing touch with is a good thing, whether it was 3 months ago, 3 years ago, or 3 decades ago. Reach out and let the person know you regret not being in better touch. Chances are they may have similar regrets. Let them know why you are reaching out now. There may be many reasons, and they may be obvious, but it will help to give the person context for where you are now in your life, grief, etc and why you want to get back in contact. Write an email 'template'. Okay, this sounds really lame, but if you have lost touch with a lot of people over the years it may seem overwhelming to send multiple emails or make multiple calls. If you have a template email to work off of, just making small changes for each person you send it too, it may feel a little less overwhelming. Plan something simple – coffee, dinner, a beer, whatever. Just get something on the books! Don't be scared to talk about your loved one. This is probably the connection you have to each other, and it is absolutely okay for that person to remain a part of your relationship.

Gratefully reprinted from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter

Can a parent get over the death of a child?

Denise Turner's son Joe died, aged 19 months, but she says that it is indeed possible to recover.

The paramedic, who came to the house when Denise Turner's baby son died, knew exactly what she ought to do. "He said, you need to sit down and you need to start to grieve," she says. But Denise didn't want to grieve. She wanted to put her jacket on over her pyjamas and take her six-year-old daughter to school. "Amy didn't know Joe was dead at that stage. All I'd told her was that he wasn't well and we needed to call an ambulance.

I knew the police were about to arrive, because it was a cot death and I knew the house would soon be swarming with people, and that it would be a very scary place for a little girl to be. I desperately wanted to get her out, so she wouldn't be left with difficult memories that might make Joe's loss even harder to cope with." Denise felt angry with the paramedic for trying to tell her he knew best. "I was furious. I said to him, what are you going to do? Stop me from leaving the house?" What she now knows is that the professionals bereaved families have to deal with, and the wider community, have a very narrow frame of expected behaviour and outcomes for those who are bereaved when a child dies.

Recently, this has become the focus of Denise's research as an academic. Denise did take Amy to school that day. Nine years on, she knows she was right. "Amy remembers Joe but she doesn't have traumatic memories about that day and I'm so pleased about that," she says. In fact, Amy, 15, her brother Dan, nearly 11 (he is Joe's twin), and Denise herself are all doing just fine. "People think there must be fallout. They think there must be deep-seated issues somewhere and I know they sometimes go looking for them, especially in Dan because he and Joe were twins. But I don't think they are there – and I don't think happy and thriving and sorted are how people expect us to be. There's this idea that losing a child is the absolute worst thing that can happen to you, and that once it happens you can't really ever recover. "So a bereaved mother is expected to behave like the French Lieutenant's Woman, standing on the Cobb staring out to sea. Or she sits in a corner weeping. But that's not how I've been – and when I started to interview other parents who had lost children, I realised it's not how they were behaving either."

For her PhD research at Sussex University where she now lectures, Denise talked to other bereaved parents. Her focus was on how families are treated by professionals when they experience a sudden death in childhood, but when she presented her interviews to academics research panels – ie other people – to gauge their reactions, she was surprised by the response. "Some of the stories were the testimonies of mothers who, like me, hadn't behaved in a way others might expect. "One mother, who I'll call Cathy, had lost her son Dylan at six weeks of age. When she realised he wasn't breathing properly she called an ambulance. That triggered a rapid response team, and some of the police who came were actually armed. Cathy had other children so that response, which she understandably considered to be entirely inappropriate, made her very angry and she was still angry when I interviewed her.

One woman on the panel, on hearing Cathy's story, told Denise: "I'm sick of this aggressive woman. She's not behaving as a grieving mother should." That prompted Denise to ask: how should a grieving mother behave? And what she realised was that a mother who has a lost a child should have the right to behave exactly as her instincts guide her. That's because, although she profoundly disagrees with the idea that a child's death is something it's impossible to recover from, she is clear that it's one of the biggest blows imaginable. The irony, which was far from lost on her, was that while society acknowledged the scale and depth of the loss, it proceeded to erect a very strict frame of reference about what was acceptable behaviour. So much so, she says, that bereaved parents sometimes end up trying to fit in to what they feel is expected of them, rather than doing what feels right to them in the days, weeks and months after a child's death.

"People would say, 'You need counselling.' I thought, what's that going to do? It's not going to bring Joe back, is it? So counselling didn't feel right for me, but the voices around me were so insistent that I remember thinking, should I actually go for counselling?" "If you don't behave in a certain way – if you're too angry, or you don't seem to be engulfed in your grief, for example – the people around you withdraw their support. They get angry with you, and you lose their sympathy. I think some people do try to fit in because they don't want that to happen to them – but where you see it all coming out is on the forums and chat boards on bereavement websites because that's the only safe place to express it. The problem with that is that these places can become ghettos and people can get stuck there." Among friends, says Denise, there was an almost ominous expectation that she was bound to be constantly on the verge of tears. "One person even said to me, a week or so after Joe died, haven't you broken down yet?" she remembers.

"Another woman said I'd always be known in our town as the woman who lost her son. But I really didn't want to be known as that. I started wearing my lipstick again very soon afterwards because I didn't want to become that woman. When I went back to playground 10 days or so after Joe died, some people were surprised – and it begs the question, what else did they think I'd be doing? Sitting inside crying, presumably: but I had another baby to look after." In general, says Denise, reaction when she was out and about was very mixed. "There were people who never even mentioned the fact that one of my children had disappeared," she says. And there were those who seemed almost attracted to her in the aftermath of the tragedy – the ghoulish-seekers, who had definite ideas about how anguished her life must be. Others, she says, just stood in front of her and sobbed.

One of the things Denise finds interesting now that she's looking at this behaviour more objectively is how parents who have suffered a loss are in some way symbolic in the wider world: other people have expectations about how they should behave because they represent, she says, the greatest loss of all. "People seem to need you to be very, very sad and it's not for yourself. It's almost on behalf of everyone," is how she describes it. However people reacted, though, it often seemed to Denise to be less about her feelings, and more about their own.

Though her research to date has centred on parents who have been bereaved as a result of sudden, unexplained child death, Denise believes these behaviour expectations are applied to parents who lose children in all situations and she now hopes to broaden her research, into a wider experience of child loss. She will look at the emotional fallout for professionals when they have to deal with a family who have lost a child – they too, she believes, experience suffering that is not properly acknowledged or dealt with. The worst aspect for parents who have lost children – worse, even, than having to hide their real feelings – is, says Denise, that the truth about survival is far more empowering and positive than is generally understood.

She has not gone to stand on the Cobb, like the French Lieutenant's Woman, and you won't find her weeping in the corner at a party. Denise has done with her grief what any of us who have been bereaved have to do: she has folded it into herself, made it an integral part of who she is, and as a result she is stronger and more sure of herself and more aware of the frailty of life. Like Denise's own surviving children, I grew up in a family where a young child died, so I have known this at first-hand too. Like Denise, I have used the experience of being bereaved to inform and guide the sort of work I do and, like her, I have sometimes come up against people who feel it is not appropriate or – as Denise was once told, by a bereavement charity, her work is "misguided". She has also been warned that she needs to honour Joe's memory but, as she says, what does that mean? She feels the best way to honour Joe's memory is to live as fully and as well as possible, for her children and for herself. Yet saying that seems somehow to bring other people up short or send them off-balance. It is as though the death of a child is so terrible that it's difficult to acknowledge that anything positive can possibly come out of it, but for the people left behind, that is precisely what they must try to find, even though they would have done anything in their power to make things different. Denise defines herself, she says, not as a bereaved mother, simply as a mother: being a good mother, a protective mother, to her surviving children has been her overriding ambition since Joe's death. That, of course, is why all she could think about on that morning in March 2005, when she found her son dead in his cot, was the impact on Amy. She could do no more for Joe, but she could protect her other children.

Underlying Denise's research is a fascination with boundaries because she believes that some of the damage is done because the professionals who are involved when a child dies – particularly the police and social workers, though it could apply to some in the medical world as well – are as unable to deal with it as anyone else and hide behind procedures and expectations as a coping mechanism. "They say a child's death is the worst thing that can happen to a parent but I sometimes think it's the worst thing that can happen to a professional," she says. "They are trained to sort things out, to make things better, to get you through – and there's no sorting this out or making it better, or getting through it." If professionals could be more honest about their own feelings, perhaps they could be more accepting of following a bereaved parent's lead on how to behave. Instead, in a desperate need to retain control in a situation that is entirely outside anyone's control, they sometimes seek to impose their own ideas about how the bereaved parent should behave – just as the paramedic did that day at Denise's house. In other words, his response was all about him and very little about Denise, and that, in turn, is what made her so angry – and makes her angry still when she remembers it. But she balks when she's accused of attacking professionals.

She was a social worker herself, for 10 years before Amy was born.

Another anecdote from the day of Joe's death concerns an exchange between a policewoman and herself. "She said social workers were on their way and would want to interview me, and I said: 'Actually, I'm a social worker.'" "This woman couldn't quite understand what I was saying and she said: 'You're a social worker? I

thought you were the mother ...' I was still in my pyjamas at that point, so it was pretty obvious who I was! But she couldn't quite compute that I could be both a parent who'd lost a child and a social worker, and I think that's at the root of a lot of the issues: we worry about how we can be two people at once. "But the key is humanity: we have to give professionals permission to be human beings first, to meet people half way. That's why I don't feel I'm attacking professionals because what I'm saying would help them learn how to cope better themselves with these situations, as well as being able to better help others." That matters because what no one wants is what one of Denise's interviewee parents said about their son's cot death: "He said that the way the family was treated that day was worse than actually losing their son." The terrible truth at the kernel of any child's death is that we as human beings find it almost impossible to make sense of – it goes against every grain in our psyche. It's not the natural order of things and we know it's not how the world was meant to be. Where a child's death is as Joe's was – random, unexplained, out of the blue – the need to explain it often seems overriding. "As a former social worker, I understand the need to protect children; but in most cases when a child dies suddenly, there has been no crime. So our response is overdramatic and not well thought through. It beggars belief that, when a cot death occurs, no one takes into account the feelings of any other children who might be in the house at the time – they are treated as an irrelevance, when in fact they could be being psychologically harmed by the arrival of police response teams and social workers and the fact that the finger of suspicion is pointing at their parents. It's undermining at the very time families most need support."

It's a tribute to her resilience that, despite all this, Denise has made it through. But not every parent who loses a child is as lucky: some are lost in that no-man's land of having to respond to others' expectations rather than being able to work through their feelings on their own terms. What is especially sad, Denise believes, is that so few have felt able to tell their own stories of survival: stories that centre on a loss that would have seemed unthinkable, but which they do move through and even emerge – as Denise has – with a new, enjoyable life. "Ultimately, our stories are uplifting ones and the ending is a happy one," she says. "Because we have hit the bottom, we've gone to the lowest place you can go and found there was still something solid beneath our feet and that, eventually, we could start to climb out again. That's a hopeful message, one I think it's important to share."

SOMEONE ASKED ME

Someone asked me about you today
 It's been so long since anyone has done that
 It felt so good to talk about you
 to share my memories of you
 to simply say your name out loud
 She asked me if I minded talking about
 what happened to you
 or would it be too painful to speak of it
 I told her I think of it every day
 and speaking about it helps me
 to release the tormented thoughts
 whirling around in my head
 She said she never realized the pain
 would last this long
 She apologized for not asking sooner
 I told her, "Thanks for asking"
 I don't know if it was curiosity
 or concern that made her ask
 But told her,
 "Please do it again sometime – soon"

~ Barbara Taylor Hudson

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Page 13 TCF Otago June July 2018



Sibling Page



Adults Grieving the Death of a Sibling

The adult survivor who lives away from home and is mourning the death of an adult sibling may experience a different grief journey. Attention and words of comfort are usually aimed at the parents, spouse, and children, and not the siblings who may live far away.

The Loss of History Each family has its own special history and the shared bonds that are a part of that history. When a sibling dies, the bonds are shattered, and the history forever has a void that cannot be filled. As they grow, children develop certain characteristics and talents. Brothers and sisters tend to complement each other by developing a balance of interests in different areas. However, surviving siblings will need to redefine their roles in the absence of this relationship.

The Loss of Future When a sibling dies, all future special occasions will be forever changed. There will be no more shared birthday celebrations, anniversaries, or holidays. There will be no telephone calls telling of the birth of a new nephew or niece. The sharing of life's unique and special events will never again take place.

When your parents die, it is said you lose your past and when your child dies you lose your future. However, when your sibling dies, you lose a part of your past, your present, and your future. Because of this tremendous loss, it is important that everyone works together to ease the path toward healing.

What Adult Siblings May Expect Guilt about how the sibling relationship was maintained is common. Each travels a separate path, sometimes communication is lacking and ambivalent feelings about maintaining the relationship surface. No matter how good a relationship may have been, the survivor often believes it should have been better, causing guilt. Anger over a new role within the family often occurs. A surviving sibling may now be the one expected to care for ageing parents, and he or she may have to step into the role of guardian for nieces and nephews.

Surviving siblings may find positive changes within their lives. These may include greater emotional strength, increased independence, and a soul-searching re-examination of religious beliefs.

Even when a sibling has died, a connection still remains. Surviving brothers and sisters think about them; talk about them; remember them at special times such as birthdays, holidays, and death dates; and may create a memorial of some type. This connection with the sibling who died does not have to be given up to move forward in life.

With thanks to The Compassionate Friends SA



Losing a sibling as a teen changed my feelings about parenthood

by Annie Oakley <http://offbeathome.com/losing-a-sibling/>

My thoughts about parenting have generally existed in a continuum that ranges from, "I definitely don't want kids" to "Kids seem like this fantasy thing" all the way to "If I have kids, I'll do this ...". But nowhere in those ricocheting and often short-lived conceptions of potential parenting has there ever been a moment where I've thought, "Yes, I'll have kids." Mostly, I've been wading about in the gray for a long time. I now realize a great deal of my ambivalence stems from my most well-known observations of parenting: a lifetime spent watching my own amazing, instinctive, and infinitely nurturing mother raise her two children... and then watching her lose and grieve one. I have seen motherhood at its finest, and seen it suffer through the worst, and I know the consequences of that experience are part of my own smudgy, undefined thinking about the subject and the choice.

When your sibling dies, you go through a radical bisecting of reality: you're a half of a pair, and the other half is no more. The core of your world, your familial unit, is fragmented. The remnants are morphed and scattered. The reality of your parents as humans becomes glaring; you witness their pain through the most horrific, tragic experience we can endure. Watching your own mother experience the sudden death of her child is an intensely vivid and ongoing lesson about the worst possible experience of parenthood, and it's an experience that continues indefinitely. I had three days left until seventeen and my brother was two months from twenty when, in the middle of an April night, my brother died in a field two miles from our house. I will always remember the sequence of events that led to me knowing that my brother was dead: the phone ringing, my parents saying that there was an accident and they didn't know what happened, them leaving to check on things (I do not know why, but the neighbours whose land his truck had flipped onto were the ones to call, and this is what they told them). My parents came home, the front door shut, and I heard my mother collapse with the most soul-wrenching sound that a human can emit. Still unmoving in my bed, I listened to the horror of two people in their dining room, experiencing the agony of losing their child, and I began the struggle of losing my brother. Over the years, I've realized that watching your parents survive this is a secondary trauma to your own experience of the loss. You grieve; you grieve for them as well. I cannot begin to convey the lessons you learn from watching your mother's sorrow swell, crest, dissipate, and rise again over the years. Witnessing that undoubtedly redefined what parenthood and mothering meant to me. In considering any potential to have my own children, my understanding of the risks and wagers inherent in parenting has changed a great deal. I learned that children weren't guaranteed. If children died — and in my horribly skewed reality, they did — their presence and much of your life was replaced with an inescapable, oppressing horror.

In short, the worst of parent experiences is much larger and clearer in my life than the good. Losing my brother either manifested or triggered in me a struggle with anxiety that I hadn't known before. Not in the sense of worrying or being tense or being preoccupied; intense, trauma-based anxiety strikes like a tsunami, collapses the structures around you, leaves you wild and panicked and grasping for reality, safety, and security. I've gained a lot of control over it and have developed ways of calming those thoughts, but they are there. I imagine that, if I had a child, they would resurface tenfold, engulfing me. I would live with not only the fear of grief because of my experience observing my parents, but the struggle with panic-and-anxiety-riddled conviction that my child might die, right now, unless I somehow prevent it. I wonder at what point, if at all, I would be able to experience my own child detached from my memories of my brother. When I initially considered ever having children, one of my first and only certainties was that its name, regardless of gender, would be after him. Since then, I've put that certainty away. If I did have children, when would I stop combating the guilt that stems from having kids, an experience he wanted and never got to have? When would my child stop reminding me of my own childhood with him? Would those thoughts be overshadowed by the present, or always on the periphery? What would be my brother's (and his deaths) role in how I viewed, rose, and related to my own child? There is the additional difficulty of being the only surviving child and having a mother who very much wants grandchildren. I'm not in a position to give them to her right now; simultaneously, I'm not in a place to explain why. I would hate for her to know that the loss of her child, or my observation of her, had negatively impacted my feelings about having kids. My mother is by far one of the strongest, most loving mothers I have ever known. She sewed her children's baby blankets at fifteen because, five years before she was ever pregnant, she already wanted her own children so badly. She is an intrinsically loving, nurturing soul; no one deserved to see their children grow up and start families more than her. I know that not all surviving siblings have these feelings; I know that many go on to have fantastic experiences with parenthood. But for me, I feel like it's an experience that I learned too much about in the wrong way and before I saw the good parts. (I have now seen "the good parts" as my friends have had children.) My own trauma and subsequent struggles with anxiety, as well as my experience with watching my parents' trauma, remain the frame through which I experience these choices, at least for now.

Page 15 TCF Otago June July 2018

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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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