

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER NO: 196

AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2023

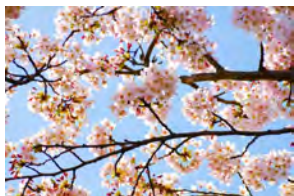
Spring Warmth

Like a tree in winter which has lost its leaves,
we look ahead to Spring for new growth and the
warmth of the sun

to heal the pain in our hearts.

Let us make Spring a time to reach out to each other
and give that warmth from our hearts,
and in return,
we will all show new growth.

Pat Dodge, TCF Sacramento



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

RETURN ADDRESS
72 TOTARA STREET,
NEWFIELD,
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 021 2155279, or TCF, Lesley Henderson, 76 O'Neill Rd., 17 D R.D., Windsor, Oamaru or by e-mail tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz

My grief journey has no one destination. I will not "get over it." The understanding that I don't have to be DONE is liberating. I will mourn this death for the rest of my life.

-Alan Wolfelt, The Wilderness of Grief
Lifted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter

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
Shane Coster	Born 16/8/77	Jason Bradley Burford	Died 25/8/13
Sashi Coulter	Born 6/8/91	Christopher Burke	Died 22/8/00
Michael Barry Duke	Born 25/8/68	Shane Coster	Died 16/8/77
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

Deepest apologies to Lee-Roy Cavanaugh's family for missing his name and details in the last newsletter.

Lee-Roy Cavanaugh Born 12/7/2011 Died 27/06/2017

Dear Friends,

As usual at this time of year this edition of the newsletter is dedicated to all bereaved fathers out there and this year especially my partner and loving dad of Ben and Toby.

When our son Ben, died 20 years ago, Guy was there for us. Day after day, week after week, month after month and still 20 years later. Initially he kept our home going when I struggled to put one foot in front of another, cared for our youngest son and did whatever needed to be done. Of course he is one of those men who do not easily talk about his feelings or express his emotions but I know he feels the grief of Ben's death as deeply as I do. He has coped and managed without needing to find and use the support and counselling I have found so useful, and in fact he will probably never know that I am writing about him today as I don't think he often looks at these newsletters. (Although perhaps he does when I am not around!) However that's not to say that if he had accessed some support that perhaps things might have been easier for him.

To all bereaved Fathers out there on behalf of your partners, wives and children, I want to thank you for being there, for the strong shoulders you supported us with and continue to do so, for all those hugs and cuddles just when we needed them and still need, for keeping the household going when we couldn't and most of all for loving our children and being the best Father they could have.

My wish is that if you do need support please ask or seek this, it is not a weakness. It is a sign of the strength of your love for the child or children who have died. It is in fact a sign of you that you are strong enough to reach out for support to help you on this terrible Grief Journey. Reach out to someone you trust, be that your partner, workmate or another family member. Talk to a counsellor or visit some of the many websites out there.

Whatever you do, please do it if you need to, because we still need you around.

On this Fathers day, I wish you all peace, support, love and some special happy memories of your child/children.

All my love, Lesley

The Anger of Bereaved Parents

The anger of bereaved parents can often be seen as a reaction of feelings of helplessness and loss of control over events. Our beloved child has died, whether suddenly through accident, suicide or murder, or as a result of illness and disease - and we have not been able to prevent it.

Our desperate frustration emerges in anger, either against particular others, against the whole world, or against God. Someone must be responsible; someone must be to blame for our loss, our suffering, and our pain. After all, the inevitable process of aging cannot be an explanation for such an early death.

So, our anger is directed against those seen to be responsible, or sometimes simply against those nearest to us. In this way, our anger may be turned on doctors and hospital staff, on police, or on the driver of the vehicle involved in our child's death.

Writers on bereavement have often mentioned the anger, conscious or submerged, which can exist against the loved one who has died. This can present an enormous problem to bereaved parents. How could we be angry with the child who has died? But we could, after all, be angry with our children when they were alive, and still love them, couldn't we?

Better, surely, that the anger is brought to the surface rather than repressed and added to our burden of unnecessary guilt. The worst outcome is that anger, unacknowledged and unexpressed after our child's death, is turned inwards against ourselves, gnawing at our sense of self-worth and leading to despair and deep depression. We have all felt the beginning of this descent in the temptation to blame ourselves. Like all the welter of emotions that hit us in the terrible weeks and months following our loss, it needs to be faced and talked about with those who will listen with real empathy and understanding.

- Denis Pye, TCF/UK
Lifted with thanks from TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter

SOUTHLAND REPORT

On Wednesday 3 August 2023 five of The Compassionate Friends members of the Southland Branch meet at a local restaurant for a meal and to have a very short annual meeting. The formalities are minimal and with everyone to continue doing what they have been doing in the past for the group. We do not need a lot of money to keep the group going and two years ago we did a two scratchy boards and this boosted the funds by \$100 and with only a couple of expenses if we do this again then we will have enough money for the year.

Linda suggested a reunion of former members and this suggestion was very well received.

So many things have changed since I lost my son 26 years ago and the internet and other options are well used in the grieving process. The friendships formed at TFC are still very special and lifelong for me. We still have the newsletter, thanks to Lesley's dedication and since April 2022 till now we sent out 88 copies, 55 to the newly bereaved.

We decided the Candle Light Service will be held on Wednesday 6 December and as it isn't good for the environment letting balloons go Vanessa will organise little boats like last year. This were well received last year.

Wendy

Central Otago Compassionate Friends.

Kia ora.

My thoughts go out to all Bereaved Parents, as you struggle to get through Father's Day, with all its memories, both beautiful & painful....

May the signs of new life in our emerging spring remind us of past shared joys.....

Do please know that I am only a phone call away, and if I can ever be a listening ear at any time027 309 1246

Or if you would prefer to chat by email don't hesitate....janpessione@xtra.co.nz

If you would like a visit, please let me know,& I will arrange

Always remember you are not alone in this most painful of journeys.....

Stay warm! Stay as well as you are able...

With the very best of good wishes..

Jan (Pessione) Interim Chairperson)
C/- Alexandra Community House,
Centennial Avenue, Alexandra 9320



FATHER'S DAY – GRIEVING DADS EMOTIONS

By Kelly Farley from his website Grievingdads.com

This is for the dads out there on Father's Day who have ever had the unfortunate task of burying a child. I see all of you and your pain because I am one of you. I am a member of this brotherhood of guys just trying to survive the loss of our child. Some of you will experience Father's Day without your child for the first time and others know this day all too well. It's a day that can create all sorts of emotions depending on the person. Here some of the emotions I feel on this day:

- **Sadness:** I miss Katie and Noah every day and Father's Day is no different. Although most days people wouldn't recognize the great sadness I carry with me, but it is still there. I just disguise it better than I did early in my grief. Mainly because it doesn't consume me like it used to. But there is no doubt, it's still there.
- **Loneliness:** I often feel this way because I have no living children. I have two bronze urns and that just doesn't cut it for me. My wife and I are fortunate enough to live a life that provides all the necessities we need to feel safe and comfortable. However, it often feels empty and lonely. The thought of losing my wife as we get older scares me since we've come to rely on each other so much. We "get" each other because we helped each other "survive" the aftermath of losing Katie and Noah. "Survive" is relative since we both still struggle with the fallout of such losses from time to time.
- **Happiness:** To some, this may sound odd, but it's true. I am so happy to be their dad. So, happy to have known them if only for a moment in time. As painful as their deaths have been, I wouldn't change the fact that I am their dad.
- **Pride:** I am very proud to be their dad. Thinking about them puts a smile on my face. A smile filled with pride and warmth for them. A smile that hides a lot of pain but holds on to the hope of holding Katie and Noah in my arms, someday.

I am sure I could write on and on about the different emotions I feel, but I picked the words that are most prevalent in my life right now. That doesn't mean it won't change at some point as they have over the years.

I know many of you will feel alone on Father's Day, but you are not. There are 100's of thousands of grieving dads out there that are fighting to regain some sort of normalcy in their life again. As I've said many times before, there is no going back to the old you, it's a futile attempt. One's energy is better served finding the new you. Energy filled with love for your child and one consumed with doing everything they can to honor that child. I strive everyday to make my kids proud of their dad. Some days I'm successful and some days I am not. But I keep trying, it's what keeps me from throwing in the towel.

I want all of the grieving dads out there to know that regardless of the child's age when they died, you are still their dad and you LOVE them.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding their death, you are still their dad and you LOVE them.

Regardless of when their death occurred, you are still their dad and you LOVE them.

Unconditionally.

You love them.

Find a way to celebrate that love and your child this Father's Day

Lovingly reprinted from TCF NSW FOCUS

There's No Law Against Grieving—Even for Men

Two years have now passed but I still remember that day like it was yesterday.

If you are reading this, then you have probably lived that day, too. It may have been slightly different—but still the same.

Even though there was a bunch of relatives and friends in the waiting room with me, it was like I was completely alone. I had been called to the hospital less than an hour before. There had been a car accident. My wife was injured but not in danger. But no one would tell me anything about my 8 year-old Stephanie or 5 year-old Stephen who were riding in the car with her.

I had been led to a waiting room, hoping for word from the emergency room doctor. The minutes seemed like hours. Then the doctor came in. Stephanie was in critical condition and would be flown to Children's Hospital. But they were unable to revive my precious Stephen.

The words echoed over and over in my brain.

"Your son has died." The shock and the grief struck me at the same time. I had expected them to come in and tell me the kids were injured but would be just fine thanks to the excellent efforts of everyone involved. After all, that's the way it always happens on "Rescue 911."

But that wasn't the way it happened this time!

I only half remember being led back to my wife where I broke the news to her.

A moment later when I had been led into the corridor, someone asked me if I wanted to see my son. I don't even remember my response—just walking down the hallway, a nurse on each side holding my arms. All I could take were little half steps. My legs had no strength. Through the tears I could see all the nurses and hospital personnel stop everything they were doing and stare at us. Apparently they hadn't seen a grieving father before.

Finally we reached the emergency room at the end of what seemed like the longest corridor in the world. The door swung open and I spotted my son lying on a table at the far end of the room. I was helped to him and then left alone.

Waves of grief overcame me as I looked at Stephen's sweet face, laying there as if asleep. And the realization that I would never hear his laugh, I would never see him smile, I would never feel his kiss again.

After a few minutes a nurse came back and told me I would have to go because my daughter was being loaded into the helicopter and I should give her some words of encouragement, even though she might not be able to hear me.

I did that and I was driven to Children's Hospital where Stephanie died later that night.

The grief that I felt was so intense. The shock was incredible. This couldn't be happening. Both of my children were dead.

I remember the newspaper reporter who showed up at my house the next day. I had gone home to get some clean clothes and take a shower. On my way into the house she approached. We sat on the porch and both cried and grieved as I related to her the story of the wonderful life I had spent with my children. This reporter never once stared at me with that critical look that I have seen from others. If translated into words, it would be "Men don't cry."

So often men are not allowed by society to grieve. They have to be strong for their wife and their remaining family. How many bereaved mothers have told me that "He holds it all in. He never cries. He never talks about our dead child." They want me to meet their husband because maybe I can get him to understand it's okay to open up and feel grief.

I was fortunate that I grew up in a family where it was okay to let my feelings show. If I was beaten up by the school bully, my father and mother let me know it was okay to cry. When the first person I was really close to died, my grandmother, no one told me it wasn't alright to grieve.

And this upbringing stuck with me. If I'm in a store and Bette Midler's song "God is Watching Us From a Distance" (Stephen's favorite tune to sing) comes on, I've given myself permission to cry, right then and there. If I read a poem that touches me, I've given myself permission to let it all out. And if I hear about the death of another child, I've given myself permission to feel my grief all over again.

The only thing bad about men grieving is that society looks down on us because we are not "strong." After losing both my children, I really don't care what society thinks. Only a small percent of them have had a child die, and they understand my feelings. The rest of them don't. And, God willing they never will.

If you are a man and having a hard time allowing yourself to grieve, look at your inner being. Are you better because you haven't grieved? Or are you worse? Have your feelings of frustration from not grieving affected your relationship with your spouse or remaining children?

Our deceased children would, no doubt want us to accomplish something meaningful with our lives. They would want us to go on living.

Maybe it is time to grieve so that we can move forward with our lives.

Wayne Loder, TCF/Lakes Area,MI

In Memory of my daughter and son, Stephanie and Stephen Loder

Lifted with thanks and love from TCF Winnipeg chapter news



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.

From 'Say Olin, To Say Goodbye' by Donald Hackett

"The time of concern is over. No longer am I asked how my wife is doing. Never is the name of our son mentioned to me. A curtain descends. The moment has passed. A life slips from frequent recall. There are exceptions: close and compassionate friends. Sensitive and loving family.

For most, the drama is over. The spotlight is off. Applause is silent. But for me the play will never end. The effects on me are timeless. Say Olin to me. On the stage of my life he has been both lead and supporting actor. Do not tiptoe around the greatest event of my life. Love does not die. His name is written on my life. The sound of his voice replays within my mind. You feel he is dead. I feel he is of the dead and still he lives. He ghostwalks my soul, beckoning in future welcome. You say he was my son. I say he is. Say Olin to me and say Olin again. It hurts to bury his memory in silence. What he was in flesh lies buried miles away. What he is in spirit stirs within me always. He is of my past but he is part of my now. He is my hope for the future. You say not to remind me. How little you understand I cannot forget. I would not if I could. I understand you, but feel pain in being forced to do so.

I forgive you, because you cannot know. And I would forgive you anyway.

I accept how you see me, But I understand that you see me not at all.

I strive not to judge you, for yesterday I was like you. But I wish you could understand that I dwell both in flesh and spirit. The mystery is that you do too, but know it not. I do not ask you to walk this road. The ascent is steep and the burden heavy. I walk it not by choice. I would rather walk with him in flesh, Looking not to spirit roads beyond. I am what I have to be. What I have lost you cannot feel. What I have gained you cannot see. And I would not have you.

Say Olin for he is alive in me. He and I will meet again, though in many ways we have never parted. He and his life play light songs on my mind, Sunrises and sunsets on my dreams. He is real and shadow, was and is.

Say Olin to me and say Olin again. He is my son and I love him as I always did.

Say Olin."

Childless Newsletter UK

An Affirmation for Those Who Have Lost

I believe there is no denying it: it hurts to lose. It hurts to lose a cherished relationship with another, or a significant part of one's own self. It can hurt to lose that which has united one with the past or that which has beckoned one into the future. It is painful to feel diminished or abandoned, to be left behind or left alone. Yet I believe there is more to losing than just the hurt and the pain.

For there are other experiences that loss can call forth. I believe that courage often appears, however quietly it is expressed, however easily it goes unnoticed by others: The courage to be strong enough to surrender, the fortitude to be firm enough to be flexible. I believe a time of loss can be a time of learning unlike any other, And that it can teach some of life's most valuable lessons.

In the act of losing there is something to be found. In the act of letting go, there is something to be grasped. In the act of saying "goodbye", there is a "hello" to be heard. For I believe living with loss is about beginnings as well as endings. And grieving is a matter of life more than death. And growing is a matter of mind and heart and soul more than of body. And loving is a matter of eternity more than of time.

Finally, I believe in the promising paradoxes of loss. In the midst of darkness, there can come great Light. At the bottom of despair, there can appear a great Hope. And deep within loneliness, there can dwell a great Love. I believe these things because others have shown the way, others who have lost and have then grown through their losing, others who have suffered and then found new meaning. So I know I am not alone: I am accompanied, day after night, night after day.

James E. Miller TCF/Okanagan Winnipeg

MEDICINE FOR A BROKEN HEART

I found myself in a funk. Not really depressed, but not in good spirits either. I've been there before. This time the melancholy had no discernible source. No one cause that put me off my game. The week had its usual problems, but nothing remarkable; just the normal challenges of running a small business. After forty years I've learned to not let those issues bother me. Physically I was feeling okay. I managed to get in a racquetball game that week. I was eating and sleeping well. So why the blues?

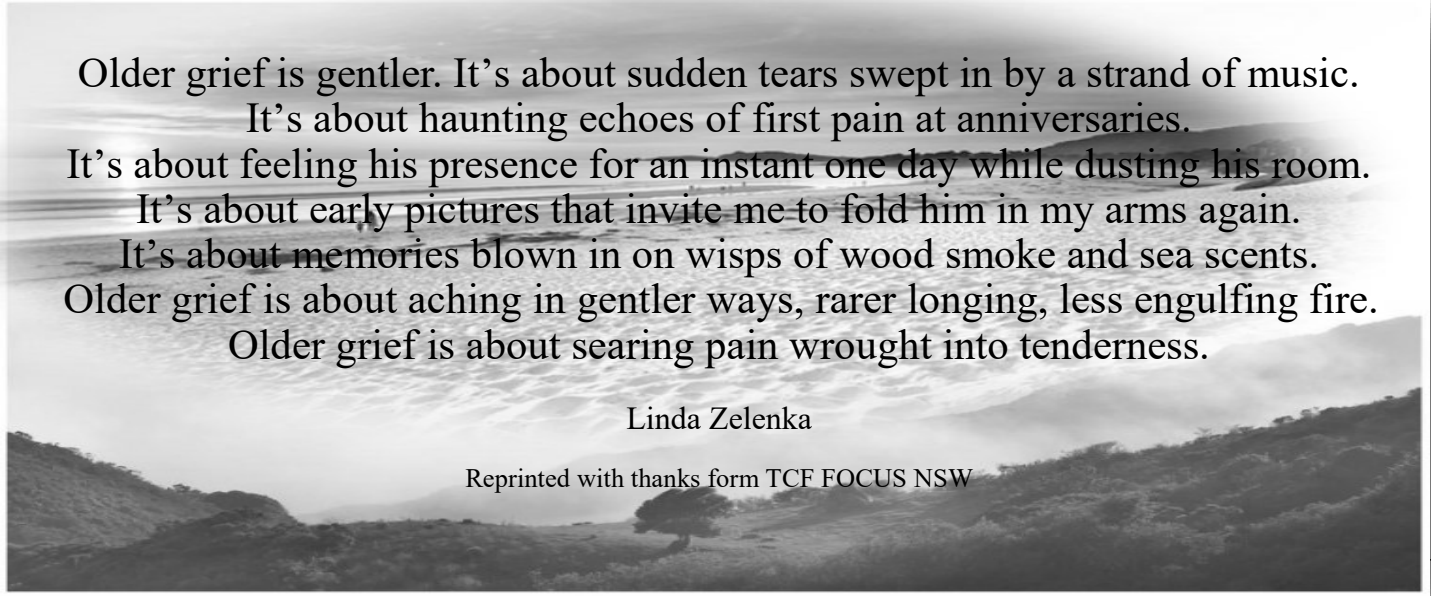
In the early years after our son died these periods of depression were fairly common. On more than one occasion I looked up out of the pit of sadness only to realize I was in a pothole on grief's highway. Over the years those potholes have diminished in number and size. Now it takes a fairly disturbing event to send me back into the valley of the shadow. That's why this quietude, with no identifiable cause, surprised me.

The weekend arrived with me still down. We had dinner plans with our best friends. I didn't want to sit in a crowded, noisy restaurant (the one they picked had a 2-fer in the local paper so it was sure to be packed) and listen to them talk about their grandchildren. Don't misunderstand. They have been wonderful friends for over thirty years and stayed by us through the nightmare when I'm sure we weren't much fun to be around; but I just couldn't force myself to be sociable. Not then. Not that night. And I still didn't know why.

Instead I asked my wife if just the two of us could go to a nearby Chinese restaurant that we frequent. It has big half-round booths we can get lost in under subdued light and sports a relaxed ambiance. Also they have a superb wine list. It was exactly what I needed: quiet time, free from the stresses of life with the one person in the world I know I can always count on: lean on. By meal's end I was feeling better. Relaxed and contented. The wine, I'm sure, helped. Then came the fortune cookies. I don't pretend to know the ways of providence, but I do believe there are reasons, sometimes, why things happen. I cracked the cookie and unfolded the paper: Love is the only medicine for a broken heart. I looked at my wife and smiled. Love is the only medicine for a broken heart. I knew it to be so.

Brad's death almost eight years ago still has amazing power over my state of mind. Thankfully the periods of sadness now come infrequently. The love of those close to me has helped make those periods short and rare. As you travel your own and personal journey of grief let in the love and support of others. Believe that tomorrow will be a kinder day.

Richard A. Berman, Baltimore BP/USA
Winnipeg Chapter News



Older grief is gentler. It's about sudden tears swept in by a strand of music.
It's about haunting echoes of first pain at anniversaries.
It's about feeling his presence for an instant one day while dusting his room.
It's about early pictures that invite me to fold him in my arms again.
It's about memories blown in on wisps of wood smoke and sea scents.
Older grief is about aching in gentler ways, rarer longing, less engulfing fire.
Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness.

Linda Zelenka

Reprinted with thanks form TCF FOCUS NSW

The Mourner's Bill of Rights by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you. The following list is intended both to empower you to heal and to decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.
2. You have the right to talk about your grief. Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.
3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions. Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.
4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.
5. You have the right to experience "grief bursts." Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.
6. You have the right to make use of ritual. The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.
7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality. If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.
8. You have the right to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.
9. You have the right to treasure your memories. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.
10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.

Reprinted with thanks from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter

*One of the most beautiful gifts in the world is the gift of encouragement.
When someone encourages you, that person helps you over a threshold
you might otherwise never have crossed on your own.*

John O'Donohue Eternal Echoes: Celtic Reflections on our yearning to belong
Gratefully lifted from Compassion UK

POETRY / MEMORY CORNER

You are all invited to submit poem's, in memory of your child/children. These may be original poems or one that you have read which means something to you and your loved ones. Please remember to add the authors name if known.

I never left you

I watch you every day,
You are always near.
I know deep in your heart,
You realise I am here.

I watch you while you sleep
In your bed at home.
hear you when you speak to me,
When you are on your own.

You cannot understand
The reason why I have gone.
But I will never leave you.
I am there to keep you strong.
Talk to me, I hear you,

Though you may not see.
We share an unbroken bond
That will always be.
Death won't keep us apart
For our love is forever.

Just remember me in your heart.
And one day we will be together.
Live your life and live it full.
Don't waste a single day.
Remember I am always with you,
Every step of the way.

By John F Connor
In memory of John Leslie Coombe,
by his Mum, Sherrie Staader



Alone

I am alone
Sound of silence fills the air
The sounds of children's joyous laughter
has left and gone elsewhere

Each day is such a struggle
to face another lonely day
But I struggle on and realize
there are so many others
who also feel this way

Down a short hallway I walk
to a very special door
I enter and am welcomed,
hugged like so many times before
No longer am I all alone
I'm with people just like me
We've all lost someone so very special
and wonder why it had to be

- Derek , TCF/Winnipeg





Here are 4 books I came across at work (I catalogue children's books in our local library All four are written to read to, or work with, young children -toddlers up.



Something very sad happened by Bonnie Zucker

Published USA: Magination Press, 2016

Isbn 9781433822667

Suit: Toddlers, Parents

A toddler's guide to understanding death.

When a loved one dies it can be hard to explain to a young child especially if the reader is going through the same loss. This book is ideal with simple language and gentle warm illustrations. It is OK to feel sad and love never dies.

This story talks of 'Grandma's death' but the reader could personalize it by substituting another relationship

Written by a psychologist there are extensive added notes to parents and caregivers making this a useful book.



Life is like the wind by Shona Innes

Published Australia : Five Mile Press 2014

Isbn 9781760060558

Suit: all ages picture book :written by a clinical psychologist, *Life is Like the Wind* is part of her *Big Hug Series* helping children in times of deep emotion. This title introduces the concept of death and grief to young readers by likening life to the ever-moving wind. When the wind is present, things move and fly and flutter about. When the wind goes away, things become very still. Delightful watercolours work with a gentle message - facing death and grief, missing the loved lost one and connecting with their memory.

The author manages to make the subject of death a natural part of life.

Useful notes are included to assist the adult reading this to a child



Let's talk about when someone dies by Molly Potter

Published London : Bloomsbury 2018

Isbn 9781472955340

Suit all ages children

A well-illustrated book for **starting conversations with children about death, bereavement and what happens next**. When someone dies, we can feel a whole host of different emotions and explaining them to a child isn't so easy. This book uses clear, easy-to-understand language to answer complex questions about death and how a child might feel when someone dies. It covers many tricky subjects with sensitivity and honesty, from what death is to why people die.

Each double page spread takes a child through how they might feel, what they might think and how they might behave. With engaging illustrations, gentle guidance and simple advice for parents and carers.



Everywhere and all around by Pimm van Hest

Published Belgium : Clavis 2015

Isbn 978 1605372693

Suit all ages - picture book

One of the most sensitive books I have read for kids (and all ages) to find their way through the process of the loss of a loved one.

A very moving presentation of ways people find meaning in death. Simple enough to read to a toddler or older child and can equip an adult to model healthy grieving.

Guides a child through trauma with a tender approach to a difficult subject by starting meaningful conversations and sparking discussion.

Yolanda's mummy has died and the wee girl is trying to find her. The story can be made personal by changing the name of the child and the situation.

I read this to our Coffee Group recently and they were all very moved and said how the book was relevant to anyone - not just a child.

Keren Marsh Whanganui TCFG July 2023



Sibling Page

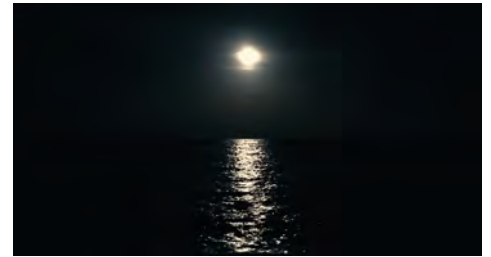


A Lament from Marcel and Conor

Where is my brother John? Where is he?
He used to paint the eggs with me at Easter when we were little.
He used to watch the NBA with me when we were teenagers.

Is he in that pile of ash in the container?
No! He is much more than that.
He is the spirit that comes over the universe to me.
He is the love that I had for him and him for me.
He is the light of the moon shining down on me.
He is the power of the Universe looking over me.
Because we are all part of the Universe.

Marcel & Conor, brothers of John
Lifted with love from TCF Focus NSW



I lost my brother...

I lost my brother to alcoholism. It took me so long to be able to say this out loud.

I am very protective of my brother's legacy and don't want his illness to become the overpowering memory of him. Would it have been easier if he passed away from cancer? Would society have given him more sympathy?

It's not his fault that his genetic makeup was dealt this shitty card. I'm now at peace with his addiction and view it as such. No one wakes up and says, "You know what I feel like doing today? Drinking myself into oblivion just for fun!" Addiction is not an active choice.

Let's show addicts less judgement and more compassion. Alcoholism is a cruel and debilitating illness. A greedy monster that hijacks your loved one and turns them into someone you barely recognise. Tim tried to fight the monster but the monster won. He tried to get sober several times, including two stints in rehab. Alcohol is the hardest drug to get off, and I'm so proud of him for trying.

Yes, he was an alcoholic but he was also the world's most adoring uncle, the best big brother, ridiculously talented at doing backflips and really, really funny. While his illness is a part of his story, it will never define him.

excerpt from article on sibling loss - Bella Brennan
Focus NSW

THE THING ABOUT GRIEF

The thing about loss, and grief, is that for the people who are experiencing it, it stops time. Suddenly, you're thrown into this surreal mode of existence where everything is moving in slow motion, none of the dialogue makes sense...your world is like a Dali painting. You feel like, if everything could just stop for a while, maybe you could get your bearings.

But all around you the world keeps going on as if nothing even happened—as if someone didn't just disappear, as if you don't now have to figure out how to live with this new hole in things. When you're grieving, every little obstacle feels like mountain and every small conflict an insufferable slight because just getting out of bed each day can require every ounce of your energy and you often feel you have nothing left to give. Being required to leave the house and show your face in public, let alone actually work with the public, compounds these feelings.

Though most people mean well and are sympathetic, a couple of weeks go by and, because they were not personally affected by your loss, they forget. They forget that although to them it's in the past, maybe you spent the day gathering photos of a loved one, planning a funeral service or helping clear a house of someone's possessions. They forget that you've been helplessly watching loved ones suffer and suffering yourself.

In a larger town or city, it's to be expected. In fact, it's probably kind of a relief - to just anonymously go about your business, keeping your private and public lives separate, and for a few hours just go through the motions of working, without having to think about that grief, loss and heartache lurking just over your shoulder. But in a small town setting, like the one where I live, it's nearly impossible to keep those two personas separate. Most people know each other's circumstances, and you can't escape the questions. Mostly they're innocuous enough - how is this or that person doing? What are the plans? What can we do to help? But people are curious and eventually they can't help but dig for dirt.

I am one of the few people in my family - a family that has, as a whole, experienced two significant losses in the past 3 weeks - who has a job where I am required to regularly deal with the public. Six hours after I found out about the tragic death of my 24 year old cousin, (or my "baby" cousin, as she was fixed in my mind, much to her chagrin) I had to stand behind a bar while people asked me things like how she died and who found her. One week later, minutes after comforting my grieving stepfather, who had just lost the most important person in his life, I was told that I "needed" to smile and be happy.

I get it that not everyone is aware of the depths of my relationship with these people. But, in a town like this, almost everyone is aware that a family is grieving. I still have to go to work. I might not be 100% but I'm here, I'm serving the drink, giving the change and saying thank you and that's literally the best I can do right now.

People who are grieving are not in their normal state. Their hearts are hurting. Their nerves are shot. They're more than likely exhausted, distracted and on an emotional rollercoaster. They're probably trying to be polite, but their filters are damn near nonexistent, so they're constantly rattling back and forth between sadness, anger, and guilt when their emotions get the better of them.

If you want to help and be kind, go ahead and offer brief condolences. Ask how they are, if you really want to know. Ask about something unrelated in their lives that they'd normally be keen to discuss. But don't require a lot of small talk, unless they initiate it. Don't ask them "what's been going on," or "what's new?" Don't tease them or criticize, even jokingly, even if normally they'd laugh. And, for the sake of all that is holy, don't tell them to "smile."

- Hope Quay

Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter





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	Jan Pessione (Acting Coordinator) (16 yr old daughter, accidental) janpessione@xtra.co.nz (Marina, 54yrs, Airways Obstruction)	03-4487800
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Johnson, Adult son, Neville, cancer	03 4488360
CENTRAL OTAGO	Pauline Trotter (Andre, 25yrs, Car crash)	0273960611
INVERCARGILL	Josie Dyer Vanessa Young (Jaylene 6yrs chemical poisoning) Southland Coordinators	0276321742 0273562271
TIMARU	Phyl Sowerby (Son Cancer 1998)	03 612 -6402
CHRISTCHURCH	Chris Guerin	02102931357
WELLINGTON	Lorraine Driskel Son (twin) 19yrs—car accident	021 688504 lorraine.driskel@gmail.com
KAPITI COAST	Anna Upton (Son, suicide)	04 2936349
PALMERSTON NORTH	Robyn Galpin (Hayley, motorcycle accident)	06 3535929
TAUMARUNUI CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	Marie and Ron Summers (Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	07 8954879
WHANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WHANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yrs, car accident)	06 3443345 marshkandb@gmail.com
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 atsilvester@actrix.co.nz

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz

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