



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER No: 182

FEBRUARY MARCH 2021

Keep going
That's all you have to do, ever.
You really don't have to be amazing
or fierce or beautiful
or successful or good.
Just keep going, please.
Slowly is fine.
Crawling is fine.
No feeling is final.
Except hope.

Glennon Doyle

Lifted with love from Compassion UK

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 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

Candle Glow

When I gaze upon a candle glow
When I look into it's light
I think of my youngest, dearest son
His eyes so shining bright.
It makes my mind turn
To another time and place
A lifetime, it seems has passed
Since I've seen his youthful face.



I'll always be remembering,
when I gaze on candle glow
That the flame that burns so brightly
Will remind me it will show
That the life that's been extinguished
Like a candle, strong and true
Will be a lasting memory.
Of a life that once I knew.

Written by Barbara Powell, mother of Bill

Gratefully lifted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News

Our Children ... Remembered with love

Forever Young

Forever Loved

Forever Longed For

Paul Graham Albrecht
Yvonne Kay French-Wollen
Rebecca Clare Halket
Allan Stephen Hobbs
Faye Marie Joyce
Keegan Lineham
Hughan Scott Norton
Vaughan Arthur Nuttall
Logan Scott O'Hara
Marlene Joy Penny
Melissa Jane TeHuia

Born 28/2/84
Born 4/2/64
Born 22/2/84
Born 20/2/56
Born 5/2/61
Born 14/2/94
Born 9/2/63
Born 17/2/87
Born 17/2/78
Born 5/2/73
Born 23/2/72

Jaylene Jessie Bennett-Young
Simon Charlton
Shane Elliot Davis
Marcus Fitchett
Sharyn Maree Jones-Sexton
Aidon Samiel Konise
Sara Loo
Thomas Craig McDonald
Anthea Gail McDowell
Jessie Adelaide Neaves
Georgia Rose Poplawski
Quintin Christie Reid
Callum Robertson

Born 19/3/95
Born 26/3/96
Born 18/3/82
Born 11/3/70
Born 9/3/67
Born 2/3/88
Born 2/3/92
Born 3/3/91
Born 1/3/79
Born 9/3/90
Born 30/3/00
Born 23/3/92
Born 8/3/82

Glenn Arscott
Tania Rose Baldock
Hayley Robyn Galpin
Ben Paul Gillanders
Daniel James Gillies
Krysha Helen Hanson
Bevan Andrew Hookway
Kai Klein
Keegan Lineham
Nicholas Ian O'Hara
Brent Allan Stenton
Jonathon Upton

Died 1/2/02
Died 6/2/09
Died 13/2/89
Died 18/2/77
Died 18/2/03
Died 6/2/03
Died 17/2/08
Died 20/2/98
Died 14/2/94
Died 8/2/00
Died 12/2/94
Died 11/2/02

Mitchell James Beaumont
Kyle David Edwards
Tineke Foley
Ricky George
Faye Marie Joyce
Anna Ruth Iris Moore
Paul John Nicholaou
Hughan Scott Norton
Vaughan Arthur Nuttall
Quintin Christie Reid
Trinity Lea Taylor
Nicole Leigh Templer

Died 29/3/96
Died 4/3/98
Died 25/3/10
Died 19/3/04
Died 14/3/94
Died 19/3/06
Died 21/3/98
Died 9/3/01
Died 14/3/06
Died 26/3/07
Died 12/3/05
Died 30/3/11

A Glimpse of Our Child

I was watching a TV programme the other night where one of the characters, a bereaved father, was suffering from a condition and had started hallucinating. One of the hallucinations was of someone walking away from him, and he believed it was his son. Although he was prescribed medication to help improve his symptoms, he was not taking these as he kept hoping that the person would turn around and he would once again see his son.

This got me thinking about what I would do to have another glimpse of Ben. Although I imagine it would be one of those bitter-sweet moments which would probably just reinforce our loss it would be the sweetest moment as well. Remember back in the early days of this grief journey, when you would think you saw your child on the street or walking through a crowd, that split second of joy before reality hit again. That's what I think it would be like now.

I do have a very clear memory of Ben walking up the street towards our house with his best friend not long before the accident. Great big smile on his face calling out "Yo Bro". Depending on the day, this memory can make me smile with love and joy or make me sad knowing I won't see Ben in the flesh again. But whichever I feel, I love the fact that I can recall it and see and hear it so clearly in my mind. I hope you all have a special memory of your child/children and friends and family to share it with.

Take care,
Lesley Henderson

I See You

I see you...
Crossing the road...
I see you...
Cycling past...
I see you...
Headphones on,
beanie pulled down against the wind...

I see you...
In the micro thousandth of a second as I wake up...
I see you...
From the corner of my eye, forever out of sight...
I see you...
I see you...
I see you

By Cazz Fleet

Lovingly reprinted from UK TCF Compassion



Central Otago Compassionate Friends

Kia ora e hoa ma,

There has been plenty happening in Central Otago this year. Our Annual Orchard Gardens afternoon tea was lovely as usual. Gorgeous sunny day with us all sheltering under the trees, relaxed and well looked after.

We are planning to travel over to Arrowtown to join the Queenstown/Arrowtown friends and no doubt will be treated to the beautiful autumn colours again. Having had some stunning blue days this last week, it is hard not to mention the weather! Warning – cliché coming – we live in paradise.

Sadly, we have new families joining our group. If you are recently bereaved and reading this, please know that our hearts go out to you. Many of us endured our bereavements some years ago, but believe me, we never forget how traumatic the first year or two is. We are planning to have informal coffee gatherings on the last Wednesday of each month at Monteiths, Alexandra, so if we haven't managed to meet up with you yet, and you would like to join us, please do! There is also the option of having afternoon tea at Living Options in Alexandra every Thursday 2.00pm onwards. Jan Pessione is always there helping to host so there will be someone there to welcome you.

Our next group meeting will be 3 May. Details will be on the front page of this Newsletter. Sue Tait will be our guest speaker. Sue is one of our bereaved Mums, on our Committee and also working with community members affected by the COVID shut downs, etc. so she has a lot of interesting information to offer us. She also works as a Volunteer for Victim Support.

Hope to see you all or at least be able to keep in contact via email or phone.

Arohanui,

Louise

Kia ora Compassionate Friends whanau,

Sitting here writing this it is the middle of March already and Easter is just around the corner. The days are getting shorter and there is a hint of Autumn in the air, even though after the hot temperatures we have had this weekend you wouldn't think so. With the change of the seasons comes a moment of reflection and wonder.

We reflect on what has been happening before us, what could be coming towards us and what we are doing at this point in time. We see change as something that is not always a good thing, but something that we have no control over. We wonder at the whys, the how's and then when's. We wonder how can time keep moving so fast when there are days when we would like it to stand still, to catch our breath and to have just a moment to think.

I haven't worked it out if its age or life style that makes the days whip by, but I have come to realise that I need to take time for myself, to smell the roses, feel the wind, and to remember our loved ones who watch over us.

For the members who are new to this game, keep your head high, keep good people beside you and know that you are not alone, there is always someone here willing to give an ear to listen, a word of advice, or a shoulder to hug.

Ps. Southland members... We will be sending out information about dessert and a catch up in the next couple of weeks.

Kia kaha

Aroha nui

Murihiku (Southland)

Heart Lines

---We have known the touch of tiny hands. We've known boys in youth who dreamed of sailing ships.

---Each of our girls were beauty queens. We've known the nightmare of the reality of death. We know too well unfinished dreams. Our lovely children are gone, but if we live to be 100, we will remember them with April eyes.

---Though memories can at first be painful, in time, they will soften and become treasures of your heart. Like beautiful flowers long ago pressed in a book, they will bring the best moments of life from the past into the present for a little while, momentarily reconnecting your life with others.

---The strongest men I've ever known have cried in front of me. It was the weaklings who walked away. Don't be afraid to cry. You may feel, and I've heard people say, "If I ever start, I'll never stop." You will. It is physically impossible to cry forever. You will cry as much as you need to cry at that time, and you will stop.

---We leave grief when we're ready; it doesn't leave us. The decision is ours in our own time frame.

---On some tomorrow's morning, the sun shining red in the dawning, our eyes will meet again with those we've loved and lost. And all of this will have been worthwhile.

Fay Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

Gratefully reprinted from Winnipeg Chapter News

The Jacket

I was heading outside to shovel snow on a cold Minnesota day and needed something warmer than my usual outerwear. I appraised and dismissed several coats in the closet. I reached way back until I found something else.

As I pulled it toward the light I recognized it and everything about me slowed down. I had not seen it in years. It was my son's down jacket. A sweet little everyday memory surfaced with tinges of sorrow as I remembered that moment years ago, when I shopped for that jacket. It was perfect. Just what Art needed for college.

I touched the collar. He had worn it a couple of years. The jacket was in great shape. I stretched one arm into the sleeve, then the other. Took my time reconnecting with all those memories that jacket held for me. I zipped it up and stood in place, still facing the closet. Somewhere in my brain it registered that standing too long in front of a closet is odd behavior. So be it. Grief appears odd sometimes.

My body heat warmed the jacket and I had a distinct awareness of the sleeves hugging me. It was more than just my arms in that jacket. It was a hug from wherever that boy is now. I returned to present moment having found the perfect jacket for the day's chores. Time to shovel snow.

Monica Colberg Art's Mom, TCF Minneapolis, MN

Lifted with gratitude from TCF Minneapolis Newsletter



Questions & Answers

I keep thinking I'm going to wake up and this will never have happened. Am I in denial?

- A. Situations of great stress precipitate us out of 'ordinary' reality into non-ordinary or dream-like states of consciousness. This too is a reactive way the psych has of dealing with feelings that in our ordinary states could not be 'borne' so we find a place, in our minds, that is bearable: I am going to wake-up and none of this will be true. Slowly, reality seeps in and we do come to realize that we are awake. We have taken time into our own hands by slowing it down ever so slightly. This is different than denial which is much more rigid, longer lasting and needing professional intervention.

How can I get to the place where joy and loss live together? How can I get past this pain?

- A. First, we don't get past the pain. We must go through it. We can't go around it or over it or under it either. The path to healing through loss, which means the path to wholeness, requires that we incorporate our pain. To incorporate means to literally take the pain into our body. We get to that place where joy and grief can live together by becoming whole. The process of healing, whether from a physical illness or from a catastrophic life disturbance, is a transformational journey. We are changed in the process. The goal is not to be the "way we were" once again, the goal is to be more than we were before, to include more of life. Ultimately, the goal is to include loss in our love and trust of life.

Edward T. Creagan, M.D., TCF/Okanagon

Gratefully taken from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News

Three Years On

The fierce, seemingly unbearable agony of loss, has been replaced by a constant, numbing pain lying just beneath the surface, ready to break forth at the most unexpected moments.

But alongside this pain, happier moments can and do happen - time spent with family and friends, enjoying simple pleasures.

And there can be moments, also, of real joy - a child's smile, the sun popping out on a frosty winter morning, or a cup of creamy hot chocolate after a brisk walk.

And within the pain are wrapped countless memories, both happy and sad. They are there to be opened when we so wish and accompany us along life's path, with its many twists and turns.

These memories remain with us to the end.

Jeanette Greaves

Lifted with thanks from UK spring Compassion



As Time Goes By... Twenty-Five Years Later

Somehow it never occurred to me twenty-five years ago on August 11 that I would see myself in the far distant future writing about this long journey without our Kenneth. I couldn't see surviving more than one day at a time.

In the beginning when I saw other Compassionate Friends who were five-year survivors it was incomprehensible that they had even been able to go on living at all.

But here we are; twenty-five visits for every occasion and anniversary to the lake where we took his ashes. Death day, Birthday, Father's Day, Mother's Day, any day at all. Scatter our roses, release our balloons, drink in the beauty of nature while silently contemplating and communing with his presence. We never say much, we don't have to, we know each other too well.

There have been lots of changes since that terrible day; joys of new grandchildren, a great grandchild. Other sorrows and leave-takings of precious family members and friends. Life having its way. We go on, we live, we laugh, we cry. But never for a moment do we forget to bring Kenneth's precious memory forward with us in all of our celebrations, sorrows and everyday situations that make us recall his laughter and funny sense of humor. We look at his pictures, hear certain songs, see a reflection of him in a smile, eyes, hair, eyebrows, lips, DNA all over the place!

As August 11 is the anniversary of Kenneth's death, so October 30 is the celebration of his birth. Kenneth would have turned 49 this year. It seems impossible to equate that age with the fun-loving, happy 23 year old he will forever be.

And so we go on twenty-five years later. Some things have changed; the acute pain of new grief softens into the ropy scar of an old battle wound. Sometimes it unexpectedly screams like the phantom pain from a severed limb, but only some times. Most times that dull ache is overcome by the joy and thanksgiving of having this loveable, quirky, all too human among us. The circle is unbroken. Thanks be.

Arleen Simmonds, TCF Kamloops B.C. In loving memory of Kenneth Bruce Simmonds
He went fishing for the last time on the banks of the Thompson River.
"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. " ~From The Song of Solomon

Lovingly lifted from TCF Minneapolis Chapter Newsletter

VOICES

A book of poetry

Written by

Margaret Gillanders and Sandi Legg.

Poems which feature in our newsletter from time to time.

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

with all proceeds to go to TCF.

To order your copy send \$5 to

TCF

C/- Lesley Henderson,

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

Windsor

Oamaru

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

as it explains so well the many feelings and emotions

I have experienced but been unable to explain.

Thank-you Margaret and Sandie.

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Dear August, you are not welcome

“Alright moody pants?”

I’m not moody.

“You are moody.”

I’m not.

“Are.”

Not.

“Are.”

James!!!!

“See? Moody.”

Ok, maybe a little bit moody. So?

“Why?”

August.

“Oh. It’s that time again. So that’s why you wrote that yesterday?”

What?

“ ‘Dear August, you are not welcome. That is all’ “.

James are you reading my diary?

“No.”

Really? ‘Dear August, you are not welcome. That is all’

“I’m not reading it mum. I am it. I am your thoughts, your fears your happiness and your tears.

Mum!!!!!! I wrote a poem!!!!”

Well done son. I’ve just thought about how you used to peer over my shoulder as I was working. Writing or typing, you always wanted to see what I was doing. Now I imagine you peering over my shoulder again and wonder whether I’d get the same response.... ’boring mum, I’m off to play’.

“You can still be a bit boring.”

Thanks! I miss our banter James.

“And what do you call this then?”

Ok. Point taken.

“So August eh?”

Yes. August. 6 years son. 6 whole years. How has my heart held this weight for 6 years? If someone had told me then that 6 years on I would be living a fairly peaceful life I wouldn’t have believed them. Actually, I didn’t anticipate any kind of life after you left. And yet 6 years have passed. It is incomprehensible.

“It might be incomprothingamy mum but....”

Haha, you still have an aversion to long words I see.

“Well I raised a smile at least. I can say incompthingamy as well as anybody.”

Ok, ok but really, 6 years and it feels like you were only here this morning?

“That’s because....”

Yes, yes, that’s because you are going to tell me that you were here this morning right? That you live in my heart and that we will never be apart.

“Ha! Now you’re writing poems. Good girl.”

James, are you ever going to be serious?

“No. I leave the serious bit to you. You do enough of it for both of us mum. My job, is to try and get a smile out of you. Have I succeeded?”

Temporarily.

“Ok, tempothingamy is good enough.”

Actually, I’ll tell you what raised a smile today. My opponent at court saw your photo on my iPad. She said ‘who’s that?’ And I said, ‘it’s my son’ beaming with pride. ‘He is very handsome’ she said, oblivious to the pain that was hiding behind my smile. ‘Yep, he sure is’ I said. ‘Thank you, I’ll tell him you said so’ and for a moment the world was normal and not broken. I pictured myself coming home to tell you what she had said and you telling me that ‘she’s only human mum’, and me calling you a big-head and it being a normal Friday afternoon of pizza and TV. Nothing will ever be normal again, will it son?

“Nothing ever was mum. You know better than to say ‘normal’. And anyway, there is more ‘unnormal’ in the world than I can be blamed for right now.”

Yeah, I guess you’re right. Anyway, I did what I said. I’ve told you. My opponent at court said that you are very handsome.

“Well, she’s only human mum.”

Big head.

“What are we watching tonight mum. I’ve ordered the pizza.”

I miss you so much son. I think it’s just this time. This lovely summertime when things were so full of joy and laughter and when the world broke.

“We’ve talked about this. We can still laugh and feel joy. Don’t go back to being moody or we’ll have to start the whole exercise all over again and I’m all out of poems and long words.”

James, I love you so, so, so very much.

“I know mama. I love you more.”

Lifted with love from Autumn 2020 - Compassion | www.tcf.org.uk

His Demons

I knew when the phone rang he was not going to be all right.

Now see, my son was troubled.

I hear my friends who have lost children talk about what a joy their sons brought

And how they never had any real trouble with them,

yet all I can do is sit and wish I could say the same.

My son was troubled.

He was a little boy on the inside yet an adult on the outside.

He had anger from something we could not control or even begin to understand.

He abused drugs and alcohol to mask his pain.

He was not able to think of the consequences of his bad actions before he did them.

In spite of the pain in his heart, he had a wide bright smile and a laugh that could brighten a room.

He could have a heart of gold.

He could be the best father, son and friend.

He had a strange mysteriously wild charm to which all who met him, loved.

He had great looks and the body to match.

I loved him and I know he loved me with all his heart.

Despite all he put himself, family and friends through,

our grief had been no less because he was not perfect.

It’s been an extension of the grief and pain I’ve lived with for years trying to figure it all out.

I worried all the time.

The week before he died he said to me, “You’re always worried about me, I’m not.”

He rejected every effort I tried to save him.

My heart stays full of tears; they’re just below the surface.

I struggle every minute to keep from being noticed.

He destroyed himself and I could only watch and wait for him to destruct.

I told myself I would not feel guilty when I received that call.

I can’t stop wondering if there was just one more thing I could have said or done;

I’ll never know.

Now that your demons have been exposed,

I pray no other child has to go through what you must have.

If I had only known, I would have protected you.

I pray you are at peace now, not to be held captive here anymore.

You just couldn’t live here any longer.

What I really want is you back so I could start over

and protect you from the demons that helped destroy you, but that’s not possible.

I now can only hold close to my heart the hope the demons have left you,

and the belief that God will protect you.

I Love You Son,

Mom TCF/Madison Area

Reprinted in TCF Winnipeg Chapter News

Ambushed

Ambushed by the news, I dropped the receiver from the pay phone. My knees buckled and I was on the ground. I might have screamed. I don't remember. Susie is dead.

Over the next week, I experienced an exponential dimension to grief. I grieved for our baby. I grieved for my son's loss and for my daughter-in-law. I grieved for the baby's uncle, my younger son, who was tasked with letting the family know what happened. I grieved for my mom, just diagnosed with dementia, who was almost derailed by the news. Our baby's death was totally unacceptable. I tried to explain to God that this wasn't right. I yelled and cried and whispered and mourned.

Forward twenty years. My knees buckled and I crumpled into a chair nearly dropping my cell phone. I don't remember making a sound. My dog came and sat by me, her eyes full of questions. Carl is dead. My eighteen-year-old grandson is dead. Ambushed again by death, my breath and all consciousness of time and awareness of space collapsed into that moment. My next breath came from a new timeline, some not-quite-parallel universe, not the world I had known before. I grieved the loss of our young man. I grieved for my son's pain and for my daughter-in-law. I grieved for Carl's uncle who was tasked, again, with letting the family know what happened. I grieved for Carl's brother and sister. I grieved for his young cousins to whom suicide was no longer just a word.

Grief has settled into my being like the big maple tree in the yard. It's always there. It changes. It grows. No longer remarkable, just there.

Now, when my tears flow, I let them fall like the gold and orange leaves of the tree. Maybe they'll enrich the medium that nourishes renewed life.

Now, I avoid the tree. I look out at the world from beneath its branches, but I don't look at the tree itself.

Now, I set the table and benches in the shadow of the tree. We gather to picnic and tell stories and laugh at jokes.

Now I sit and remember their broad grins so much like their father's, their boundless energy, and their eyes.

Now, I recriminate. Why didn't I take more time? Why did I ever let them leave my arms?

Now, I tell myself that they were never mine. They were visitors passing through. Their lives, their deaths, were theirs. I miss them.

Now, it's Tuesday. I have to take the trash to the curb.

Elaine Leet Grief Digest, Volume 16, #2

Reprinted with love from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News



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 want to be me

I miss me
I miss us
I miss you
I want to be me again

To be the daughter I used to be,
the wife, the friend, the aunty
I want to be the sister I used to be
I want to have that normal life again.

The warmth, the love,
your smile, your laughter.
But most of all just to be mum

Our happy times
The birthdays, the xmases,
the mother's days
All gone – memories now to treasure
always in my heart

The light in my eyes has gone out,
the flame, the life, the happiness
This pain you can never cure
Christopher my beautiful son
I want to hear you call me mum
and to be me

Until we meet again Mum xx
Christine Lovelace

UK compassion

**Grief is a very long journey,
a journey you take on your own.
And no one can know all the sorrow you feel,
for it is your sorrow alone.
Grief is an awful intruder,
it comes and it stays night and day.
And no one can look
at the way that you grieve,
and then tell you,
"No, this is the way."**

Anne Peterson

Lifted with thanks from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News

You will lose someone you can't live without,
and your heart will be badly broken,
and the bad news is that you never
completely get over the loss of your beloved.
But this is also the good news.
They live forever in your broken heart
that doesn't seal back up.
And you come through.
It's like having a broken leg
that never heals perfectly—
that still hurts when the weather gets cold,
but you learn to dance with the limp.

Anne Lamott

Reprinted with love from TCF Minneapolis Chapter Newsletter

Coping with the Conflicting Emotions of Grief: ELEANOR HALEY

How are you feeling today? Yes...you.

It's a simple question. You're asked a version of it every day. You know how to respond. Keep it simple. Choose a one to three-word answer. Bonus points if you choose something neutral-to-positive that doesn't require a follow-up question. Don't say anything awkward or concerning (unless you're certain the person you're talking to genuinely cares). The 'how are you' exchange isn't intended to be complicated, which is kind of weird when you consider how convoluted a person's state-of-mind is at any given moment. Scientists don't really know how many thoughts we have per minute, but according to a little Google research, estimates range between 50,000 – 80,000 thoughts per day.

Our emotions, which are very closely tied to our thoughts, also tend to vacillate and shift through the day. People rarely feel just one thing at a time or one way towards a given person, place, event, or thing, so although you may make a habit of saying 'fine' or 'good' when someone asks you how you're doing, the answer is probably a little more complex. But I don't need to tell those of you who are grieving this because grief, well, it makes you feel things! So many different things that life after the death of a loved one often comes to feel like one big emotional mashup.

One emotional experience that many grieving people find particularly vexing is the realization that their thoughts, emotions, and needs occasionally seem to conflict with one another. A very common example of the this is the feeling of simultaneously being happy but also sad. This is something grieving people eventually learn to live with because after the death of a loved one this bittersweet reality is just unavoidable, but the first time a person experiences happiness or laughter after the death of a loved one they may feel guilty. They may say to themselves, "If I feel happy, then I can't be sad, right?" Wrong, this way of thinking goes back to the false belief that a person can only feel one way at a time; when in reality, people can feel many things at a time. One emotion doesn't replace or cancel the other out. So, happiness doesn't have to replace sadness, it can exist alongside it.

The fact that thoughts and emotions are not either/or is important to remember because it will come up (if it hasn't already). Grief is full of puzzling paradoxes! You may have your own examples, but here are a few... A wife loves her deceased husband, but also needs the companionship and affection of a partner. Her connection with a new partner does not diminish her love for her deceased husband.

A woman has struggled with infertility in the past and her grief over this loss makes her feel a little jealous when her friends become pregnant, even though she is truly very happy for them.

A brother feels that grieving his sister's death has made him stronger and has given him a greater appreciation for life, but he still wishes the death had never happened.

A daughter feels hopeful for the future, but scared that moving forward will mean having to leave her deceased mother behind.

A husband feels happy at his son's graduation, but also sad that his late wife couldn't be there to witness their son's special day.

Grief is hard work for so many different reasons, but one of those reasons is because it forces you to stretch your heart and mind to create enough space for all your thoughts, emotions, and desires to exist alongside one another. This, in turn, requires you to be flexible enough in your thinking to accept that it's okay to feel two seemingly opposite things at the exact same time. Grief opens your eyes to a world in which the sun and rain can exist in the same moment.

This reality can be a bit disorienting at first, but in many ways, it is a good thing. It means that you don't have to choose between grieving the past and living in the present. It means that the pain of loss can exist right alongside things like pleasure, happiness, and hope. And above all else, it means that you never have to leave your loved one behind as you move forward in the present.

Lifted with thanks from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter

Defining Moments

A birth. A graduation. Learning to drive. A new job. A milestone birthday. A move across the country. An illness. A wedding. A divorce. These are all defining moments.

But is there any other moment in a bereaved parent's or family member's life like the defining moment that comes as a result of a knock at the door, or a call in the middle of the night, or perhaps when a doctor's eyes elude their stare? Every other defining moment pales in comparison to hearing the news that a child in our family has died.

It matters not if our children were young or old, if they were a babe not yet born, or a child with grandchildren of their own. They were OUR children, and they died, and our life was, and will forever be, shaped by THAT moment in time. When we are new in our grief, all emphasis is trapped in THAT day, THAT moment. It is the defining moment by which all time is measured from that point on. For years we talk in terms of something happening before or after the death.

We are sad, we are angry, we are traumatized. We're at war with ourselves and everyone around us. We want time to move backward, or at least speed up. To take us as far from that defining moment as possible. And yes, we are scared. We are scared of forgetting, scared of letting go, and even scared of moving past THE defining moment.

The good part, the part that I've learned from fellow Compassionate Friends, is that yes, it is the most defining moment in our lives, but it doesn't have to be the thing we remember most. We are connected by a love for our children that goes beyond the defining moment. We can reach back and remember wonderful memories and a love so special that it will not let go. EVER!

More than 14 years have now passed since my children were killed in a car accident. Time has seen me through the anger, the sadness, the pain, and the brokenness that came from dealing with their deaths. It has been a long journey, a journey of the heart. As Douglas Wood wrote in the book *Old Turtles and the Broken Truth* - those who take great journeys of the heart are changed. I admit it. I am forever changed by that defining moment, but the important thing I also realize is that my great journey of the heart really began when Stephanie and Stephen graced my life. It wasn't long enough - not nearly long enough. But we shared a love so special, so sweet, so enduring that it will forever be what I choose to remember the most. I choose not to remember that they died or how they died. I choose to remember they lived and how they lived. They were special. They were beautiful. They were silly. They were loving. And they were wonderful!

It took a lot of time on my journey for me to reach this point, and it wasn't without struggle and doubts. There were days when just getting out of bed and facing a day without them took all the courage I could muster. But I did it. Sometimes it was necessary to deal with their deaths on a one day at a time basis, and sometimes one moment at a time. But I continued on my journey because I refused to let a terrible day be what I remembered most about two really terrific kids.

Yes, it is indeed the most defining moment for bereaved parents and family members. We're different people when we walk through the fog of grief. The important thing is, we walk through the fog to the other side where sunsets are once again beautiful and we are struck by the brightness of the stars.

Is there any better way to honour all our terrific kids than to marvel at the beauty of the world.

Pat Loder Lovingly lifted from TCF/
Reprinted in Winnipeg Chapter News



Victoria, AU



Sibling Page



What are We Waiting For! (Something worth implementing in our lives)

My brother-in-law opened the bottom drawer of my sister's bureau and lifted out a tissue-wrapped package. "This", he said, "is not a slip. This is lingerie." He discarded the tissue and handed me the slip. It was exquisite: silk, handmade and trimmed with a cobweb of lace. The price tag with an astronomical figure was still attached. "Jan bought it the first time we went to New York eight or nine years ago. She never wore it. She was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is the special occasion." He took the slip from me and put it on the bed with the other clothes we were taking to the funeral home. His hands lingered on the soft material for a moment. He slammed the drawer shut and turned to me. "Don't ever save anything for a special occasion. Every day you're alive is a special occasion."

I remembered those words through the funeral and the days that followed when I helped him attend to all the sad chores that follow an unexpected death. I thought about them on the plane returning home. I thought about all the things she hadn't seen or heard or done. I thought about the things that she had done without realizing that they were special. I still think about his words and how they've changed my life. I read more and dust less. I sit on the deck and admire the view without fussing about the weeds in the garden. I spend more time with my family and friends and less time in committee meetings. Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experience to savour, not endure. I try to recognize those moments now and cherish them. I don't save anything. We use our good china for every special event - such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, or discovering the first camellia blossom. I wear my good blazer to the market if I feel like it. I don't save my good perfume for special parties. "Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing, hearing, or doing, I want to see, hear, and do it now.

I am not sure what my sister would have done had she known that she wouldn't be here for the tomorrows we all take for granted. I think she would have called family members and a few close former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. It's these little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew my hours were limited - angry because I put off seeing good friends, angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intended to write, angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and daughter often enough how much I truly love them.

I am trying not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and lustre to our lives. Every morning, when I open my eyes, I tell myself that it's a special day.

Ann Wells, Laguna Niquel CA, USA Lovingly lifted from TCF/Johannesburg,

Spotify Playlist for Sibling Loss Podcasts

If podcasts are your thing, you'll find a wealth of them here <https://spoti.fi/2ZIqc7y> all focused on the topic of sibling loss. The playlist has been created by friend of SIBBS, Kyla Preston. Huge thanks to Kyla for compiling this fantastic resource and for generously sharing it with the SIBBS community.

Information lifted from SIBBS newsletter tfc.org.uk

Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone.

No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together. Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief. There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything.

You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex, TCF/Marin County, CA

Gratefully reprinted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter

Kelly's Poem for Mark

By Kelly Marie Allen

You are my brother and my best friend,
You gave me happiness when I felt weak,
My heart is broken, it don't know how to beat,
Since you left me, my life feels incomplete.

They say that time heals almost anything,
Yet they don't say how much you'll need,
I've been broken since we said goodbye,
So I have some doubts my tears will dry.
Yes I have my doubts that my tears will dry.

This is a forced goodbye I didn't wanna say,
If I'm honest I'm not sure I'll ever understand,
I wish I could find the words for how I feel,
And damn I wish this nightmare wasn't real.

They say that time heals almost anything,
Yet they don't say how much you'll need,
I've been broken since we said goodbye,
So I have some doubts my tears will dry.
Yes I have my doubts that my tears will dry.

From this day I'll be my brother's keeper,
I'll make sure to live for the both of us,
Brother I promise that I'll do you proud,
But please guide me through this dark cloud.

They say that time heals almost anything,
Yet they don't say how much you'll need, I've
been broken since we said goodbye,
So I have some doubts my tears will dry.
Yes I have my doubts that my tears will dry.

They say that time heals almost anything,
Yet I doubt that time will ever heal this pain,
But brother, I promise I'll live for you and I,
And by my side I know you'll always fly.

Gratefully reprinted from SIBBS TCF UK 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	Wilma Paulin (Son & Daughter, 6yrs & 3mths)	03-4493213
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Pessione (16 yr old daughter, accidental)	03-4487800 janpessione@xtra.co.nz
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 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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