



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



NEWSLETTER

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive.

July-August 2022

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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:00 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory.
July 19th. & August 16th.

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. **Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last weekend or earlier if you plan to attend.**
Directions....On Route 16, going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church.
Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room.
July 26th. & August 30th.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace, but whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2020

WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the 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 for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

Weather Cancellation
**In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:
Ed or Joan Motuzas at
(508) 473-4239**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239
 * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Secretary

* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

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* Rick Dugan 508/877-1363

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Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085
 Mitchell Greenblatt 857/225-7135
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774

The chapter address is:

The Compassionate Friends
 Metrowest Chapter
 26 Simmons Dr.
 Milford, MA 01757-1265

Regional Coordinator

Dennis Gravelle
 638 Pleasant St.
 Leominster, MA 01453-6222
 Phone (978) 537-2736
 dennisg@tcf.email.com

The Compassionate Friends has a national office that supports and coordinates chapter activities. The national office can be reached as follows:

The Compassionate Friends, National Office
 48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
 Wixom MI 48393-7736
 Toll-Free (877) 969-0010

Web Page:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

There are no dues or fees to belong to *The Compassionate Friends*. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to send information to newly bereaved parents, purchase pamphlets and books, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

THANK YOU to the friends who help keep our chapter going with their contributions.

Mrs. Ann Qutab in loving memory of her son **Akif S. Qutab**. "Forever loved and never forgotten".
 Mrs. Phyllis Curran in loving memory of her daughter **Monica Michelle Curran** on her birthday June 21st.
 Ms. Betty Myers in loving memory of her son **William Bruce-Tagoe** on his anniversary July 6th. "Every day is one day closer to you".
 Mr. & Mrs. James Loughran in loving memory of their son **Christopher James Loughran** on his anniversary August 6th. "Forever loved and never forgotten".

FATHER'S DAY

BY ALAN PEDERSON

Years have come and gone and time has surely drifted by. I've searched for any answer, yet I'm left to wonder why. The only thing I know for sure, through the happy and the sad. No matter what the circumstance, I will always be your dad.

Not a day goes by that I don't hold you in my heart. My love reaches far beyond this space we are apart. These empty arms remember all the good times that we had. I may be standing here alone, but I will always be your dad.

Some won't understand, so I don't bother to explain. They look into my eyes, but they can only see the pain. Afraid to look too deep as they are blinded by the fear, If only they could know, a father's love won't disappear.



So when this road gets lonely and the journey seems too hard, And I get to feeling sorry that I didn't get a card. If I close my eyes I can almost hear you say. "I love you and I miss you, daddy....Happy Fathers Day."

Alan Pedersen is an award-winning speaker, songwriter and recording artist. His inspirational message of hope and his music have resonated deeply with those facing a loss or adversity in their lives and have made him one of the most popular and in-demand presenters in the world on finding hope after loss.



Our Children Remembered

As a regular feature, the newsletter acknowledges anniversaries of the deaths of our children/siblings and their birthdays. This issue covers the months, July and August. If information about your loved one is missing, incorrect or our chapter files are in error, please send the correct data, including your name, address, and telephone number, the name of your loved one and the birthday and date and cause of death to the newsletter editor, Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265.

Anniversaries

July

THERESA LAUREL SWINDELL
WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE
SCOTT F. MOTUZAS
ETHAN WAYNE MILLER
ANDREW RYAN WEGLINSKI
SHERIL SEARS JONES
DIXON BERGMAN

August

JULIE A.SLOCUM

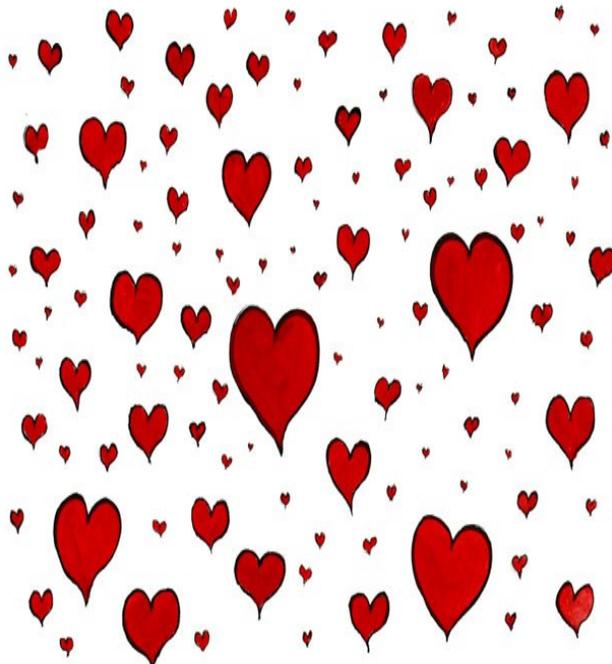
Birthdays

July

PATRICK WALKER EVENS
MIRANDA E. DeGUGLIELMO
TROY F. MARDEN
MIRA TUTEJA
ELISSA DAON
KAITLYN KENNEDY
BRIAN F. ALLARD

August

THERESA LAUREL SWINDELL
CHRISTOPHER JAMES LOUGHRAN
JASON LADIEU
AKIF S. QUTAB
JAMIE BLAU
JENNA LOUISE GIARDINI
CASEY REUTER DURKIN
DAVID ALEXANDER SCHNEGG
CLIFFORD CROWE
GREG BRUNO
ADAM SCOTT COLE



Softly...may peace replace heartache and cherished memories remain with you always on your child's birthday.



THE SIBLING CORNER



This page is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief thru encouragement & sharing

"Siblings Walking Together." We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

BROTHER

In my dreams he appeared to me, my beloved brother, to take me to our special place. To him I said, "I never thought we'd meet here again." He replied, "I am here."

Though in my grief, no tears were shed, for the peace and serenity that were now his, were bestowed upon me, to quiet my aching heart.

He took me to our lake, a place that was now forever suspended in time. We stood for a while, gazing out over the shimmering water, beneath a deep blue Heavenly sky.

Without words he spoke, "I am resting and you should not grieve for me. I am in peace and on my way to everlasting joy and happiness in the light of God. We will meet again one day." I knew to look at him that this was true, for he was no longer sick or suffering.

I sensed our time was almost over. To him I said, "I love you." He replied, "I'll always love you." With his last words still lingering on his beautiful face, he faded into the mist from our lake, to return to the hand of God.

Although I cannot see him now, I will always be able to return to our lake in my dreams, and never lose the memory of our final moments together...

*by Susan Drimam
TCF, Cape Cod
(in memory of her brother BILLY who died
by suicide July 24, 1991)*₄

LONELY HURTING CHILDREN

How is your Mom doing?
Is the basic question asked...
Sometimes an inquiry about Dad
But so sadly seldom
They do not ask the siblings...
They must be so sad.

True, the depth of our loss
Brings agony and pain.
But the children, the dear children
Really do hurt again and again.

They lost a brother or a sister,
Their pain is just as real...
Frustration, anger and fear
They too, go through such hell.

Who is there to comfort them,
To give a word of care?
Everyone is more concerned
About the parents' welfare.

While the siblings
Drown in their hurt and pain,
No one to hold them near...
Let them know they are not to blame,
To uplift and ease
Their minds from fear.



*Linda Camper, a bereaved sibling
TCF, Colorado Springs, CO*



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



A Love Story

I was reading an article in the May issue of Good Housekeeping by a novice gardener, Joanne Kaufman called "A Late Bloomer's Love Story." She described her obsession with gardening after her children were grown and gone and needed to redirect her nurturing. Her trials and errors along with the joys and frustrations reminded me of the required patience and perseverance of raising children.

She would fret when her daisies droop, like we do when our child is teething or has a fever. She would lie awake brooding about whether the soaker hose is working properly, as we do about the car breaking down when our teen is out alone at night.

She prayed that her hostas wouldn't be eaten by the neighborhood deer, as we pray that our loved ones won't be eaten up by the scary, cruel and dangerous world out there.

She accepts the blame and the credit for her gardening blunders and delights. After three attempts at planting yarrow resulted in measly little stalks of dull yellow, she pointed her accusing finger at nature (too much/not enough sun/rain) or at the soil (too much/not enough lime/acid). We blame ourselves when our children don't "turn out" as we expected. Did we spoil them? Should we have sent them to private school? Were we too strict/not strict enough?

On the other hand, one summer she threw some dahlia tubers in a trench and completely forgot them until the next year when they bloomed so big and full that they could have been on the cover of a seed catalog. Some children are neglected and abused, or come from broken homes and thrive and succeed in spite of incredible odds.

There are infinite possibilities, and gardening, like parenting, is a job without end. We can plant, water, pull weeds, spray for bugs and pray for the best. It's all about believing and hope. Many factors are out of our control. If we plant bulbs in the fall they have an excellent chance of surviving and coming up next year and in spite of all our good intentions, some will die.

***Sue Kadra
Metrowest Chapter TCF, Milford, MA***

A Father Writes

A father does not find his job an easy one. The responsibilities he faces are enormous. Everything, from finance to being a good role model, *tests* a man's ability to be the best father he can be. It is a job charged with emotional, physical and mental challenge. And, at the time, it is only one of the many roles he fills. His roles include husband and lover, son, friend, boss, co-worker, to name a few. The relationships he has are numerous, complex and always changing. One event in particular can really put these relationships and roles to the test, the death of his child.

The bereaved father is a unique individual, his uniqueness and attendant problems are not often understood by others, or even by himself. His child's death puts extraordinary demands on him. All the roles he fills change, and his life is truly not ever the same again. That is not to say it cannot be good, but just that the circumstances are going to be different.

When a child dies, it seems that the majority of sympathy is directed toward the mother. This is usually because she is much more open in her grieving, thus it is easy to focus on her emotional needs. But what of the grieving father? His other roles may actually prevent him from working out his grief. As husband and provider, he is the one who sees to the practical things around the death, funeral arrangements, notification of people, arrangement for sibling care, etc. It may be days, weeks or months before things are settled to the point that he thinks deeply about what happened. In most cases, he is back to work and into his usual routine so quickly that he can find himself comforted by this. The impact of the child's death is lessened to a degree. Away from the house, it is easier to "forget" what has happened.

In our society we are taught in subtle, and not so subtle ways, that men don't cry and that, in general, they are not at all open about their emotions. Thus, many men are denied a perfectly good emotional release mechanism, crying. Even in the privacy of his own home, a man may feel that he has to "be the strong one." Our experience has taught us that men who use crying as a tool in their grief work have fewer long-term adjustment problems. Since men often suppress their feelings, good and bad, how they are coping with their child's death never comes to the surface.

***Bob Steiner,
TCF, Salem, OR***



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Grief Is Not A Competitive Event

We know that no child's death is "better" or "worse" than any other child's death. We know that to some people, losing an infant may somehow sound less tragic than losing a twenty-year-old, and that to others the opposite may be true. We know that how long you had a child is not nearly as significant as the fact that you lost the child. We know that violent death wrenches our souls, but that a so-called "peaceful" death achieves the same end: a child you can no longer hold in your arms.

Again, we learn to grit our teeth and take deep breaths before responding to those uneducated outsiders who may venture an opinion about how "lucky" we are to have a child for a particular amount of time, or how "fortunate" we were not to have "bonded more firmly" or whatever. There is more than enough pain to go around for all of us. Nobody's grief needs to be larger or smaller than anyone else's. Nobody's sorrow needs to be diminished, not for one fleeting nanosecond.

*Grief is a process, and it has no timetable.
End of subject.*

Elizabeth Mehren

After the Darkest Hour the Sun Will Shine Again

A Message From Heaven

I am not so far from you,
Just a little way beyond;
Past the cares and past the pain,
Far past my earthly bonds.
When you feel you miss me most,
As years go drifting by;
Each memory will prove to you,
That our love will never die.
For memories are but a touch,
From the Father's gentle hand;
To heal your pain and mend your hearts,
To help you understand...
That while I left you far too soon,
I did not leave alone;
For the Father sent His angels,
To gently take me home.
Take comfort when you think of me,
Keep my love alive in your heart;
And with the warmth of each memory,
We will never be apart.

Allison Chambers Coxsey

STILLBORN

I carried you in hope, the long nine months of my term, remembered that close hour when we often felt you kick and move. As you slowly grew within me, wondered what you'd look like when your wet head emerged, girl or boy, and at what glad moment I should hear your birth cry, and I welcoming you with all you needed of warmth and food. We had a home waiting for you.

After my strong laborings, sweat cold on my limbs, my small cries merging with the summer air, you came. You did not cry. You did not breathe. We had not expected this; it seems your birth had no meaning, the summer air, or had you rejected us?

They will say that you did not live, register you as a stillborn. But you lived for me all that time in the dark chamber of my womb and when I think of you now, perfect in your little death, I know that for me you are born still; I shall carry you with me forever, my child, you were always mine, you are mine now.

Death and life are the same mysteries.

Sheila Kitzinger

TCF, Rhode Island

***in Education and Counselling for Children,
by Leonard Clark, Schocken Books, 1979***

TCF, Rhode Island

THE FIRST YEAR

The first year

Some said it was the hardest
Others have said wait for year two
Do I have a choice?

The first year

I have completely lost it
I don't know where it went
Can I get it back?

The first year

The pain, the anger, the despair
That never ending feeling of loss
Will it ever end?

The first year

Holidays and birthdays bring tears
Memories are too painful to recall
Why did this happen?

The first year

Thank God it's gone, never coming back
Nothing will ever be the same
Can I please wake up now?

S. Euliss

TCF, Vancouver, WA



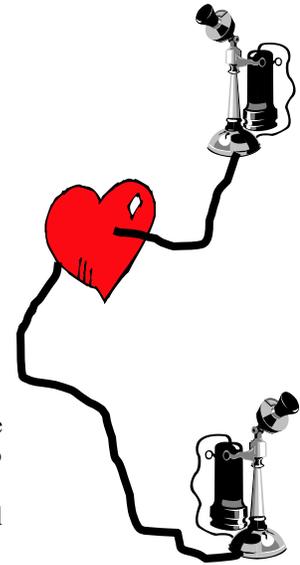
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

- Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
- Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
- Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942
- Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)366-2085
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)653-0541



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.



A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process.

Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

- Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)**
- Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)**
- Janice Parmenter (Sub.)(Tyler's Mom)**
- Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)**

WHEN A CHILD DIES...A FATHER'S GRIEF

By Owen Pettier

"Fix it Daddy" my son, Chuck, would say as a little boy, bringing me some broken toy. Over the years I fixed the broken toys, the malfunctioning appliances, the ailing automobiles, the carpentry projects, etc. But in July of 1979, I came up against something I didn't begin to know how to repair - a broken heart after the death of my son in an automobile accident. Dad, the fix-it man, had an insoluble problem. There was no way to make it better for myself or anyone else in the family.

After the numbness and shock wore off, I began to realize that he was really dead and all the bright hopes and expectations for the future gone with him. The terrible pain of grief and a sense of helplessness set in. There were feelings of anger, frustration, guilt, trouble concentrating at work, and wanting to escape but not knowing were to escape to.

I tried to bottle up my emotions and be strong. I postponed my grief due to concern for other members of the family.

For men of my age group and often younger men, too, conditioning has given us an image of being male which includes: Men should be strong - "big boys don't cry"; the male is the protector of the family, the provider, the problem solver he should be self-sufficient and able to handle everything on his own; display of emotions taboo, even among close friends and family. When a man loses his child, these expectations are unrealistic and superhuman.

In October we began going to Bereaved Parent meetings. The outcry of another father hit home; "What is a father to do? You can't sit at your desk and cry." At the meetings we heard a different approach. Rev. Simon Stephens, who founded Compassionate Friends, said, "Grief only becomes a tolerable and creative experience when love enables it to be shared with someone who really understands." From our support group leaders we heard things like. "Grief work is the hardest work you will ever have to do. Lean into the pain. You cannot go over, under or around grief, but only through it. We did not have any choice about what happened to our child, but we do have a choice about recovering from our grief."

We learned a lot about grief. Everything we learned indicated it is much healthier to admit to and talk about our feelings than it is to deny them. Suppressed or unresolved grief surfaces in one way or another. It can be physical ailments, such as high blood pressure, stomach disorders and heart complications, or it can result in divorce, dependence on drugs or alcohol, or mental illness.

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I was once talking about this in class when suddenly a woman blurted out, "So that's why I wanted to use the good china so much a year after she died."

It's a lot harder to give up the child and keep the child at the same time, because when our parent dies we have to lose and keep our past. When our child dies we have to lose and keep our future...

In our grandparents' day, losing a child was an expected part of life. But it is not in our time. Few of us even knew anyone else to whom it happened. So we have few models. Each of us seems to have to find our own way for ourselves. It is a hard and lonely journey. But the experience of others who have gone down this valley is that there is a resolution at the end. We can hold on and let go. If we can for a moment share with others on the same journey, we can help others find direction and let them help us.

... That is what The Compassionate Friends is all about.

**Dennis Klass, Ph.D.
TCF, St. Louis, MO**

About Handling Grief

I always wonder whether we should speak about "handling grief". Grief is so much like a force of nature, like an avalanche, or an earthquake or a tornado. Such a force of nature handles us - and we can only react to it. No matter how much we know and how well we prepare, we are never quite ready for grief.

If we keep in mind that grief is handling us, instead of expecting it to obey our own plans, chances for positive survival are much better. True, "handling grief" is only a word - yet this concept can inadvertently convey the wrong idea at the worst possible time. Otherwise, we and our friends could well expect us to follow more traditional good manners in the face of unbearable stress. That would further drain our severely reduced emotional and mental resources. By acknowledging that grief handles us, we can retain a better grip on reality. If we accept the fact that grief is the master here, and a difficult master at that, we can learn to respect grief's power and begin our healing-work with a more useful perspective.

Among the first things to do is to give up fighting - grief only tightens its grip if we try to struggle against it. Moving with the storm, until we have gone through it, we increase our chances for emerging unbroken. Then we can gradually start to rearrange our life and our reactions, much like straightening our devastated house after a flood.



Even if we find that grief has taken away, or ruined, much of what we had and loved, there comes a time when we can begin to master our attitude about grief. Do we recover some treasures from the devastation? Do we have some things left to go on with? Do we find the strength to feel thankful for having had a treasure at least for a while?

Just as the results of a natural disaster can take a long time to disappear, so the results of grief will not become manageable overnight. We must sift through many facts, many memories, many feelings, until we can say: "This is what is left, I have salvaged some treasure, I have restored rich memories. I have recovered many feelings. But I will always remember this event in my life, it will always be a part of me - *I have been changed.*"

Sascha

Beyond Surviving: Suggestions for Survivors

Iris M. Bolton

1. Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why" or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings but all your feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy, you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself. It's okay to express it.
6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do. Guilt can turn into regret, through forgiveness.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
8. Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
10. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
13. Expect setbacks. If emotions return like a tidal wave, you may only be experiencing a remnant of grief, an unfinished piece.
14. Try to put off major decisions.
15. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
16. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
17. Be patient with yourself and others who may not understand.
18. Set your own limits and learn to say no.
19. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.



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20. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as Compassionate Friends or Survivors of Suicide groups. If not, ask a professional to start one.
21. Call on your personal faith to help you through.
22. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, e.g., headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep.
23. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
24. Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting.
25. Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and even go beyond just surviving.

Reprinted with permission from Suicide and its Aftermath (Dunne, McIntosh, Dunne-Maxim, Norton and Co., 1987)

DEPRESSION

WHAT do you do when you've lost all hope? HOW do you carry on when tomorrow holds no promise? WHERE do you go to escape your pain? WHO do you turn to when no one seems able to help? WHEN do you simply give up and throw in the towel?

Most of us have felt the weight of the world on our shoulders at one time or another. Depression often follows an upheaval in one's life: financial reverses, divorce, chronic illness, loss of a loved one. Most depressions of this type, though relatively short-lived, are extremely painful and frightening. If the five questions above describe your state of mind, professional counseling should be sought.

If counseling is not a viable option in your life, the very best piece of advice I can pass on is one of the basic tenets of the many wonderful twelve-step programs (originated by Alcoholics Anonymous): live life one day at a time. If even this is too difficult, cut it down to one hour at a time. Small time sequences are much easier to live and deal with than an open-ended future of too many days, months or years. When you are depressed, time drags endlessly and it seems impossible that you will ever feel better. Be assured - you can and you will. It takes courage and patience and trust - trust in me because I tell you it is so; trust in yourself, though you feel so very weak right now; trust in the human spirit which has the power to overcome the greatest obstacles. Hang in with all your might. It will be worth the effort when you emerge from the darkness of depression into the light of all that is still possible in your life.

Carole Babush, 1990
TCF, N. Atlanta, GA₁₀

The Little Things

Often, even the simple tasks of every day living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feeling you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food - you probably didn't even taste it - or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears? Sometimes even getting through the day in your own house made you feel as if you had run a marathon and it left you in worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the family laundry could make you cry or that getting a piece of mail in your child's name could take your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely. Perhaps this quote puts it in a nutshell:

"One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people will never know about."

Ann Tyler
TCF, Sacramento Valley, CA

VACATIONS

Vacation time is upon us again. You may be having trouble with that very thought. My only advice is to go where it is the most comfortable for you. Large places with many people may not be the answer this year. The family oriented spots may make it more obvious that one of your blessings is missing. It may be that you are locked into plans that were made before the tragedy of your child's death. You may hesitate to change these plans if they involve other people. I, personally, could only be with people who understood my feelings in the beginning. If the other people involved are not sensitive and understanding, you may want to reconsider your plans. Good, warm, caring friends who will allow you to be wherever it is that you are can be a great comfort. Keeping it simple with a backdoor through which you can escape if necessary, can be the best answer. Going away and coming home can be a problem in the beginning. Know that it is normal.

Whatever it is that you do and wherever it is that you go, I hope you will keep in mind that it won't always be this painful. **IT WILL BE BETTER.** Be patient. If you can find any peace and enjoyment, do it. You deserve it and it doesn't mean you don't care.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta Chapters

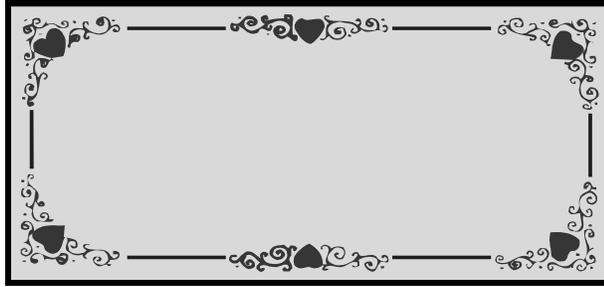


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Address Correction Requested

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