



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Feb. 2024 ISSUE

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"This newsletter is sponsored by an anonymous family in memory of our children".

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be Feb . 1st, the first Thursday  
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

#### **LOCATION:**

**The Neighborhood Church**  
**415 Paseo Del Mar**  
**Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274**  
**(South of Torrance Beach)**

**DIRECTIONS:** Pacific Coast Hwy. to Palos Verdes Blvd. → Palos Verdes Blvd. becomes Palos Verdes Drive West. Veer Right. → Go to Via Corta (stop sign just past Malaga Cove Plaza). Turn right. → Go down hill to Arroyo (stop sign). Turn right. → Continue down hill to end of street. → Turn left on Paseo Del Mar. → Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

**--Please remember to park in the church parking lot and not on the street.--**

#### **The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...**

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Thursday, Feb 1st meeting will start with “**Nourishing Your Broken Heart.**”

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com) for the link.

The TCF Friends group takes place at Hoff’s Hut’s outdoor patio dining area (Crenshaw & 237<sup>th</sup> St in Torrance) at 1 PM. most Fridays. All are invited. Please call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming for the reservation.

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Connie at (310) 292-5381.

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF  
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The **Thursday, Feb 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will start with “Nourishing Your Broken Heart.”** February is a good time to focus on the heart. From the physical, emotional and sentimental aspects, we are led by the heart. In the beginning we may feel sharp daggers to our hearts as we face the reality of our loss. Many newly bereaved parents find in the coming months a heaviness and physical pain in their chest as if their heart needs attention. Combine these feelings and you can understand why when grieving the loss of a child, you need time for your heart to catch up to what your head already knows. Make the time to reflect and give yourself small things that can nourish you while you are grieving. No matter how exhausted we feel, we need to take care of ourselves while we deal with our grief and loss. Join us as we share what we have found helpful on our various grief journeys.

## Broken Heart Syndrome

One afternoon, I was channel surfing looking for something to watch when I came across the Oprah Winfrey Channel. She was interviewing a woman named Madonna Badger. On Christmas Day, 2011, Madonna's 7 year old twins, a boy and a girl, her 9 year old daughter and her parents all died in a horrific house fire. She spoke of the unrelenting grief and sorrow she has suffered in the years since. I was riveted to the television screen as she recanted her story. As she talked, she coined a phrase that I had never heard of before to describe her pain, “Broken Heart Syndrome.” It is a temporary condition that is brought on by extreme stressful situations, such as the death of someone deeply loved.

I thought, finally there is a label for the intense pain and suffering that those who grieve feel! Broken Heart Syndrome is an identifiable condition brought on by stressful situations, such as the death of a loved one. Broken Heart Syndrome is also called takotsubo cardiomyopathy. Broken Heart Syndrome manifests as a temporary disruption of the heart's normal pumping function or with even more forceful contractions, while the remainder of the heart functions normally.

Symptoms can include chest pain and shortness of breath. It effects more women than men. It is attributed to a reaction to a surge of stress hormones.



After my daughter died, I suffered with intense bouts of pain on the outer left muscular wall of my upper torso. An EKG revealed no abnormalities. Seven years later, I still never know when this pain might reoccur. I have however connected my episodes with certain stressors, such as; my child's birth and death dates, holidays and special occasions.

Although doctors are just now learning about this condition, the good news is that broken heart syndrome is treatable and the discomfort should abate with time. If you think you might be suffering from broken heart syndrome, you should discuss it with you physician.

Let us all take care of our own hearts this Valentine's Day.

--Janet Reyes TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

## Coping With Winter Blues

When the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, we often find ourselves feeling low. Some people call this the Winter Blues. When you are grieving, those blues can feel overwhelming. Grief itself is hard to cope with, and cold winds and longer nights can make those feelings seem more intense. Here are a few ideas that may help you cope with the Winter Blues:

- Winter only lasts a few months. Use this time to reflect on your relationship with the person who died. Sometimes in our efforts to deny our loss, we rob ourselves of precious memories.
- Reach out to friends or family when you can. Often our isolation is worse because we do not allow ourselves time with others. You are not alone. There are many other people going through a similar experience. Although your relationship with your loved one is special, other people can understand. Take the risk to ask someone over for coffee or tea. Share with them.
- Take time to look through picture albums. Gather family to share stories. Make a new tradition during the dreary months of winter for family to gather for an evening of remembering. The holidays are over and the pressure is off. Maybe other people are feeling the same way and are afraid to talk about it.
- Try a grief support group. Sometimes all we need is to know other people hear us and understand. A group can help you to know you are normal.
- Read...favorite stories, comedies, novels, or information about grief to understand your own

reactions better. Somehow reading about such topics helps us know we are not alone.

- You can look for grief materials in your local library, church, or local TCF chapter.
  - Take good care of yourself. Eat right, rest and pamper your body. This goes for any season. Your body is under a tremendous amount of stress in adjusting to your loss.
  - Since grief affects us physically, paying attention to our bodies is important. Whether you prefer to do things alone or with others, physical activity helps. Taking a walk, doing simple aerobics, indoor swimming, playing racquetball or other activities can help you keep your body ready for the continued adjustment to loss. Feeling better physically can make a difference.
  - If you feel sad and need to cry, know that is a normal reaction. You are not weak if you need to show your emotions.
  - Write a letter to your loved one. Sometimes we need to communicate with them. Going to the cemetery is okay and normal. If the weather prevents that, a letter can be very helpful.
  - Remember that you will survive this loss. The pain and ache can seem like it will last forever. The intensity will lessen in time, although you will always remember your loved one. Time does not necessarily "heal" all wounds, but it can help us adjust to the change. Take it minute by minute...then day by day.
- TCF Newsletter, Pittsburgh, PA

## Wounded Heart

*"Your broken heart requires at least as much care as a broken bone. With proper care you can be confident that you will heal. The same powerful forces that mend a broken bone will heal your emotional pain, but a wounded heart needs time and proper care to heal." ~Harold Bloomfield, MD*

If someone fell and broke a leg, people would rush to their aid. They wouldn't stop to even think about it. Yet, when it's our hearts that are broken, few rush to our aid, and even fewer understand. At first, we receive the cards and phone calls wishing us well and telling us "if there's anything I can do"... but they soon taper off to a trickle. Then we begin to hear that we must —get on with our life, —we can't let it get us down, and we're told just how soon we should be —back to normal ... we're given a deadline of sorts. When we don't

follow the acceptable standards for healing, we are thought to —need help ... the professional kind ... and we're told that we are —in denial.

These same people, who seem to have all of the answers, not only have never experienced the loss of a child, but also tend to not want to get too involved ...too close to our pain. They would rather stand off to the side until we're back to our old selves ...whatever that is!

They're uncomfortable when we speak of why our hearts are broken and they don't mention it for fear of reminding us of how our hearts broke in the first place... as if we could ever forget.

When they ask us, How are you? ... it's more a greeting than a question. They don't want to hear how we ache inside, how lonely and empty we feel how desolate we feel. Why ... because they can't fix it. They can't make us whole again. And unlike a broken bone that's healed, we will never be as good as new.

We will be forever missing a part of what made us the person that we once were. When our child died, so did a part of our heart and where that piece was, now there is nothing ... only a gaping hole that nothing and no one can ever fill. Unlike a broken bone, we will not mend in a few weeks ... in fact, we will never fully mend. We learn to live without that piece of our heart  
-- Jacquelyn M. Comeaux In Loving Memory of My Angels... Michelle, Jerry & Danny

## This Month Of February, I Wish You Love



This is the month that a whole day is dedicated to love. In our sorrow, let us not forget that one emotion which, above all else, can comfort and console us.

Let us think of the things we love:

1. Our child—whom we loved—still love—and always will love—here in our hearts as long as we live.
2. Our families—hurting like us—lonely —needing each other—needing us.
3. Our true friends—listening—trying to help—wanting to lighten our load, but not knowing how—not always understanding, but there.
4. Our memories—of wonderful times gone by—some that make us laugh—some that make us cry—but all part of the fabric of our lives and of our love for each other.
5. Our quiet times—to get away by ourselves and think—to read—to note again the world around us—to

let peace enter.

6. Our Compassionate Friends—who are there—who know—who understand when others do not.

“Love makes the world go ‘round” and when our world comes to a sudden, grinding, heart-shattering stop, love is the glue that keeps us from falling off.

-- Fran MacArthur, TCF Southern MD

## For Our Kids In Spirit

I see you when I open the closet door  
empty hangers where your life once hung  
empty shoes that litter the floor  
so many songs still left unsung.

Dreams are crushed like light bulb glass  
and the implosion floods our mind,  
is nothing sacred? Our child dies  
and we are left behind.

Part of my spirit left that day  
to guide my son to the light  
part of my spirit left that day  
when life grabbed my heart and took a bite.

The heart is slow to heal  
it's a muscle severely bruised  
but for a muscle to recover  
it needs only to be used

So allow your heart to shine  
wherever you may go  
let your heart beat rule the day  
and allow the love to grow

Live love, be love, look for love  
imbue it in what you say  
and even though our child died  
the love does not go away.

It is then that our soul shall I recover  
and we can sigh without a cry  
knowing our child is right beside us  
their spirit didn't die.

They seek from us  
what we seek in them  
just a moment  
to be as one again

They have the need just as we  
to feel that love that tingles the soul,  
a connection made, a circuit complete  
in our togetherness we are the whole.

Whispers of love are everywhere  
my lost child now is found  
and although his body is forever gone  
My soul can hear his song

Music to my ears  
when he leaves a penny on the floor,  
an orchestra in my heart  
when he whispers through the door.

Turn the light on, turn it off  
he speak to me in metaphor  
using what ever that he can  
to let me know that there is more



There is more to life than life  
death is not an end  
and I find comfort  
in the messages; whatever he can send.

Spirit lives on as pure energy  
its in our hearts we find the switch  
to turn on that connection  
and receive that special gift.

Knowing that love is eternal  
and that life is just a dance  
will not provide answers to the whys  
but can give us a second chance

To chance to say what's in our hearts  
and to listen with our soul  
finding solace in a dialogue  
no one else could know

Whispers of love are just that,  
gentle murmurs we hear in our despair  
and we know deep in our soul that love  
never dies - our child is always there.

--Mitch Carmody [www.heartlightstudios.net](http://www.heartlightstudios.net)

## Do Real Men Attend TCF Meetings?

It has often bothered me that more men and persons of cultural minorities don't attend TCF meetings. I know there are societal and cultural

restraints which inhibit many bereaved persons from seeking outside help or support. Being both a man and a member of an ethnic group, I know very well the false pride which often restrains us from admitting we are not as self-sufficient as we want others to believe. We are taught (men in particular) at a young age not to reveal when we are hurt. We must be strong and brave and silent.

Stoic endurance is really not unique in my culture. The British call it "keeping a stiff upper lip." The Japanese call it gaman. Hispanics pride themselves on their ability to aguantar. In the U.S. it is embodied in the Puritan ethic.

When I began attending TCF meetings regularly, I wondered for a long time whether I was a "real man". Was I less macho than my peers? Couldn't I handle my grief in solitary dignity? The answers, I finally decided were yes, no and maybe. Maybe I could have adjusted to my son's death all by myself. Maybe I could have shunned the possibilities of self-destructive behavior, drunkenness, drug abuse, wild living or the unraveling of my family life without TCF. Maybe I could have dealt alone with all the anger, despair, and depression. Fortunately, I didn't have to.

I readily admit I wasn't very enthusiastic about going to my first TCF meeting. I imagined a group of people sitting around crying on each other's shoulders, bemoaning their cruel fate. Instead, I found people who were hurting as much as I; who, like me, were angry, who often felt depressed—but who were working very hard to mend the tattered fabric of their lives. I soon discovered that this was a place where I could talk about my grief and still feel safe about it. Nobody was going to think me less of a man for not getting over my son's death in a few months.

TCF doesn't promise or offer any quick fixes. There are no magic words or formulas to take away your grief. Whatever "magic" takes place, I know now, happens slowly. I don't believe it is possible for a bereaved parent to "forget", but I think TCF's support and understanding help make it easier for us to go on with our lives. We need not become lifelong emotional cripples.

To all of you hurting people who have never attended a TCF meeting, I urge you to give it a try. Attend two or three meetings and see if some of the "magic" doesn't rub off on you. What have you got to lose? You can't hurt any worse than you already have. TCF is for any and all bereaved parents—men and women, minorities and gringos,

people of any or no religious faith.

The one thing everyone at TCF has in common is the death of a child—and how it feels.

--Steve Perez, TCF, Denver, CO

## My Hope Chest



On November 24, I became a bereaved parent when my 15 year old son, Robert, died by suicide.

We had run out of time for prevention and/or intervention. It was now time to begin grieving. Death by suicide (because it is normally seen as a choice thus the stigma attached to it) typically elicits a more significant amount of anger and guilt. This added dimension often takes longer to work through and the "what if" questions are relentless with no answers. I HOPE to give you some insight into the things that helped me and gave me the courage to grieve and gave me Hope for the future. These are things that I put in what I now call my HOPE CHEST.

Hope comes to us in many ways, people, places, things, in looking back and in looking forward. Many of our "hopes" come to us before we even know what they are and how significant they will be down the road.

Hope is in support groups like Survivors of Suicide and TCF. I learned the language of a bereaved parent and received encouragement, unconditional acceptance, and hope. I learned to work toward changing my anger to forgiveness and my guilt to regret. Two of the hardest hurdles were forgiveness of self that came with the "why" questions and letting go of the guilt, real and imagined. How could my strong, yet sensitive child with a belly laugh that is still music to my ears, make this choice? Leaving these behind brought hope.

Hope is passing on knowledge that you have gained thru your journey and/or circumstances and using it for change.

Hope is in time...we need time to heal and that time frame is different for each of us.

Hope is in the grieving process, you heard that right. Grief opens us up and bares all...showing us our strengths and weaknesses. We foster hope within ourselves when we use our strength to bolster our weaknesses and vulnerable areas, gaining confidence with each step.

Hope is in the memories we have of our children. Hope is in Heaven, knowing that we will

one day be reunited with them. The candles we light tonight in memory of our children are to celebrate their lives, to show them, the community, and the world how much we love them and miss them. The candles also represent hope for us, they reflect our courage to stand here tonight, even tho wounded, to show we have taken up the challenge to grieve with as much courage and grace as possible and make our children proud of us.

--By Barbara Parson, TCF Atlanta



## My Baby Died, and Taught Me Faith

That little voice within me is always right but, it's taken me a long time to learn that. I tend to drown her out with the noise of my mind.

She knew, when I first found out I was pregnant, on my daughter's birthday, May of 2009, that it was the beginning of an end. She tried to tell me something was wrong. Every time I uttered those two simple words, "I'm pregnant," she'd give me that kick in the shin within – it said, "Not yet, wait." But I didn't listen.

My Aunt Debbie, 51, had just passed away in March, after a long battle with lung cancer, and the pay cuts for Kory and I both had hit in January, and again in May, decimating our income.

When we found out we were pregnant again, with our second child, JOY wasn't even the word for it. It was like we were climbing a sheer cliff, scrambling at slippery rock walls with bare fingers, and someone had just tossed us a rope from above.

In many ways, that baby was the only good thing happening for us.

We were already picking out names and planning the nursery, when I woke up – on Kory's birthday – to find the end had come.

My baby died, and with it, a little piece of me died, too.

The miscarriage was the most physically and emotionally painful, personal experience of grief I've experienced yet, out of eleven more deaths since.

I felt like my body betrayed me, and I had so many questions my doctor could never answer – why did this happen? Was something wrong with me? Would I ever be able to conceive again?

My mind could torment with these questions 'til I reached my death bed, and never find answers.

I needed to find peace – not necessarily a definitive answer on how or why this had happened – just peace. For me, that was maybe just accepting NOT knowing, NOT being able to understand.

This is something I've struggled with repeatedly since, because loss doesn't make sense. There's never a good reason why. It simply is as it is, and there's nothing we can do to change it.

But we can find peace, if we trust the voice within.

I have learned that peace is accepting this moment as it is, whatever it brings. That doesn't mean I have to say, "YIPPEE! I'm so happy my baby died! I can't wait to find the gifts in this!"

It means, it's o.k. to feel angry, sad, scared, betrayed, and bruised. It's ok to feel the pain, and acknowledge it. Facing the pain is how we create a path to peace.

So, I bought a journal, and I ripped my pain out onto those pages in large scribbles and scrawls.

The day I went back to the doctor to have an ultrasound that would show an empty womb, no longer bearing the beauty of my would-be baby, I took my journal and my pen to the creek, and reminded myself of the beauty around the pain. Simply surrounding myself in beauty completely changed my perspective. Life was no longer just the pain of the loss, life had beauty, too.

I closed my eyes, listened to the quiet whispers of the creek beside me, and asked for my peace and answers from within. I wanted to understand why this baby had come in, then gone. Why? Why did it come at all then? What gifts did it have for me?

I believe, "All things work for good in my life," so what good could possibly come from this?

The answers I found in my quiet reflection were this...

That baby didn't come for nothing. I thought maybe she'd come to teach me how to be a Mom to two, or how to play catch with my first little boy.

Instead, she taught me FAITH.

I'm not talking faith like pick a religion, believe it, and preach it. I'm talking FAITH: believing in the unseen, believing in me, believing in that little inner voice within.

Just a few days after the miscarriage had begun, I wrote in my journal.

No one could have prepared me for this

experience. I have been completely caught off guard by how deeply it has affected me, and how far reaching the pangs of utter devastation and loss have spread into my heart. What comforts me is this intrinsic knowing within, that this experience has led me directly to...not away from...the beautiful, wonderful little being that is coming my way. Suddenly, I do feel a strong connection to a baby boy coming – I can almost see him! I can feel him, hear him (a little giggle), and sense him. He is playful and joyful and ready to come and play. He's excited to meet us and know us as his parents. He's already connected to Kayta and experiencing her as his big sis. He's-a comin' and he's right on time.

I named that baby "Faith," for what she'd taught me, and moved forward, believing another baby was coming soon.

Just a few weeks later, I found out I was pregnant again.

I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy in Spring of 2010.

After a whirlwind natural delivery, I hemorrhaged and lost over a third of my blood. My parents said they thought they were going to lose me, as they watched my doctor fight to find the source of the bleed and stop it. In the end, I made it through, but spent the first month of my son's life not being able to stand up for more than ten minutes because I was so weak.

He was worth it though! He was a dream come true in so many ways. See, I had lost the first baby boy in my life – my nephew, when he died just two months before his third birthday. And, I had lost Faith with the miscarriage.

But, in the end, that voice within was right again.

I now have the bubbly, cuddly, giggly little boy who adores his big sister. He is everything I knew he would be, and I treasure him more every day now, for the battle I fought to reach him. I always knew I would make it to him, somehow, I just had to have a little "Faith" along the way.

Not every story has a happy ending like this one, but every story can have that peace that comes from within – that "accepting the not knowing." It's hard to believe, but I've seen it again and again in my life. Change, death, pain are all a part of this world. But, if we have a little faith, we can find the beauty around the pain. We can find peace, even in the pain, if we trust the voice within.  
--Megan Aronson Opentohope.com

## Newly Bereaved...

### Let Me Tell You Who I Am Now...



I am still a person like you, with a life like yours, yet not. I am still a mother like you, yet not at all like you, all at the same time. I wish there were some way you could understand me, without becoming who I am now. You see, there's a pain I carry, unlike any pain you carry, unless you are a bereaved mother too.

This pain I have is always there. It doesn't nap during the day or get safely tucked into bed at night. It follows me everywhere; it never leaves my side— like my son used to do, only grief is not cuddly, nor sweet.

No, a mother's grief is a torturous life sentence, that no one wants to live. It's bargaining for a different ending, over and over, one where no one dies.

It's the panic of it happening again, any time, anywhere... It's the toxic self-blame that never turns its finger around to blame itself. It's the spiraling of obsessive thoughts, (what if... if only?) seeping its poison through every crevice of my mind.

It's the regret, so convincing that I failed as a mother, powerless to protect my child from death. Yes, grief's emotions are as unpredictable as the ocean tide, crashing down on me to drown me alive.

I have three kids, not two. My first son died. There, I said it.

—<https://stillstandingmag.com/.../let-me-tell-you-who-i-am-now/> BPUSA

## Seasoned Grievors...

### Nine Years or Nine Hundred

Sometimes it seems that nobody understands  
The pain of losing your child  
"Well," they say, "it's been nine years  
Shouldn't you be over it by now?  
My parents died (or my cousin - or my dog,)  
And I did my grieving and got over it," they say.  
Nine years— It seems like only yesterday  
And I remember the horror:

- The police knocking at the door in the middle of the night

- Making funeral arrangements (funeral arrangements?) for my son.
- Asking his best friends — boys who were just yesterday playing ball and laughing with him — to be his pallbearers.
- That awful empty feeling in the pit of my stomach when the limousine from the funeral home; drove up to our house.
- Seeing his casket poised above the freshly-dug grave.
- Being pulled away from the gravesite when the eternity of services was done.
- Waking up every morning for weeks and for a blessed split second thinking everything was right with the world, then the reality crashing in that he is dead.
- Fumbling my way, somehow, through the days and nights.

Yes, my friends, it's been nine years. And still it hurts to say his name.

To think what he might have been doing now with his life.

To realize what a waste of a young life it was. So, please, don't expect me to be "over it" or "okay."

Not in nine years - Or in ninety - Or in nine hundred  
--Barbara Koontz Clarihew, TCF/Bucksmont chpt.

## Friends and Family...

### My Wish List

I wish you would not be afraid to speak my loved one's name. They lived and are important and I need to hear their name. If I cry or get emotional when we talk about my loved one, I wish you knew it isn't because you have hurt me; the fact that they have died has caused my tears. If you allow me to cry, I thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.

I wish you wouldn't let my loved one die again by removing from your home his pictures, artwork or other remembrances. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish that you wouldn't think that if I have a good day my grief is over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.

I wish you knew that the death of a child/sibling is different from other losses and must be viewed separately. It is the ultimate tragedy and I wish you wouldn't compare it to other losses.

Being a bereaved parent isn't contagious, so I

wish you wouldn't stay away from me. I wish you knew all these 'crazy' grief reactions that I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following a death.

I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for us. As with alcoholics, I will never be 'cured' or a 'formally bereaved', but for evermore be recovering from my bereavement.

I wish you understood the physical reaction to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses or be accident prone, all of which are related to my grief.

Our loved one's birthday, the anniversary of the death and the holidays are terrible times for us. I wish you could tell us that you are thinking of them on these days. And if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about them and don't try to coerce us into being cheerful.

I wish you wouldn't offer to take me out for a drink or to a party, this is just a temporary crutch and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have hurt before and I can heal. I wish you knew that grief changes people. I am not the same person I was before my loved one died and I never will be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to 'get back to my old self', you will stay frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know the new me – maybe you'll still like me.

– Source Unknown



### Helpful Hint...

You hurt so much because you love so much. You are crazy with grief because you are crazy with love. The determined desire to go beyond simple survival, to travel beyond deaths' details, holds great power over death and depression. The bad news is, it isn't easy. The good news is, it can, and has been done.

–Author Unknown



### Book In Review...

After The Darkest Hour, The Sun Will Shine Again: A Parents Guide to Coping with the Loss Of A Child by Elizabeth Mehren. Written from her own



experiences, Elizabeth answers the questions every bereaved parents ask. Will I ever get over it? Both a guide and mediation the book is valuable to friends and relatives.



## Welcome...

“If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends meeting, please muster all of the strength and courage you have and walk in the door for that first meeting. We'll help you from there. We care. We understand. We too have the same wounds as you. We need not walk alone.”

--Janet G. Reyes

## Butterfly

A butterfly came to me today  
and landed upon my knee  
His wings were heavy from the rain  
I knew you had sent him to me

Only an Angel such as yourself  
would care about these things  
so I dried him with my breath  
and sat him on some leaves

As I sat there watching him  
soaking in the Sun  
I thought how great it must be to fly  
it looks like so much fun

My Angel now you have your wings  
Don't let my tears weigh them down  
I know someday I will see you again  
Until then keep sending the butterflies around.

--Mary Woody

## We Are Individuals ...

We are individuals.  
We are similar, but different.  
We each have our own perception of the same scene or situation.  
We all view life through the spectacles of our experiences.  
We are all grieving our losses.

Does that mean that we all feel the same way?  
Does that mean we are suddenly alike?  
Is there a book that tells us what to feel?  
We travel the same road at different speeds

Our destination unclear

Loss of a child is devastation  
It changes us – but how?  
If we were compassionate, do we now hate?  
If we were closed minded, do we now embrace new ideas?  
If we were full of hostility, do we now look out in love?  
Who we are has changed . . . but we still retain much of ourselves.

Our bond is our loss ... We reach out in pain  
Our world, no color but gray

Will we love all those we meet?  
No, we are human

Will we hate those we greet?  
No, our pain is alike

We are drawn together by our Spirits  
We must interact in the flesh  
God tells us the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak  
Let your Spirit rule

See her. Look at him. Indescribable Pain;  
Anguish.  
Reach out. Spirit to Spirit  
Put aside our differences  
Help each other all along the way.

Thirty days, Thirty years  
The loss is still a loss  
Do we live, survive?  
Differently, yes... Differently.  
--Debbie Chase, Cedar Rapids, IA

I forgot to read the fine print,  
when I signed up to be your mom.  
I thought it would be hugs and smiles and quite a lot of fun.  
I didn't see the bit that read of pain, loss, grief and despair.  
I didn't know that you'd be gone, and that life would be unfair,  
But I am still your mother, I will be every day.  
If I had read the fine print,  
I would have signed up anyway.  
--Karen Frisco



Toy Akasaka  
Born: 1/91 Died: 2/15  
Parents: Jay & Sharon  
Akasaka

Josue  
Born: 3/04 Died: 6/07  
Mother: Elizabeth Centeno

Brandon Armstrong  
Miscarried: July 1995  
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Connor Aslay  
Born: 5/99 Died: 7/18  
Mother: Erin Aslay

Jeremiah Bell  
Born: 1/88 Died: 6/15  
Mother: Angela Alvarez

Scott Berkovitz  
Born: 5/88 Died: 1/16  
Parents: Carl Berkovitz &  
Maria Moore

Noah Bernstein  
Born: 6/87 Died: 2/17  
Mother: Beth Bernstein

Cheianne Jayda Berry  
Born: 12/01 Died: 7/16  
Mother: Kristina Berry

Sam Boldissar  
Born: 10/91 Died: 3/17  
Parents: Jeeri & Frank  
Boldissar

Alex James Bonstein  
Born: 11/91 Died: 7/16  
Mother: Cynthia Sanchez

Tamara Lynette Boyd  
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/00  
Parents: Gloria & Gayle  
Jones

William Joseph Britton III  
Born: 3/62 Died: 7/85  
Mother: Jean Anne Britton

Larry Broks Jr.  
Born: 7/88 Died: 9/17  
Mother: Thessia Carpenter

Scott Vincent Buehler  
Born: 3/80 Died: 2/08  
Mother: Elizabeth Buehler  
Miller

Julian Burns  
Born: 12/18 Died: 1/19  
Parents: Daniel & Marta  
Burns

Frank Christopher  
Castania  
Born: 8/94 Died: 7/05  
Parents: Frank & Debbie  
Castania, Grandparents:  
Richard & Ann Leach

Vanessa Roseann  
Castania  
Born: 2/97 Died: 7/05  
Parents: Frank & Debbie  
Castania, Grandparents:  
Richard & Ann Leach

Carina Chandiramani  
Born: 5/86 Died: 9/18  
Mother: Norma  
Chandiramani

Blair Chapin  
Born: 4/82 Died: 5/18  
Sister: Elizabeth Chapin

Michael Edward Clapp  
Born: 2/93 Died: 4/18  
Mother: Patti Clapp

John Francis Cleary  
Born: 12/74 Died: 8/93  
Mother: Pauline Cleary  
Basil

Matthew Hales Clifford  
Born: 1/80 Died: 3/15  
Parents: Bob & Melissa  
Clifford

Aaron Christopher  
Cochran  
Born: 11/90 Died: 9/12  
Mother: Julia Carr

Tiffany Lamb Corkins  
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/05  
Mother: Nancy Lamb

Hannah Elizabeth Cortez  
Born: 9/92 Died: 7/13  
Parents: Rafael & Shari  
Cortez

Mike Sebastian Cortez  
Born: 5/97 Died: 6/17  
Mother: Rita Cortez

Scott Curry  
Born: 8/59 Died: 7/08  
Mother: Marilyn Nemeth

Michael N. Daffin  
Born: 2/85 Died: 4/17  
Parents: Michael & Diana  
Daffin

Daniel Elijah Day  
Born: 4/93 Died: 5/16  
Mother: Kristen Day

Michael David Deboe  
Born: 12/75 Died: 5/09  
Parents: Dave & Judy  
Deboe

Sean Michael Denhart  
Born: 3/88 Died: 12/20  
Mother: Janna Denhart

Luke Edward Devlin  
Born: 12/07 Died: 12/07  
Parents: Jacqueline &  
Tom Devlin

Allison Jeanine Kirkbride  
Dewart  
Born: 10/87 Died: 1/06  
Parents: Z & Michael  
Dewart

Ryan Dobie  
Born: 7/92 Died: 2/19  
Parents: Linda & Douglas  
Dobie

Michael John Dornbach  
Born: 7/60 Died: 10/17  
Parents: Maria Trillegi &  
Edward Dornbach

Wayne Douglas  
Born: 9/71 Died: 1/10  
Mother: Marie Galli

Ramsay Downie, II  
Born: 2/64 Died: 10/99  
Parents: Ramsay & Sally  
Downie

Joel Draper  
Born: 1/84 Died: 5/2004  
Mother: Tracy Solis

Mark Edler  
Born: 11/73 Died: 1/92  
Parents: Kitty & Rich Edler

Gregory Robert Ehrlich  
Born: 4/91 Died: 2/19  
Mother: Sarah Ott

Lorian Tamara Elbert  
Born: 5/66 Died: 10/07  
Mother: Dorota Starr  
Elbert

Bettina Mia Embry  
Born: 8/65 Died: 4/22  
Parents: Larry & Elena  
Bruns

Jeffery Mark Engleman  
Born: 6/61 Died: 2/10  
Parents: Janette & Laszlo  
Engelman

Richard Paul Engelman  
Born: 02/66 Died: 03/95  
Parents: Janette & Laszlo  
Engelman

Cody Jarod Esphorst  
Born: 3/02 Died: 7/19  
Parents: Jesse & Julie  
Esphorst

Jesse Eric Esphorst  
Born: 9/00 Died: 3/17  
Parents: Jesse & Julie  
Esphorst

Chidinma Ezeani  
Born: 8/89 Died: 10/19  
Mother: Ifeoma Ezeani

Robert Justin Fields  
Born: 1/00 Died: 1/22  
Parents: Loree & Bob  
Fields



Shawn Eric Fillion  
Born: 12/82 Died: 8/21  
Mother: Lise Fillion

Jesse Hernandez  
Born: 2/90 Died: 11/22  
Mother: Joann Hernandez

Kathryn Anne Kelly  
Born: 12/72 Died: 1/91  
Parents: Dick & Timmy Kelly

Joseph Licciardone  
Born: 4/94 Died: 3/16  
Parents: Connie & Leo Licciardone

Michella Leanne Matasso Fincannon  
Born: 8/86 Died: 1/06  
Parents: Bill & Cheryl Matasso

Jennifer Nicole Hower  
Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04  
Brother: Jeff Hower

Chase King  
Born: 4/87 Died: 11/19  
Mother: Laura King

Gaby Lindeman  
Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12  
Parents: Gilberto & Graciela Rodriguez

Bryce Patrick Fisher  
Born: 10/86 Died: 8/21  
Mother: Nancy Goodson

Rachel Suzanne Hoyt  
Born: 2/70 Died: 1/95  
Sister: Laura Hoyt D'anna

Colby Joshua Koenig  
Born: 6/84 Died: 1/10  
Parents: Cindy Tobis & John Koenig

Joshua Lozon  
Born: 6/91 Died: 6/21  
Mother: Tracey Gentile

Miles Andrew Gallas  
Born: 2/89 Died: 3/21  
Mother: Denise Gallas

Sarah Jade Hurley  
Born: 6/97 Died: 5/17  
Father: Tim Hurley  
Grandmother: Laurie Hurley

Scott Koller  
Born: 10/83 Died: 3/15  
Mother: Betty Benson

Richard Lee Luthe  
Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98  
Parents: Jeff & Lorraine Luthe

Mark Scott Galper  
Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97  
Mother: Sheri Waldstein

Taylor X. Hyland  
Born: 8/06 Died: 7/20  
Mother: Tessa Hyland

Keith Konopasek  
Born: 1/63 Died: 7/95  
Parents: Ken & Mary Konopasek

Shauna Jean Malone  
Born: 8/70 Died: 1/13  
Parents: Tom & Mary Malone

Leslie Geraci  
Born: 6/66 Died: 7/11  
Father: John Geraci

Steven Ishikawa  
Born: 9/75 Died: 4/17  
Mother: Miki Ishikawa

Margareta Sol Kubitz  
Born: 9/05 Died: 9/09  
Parents: Maria & Bill Kubitz

Elizabeth Mann  
Born: 7/60 Died: 5/05  
Parents: David & Olivia Mann

Lexie Rose Gilpin  
Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09  
Mother: Michele Gilpin

Alexander John Jacobs  
Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19  
Mother: Diane Jacobs

Michael Kropman  
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12  
Parents: Brenda & Greg Kropman

Janet Sue Mann  
Born: 10/61 Died: 9/10  
Mother: Nancy Mann

Steven Paul Giuliano  
Born: 4/55 Died: 4/95  
Mother: Eleanor Giuliano

Stefanie Jacobs  
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97  
Father: Rob Jacobs

Cherese Mari Lauhere  
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96  
Parents: Larry & Chris Lauhere

Alex J. Mantyla  
Born: 3/89 Died: 8/08  
Parents: Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Marc David Guerreva  
Born: 7/97 Died: 7/17  
Mother: Sharon Cortez

Jason Christopher Jenkins  
Born: 4/86 Died: 11/20  
Parents: Alvin & Caprice Jenkins

Bryan Yutaka Lee  
Born: 12/70 Died: 9/07  
Mother: Kathee Lee

Jesse Robert Martinez  
Born: 1/89 Died: 9/21  
Father: Harry Martinez

Leslie Geraci Hart  
Born 6/66 Died: 7/11  
Father: John Geraci

Lizzie Jester  
Born: 6/93 Died: 7/18  
Father: Lee Jester

Steven J. Lee  
Born: 1/63 Died: 10/06  
Mother: Donna Lee

Travis Frederick Marton  
Born: 10/91 Died: 1/15  
Mother: Ricki Marton

Adam Guymon  
Born: 4/89 Died: 4/06  
Mother: Eileen Guymon

Emily Matilda Kass  
Born: 6/95 Died: 3/06  
Mother: Susan Kass

Emma Nicole Lerner  
Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06  
Mother: Nancy Lerner

Matthew "Matty" Louis Match  
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18  
Parents: Mike & Shirley Match

Christie Hagenburger  
Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17  
Father: D.W. Hagenburger

Jillian Nicole Katnic  
Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18  
Mother: Debbie Hughes

Kevin Le Nguyen  
Born: 5/88 Died: 6/14  
Mother: Tracy Le Nguyen

Grandmother: Dorothy Match

Bishop Michael Hernandez  
Born: 3/98 Died: 6/21  
Father: John Hernandez

Douglas Drennen Kay  
Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06  
Parents: Diane & Steve Kay



Max McCardy  
Born: 4/05 Died 8/15  
Parents: Derk & Akemi  
McCardy

Joseph Mc Coy  
Born: 9/11 Died: 11/14  
Mother: Amy McCoy

Sarah Mc Donald  
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/17  
Parents: Tom & Shideh  
Mc Donald

John Paul Mc Nicholas  
Born: 12/89 Died: 11/20  
Parents: John & Leeann  
Mc Nicholas

Kirk Nicholas Mc Nulty  
Born: 7/84 Died: 2/14  
Mother: Elaine Mc Nulty

Jeremy Stewert Mead  
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14  
Mother: Carol Mead

Robert Andrew Mead  
Born: 5/65 Died: 4/11  
Mother: Carol Mead

Nicole Marie Megaloudis  
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/04  
Mother: Gail Megaloudis-  
Rongen

Damion Mendoza  
Born: 7/76 Died: 6/92  
Parents: Carlene & Paul  
Mendoza

Christopher Metsker  
Born: 11/94 Died: 3/18  
Parents: Justin & Tara  
Metsker

Blanca Isabel Meza  
Born: 9/21 Died: 9/21  
Mother: Angela Azurdin-  
Meza

Mathew Scott Mikelson  
Born: 44/77 Died: 4/20  
Mother: Dorthy Mikelson

Keith Moilanen  
Born: 10/80 Died: 5/19  
Mother: Jill Moilanen

Reyna Joanne Monje  
Born 9/98 Died: 4/21  
Mother: Debbie Trutanich

Jacki Montoya  
Born: 10/89 Died: 6/15  
Mother: Theresa Montoya

Joshua Montoya  
Born: 4/15 Died: 6/15  
Grandmother: Theresa  
Montoya

Danielle Ann Mosher  
Born: 8/78 Died: 6/97  
Parents: Paul & Rose  
Mary Mosher

Benjamin A. Moutes  
Born: 3/07 Died: 5/10  
Parents: Kevin & Claudia  
Moutes

Danielle Murillo  
Born: 5/96 Died: 4/14  
Parents: Cheryl Outlaw &  
Manuel Murillo

Christopher Murphy  
Born: 11/92 Died: 4/18  
Mother: Deborah Murphy

Christopher Myers  
Born: 10/86 Died: 5/06  
Parents: Janet & Larry  
Myers

Edward W. Myricks II  
Born: 4/72 Died: 10/11  
Parents: Edward & Sandra  
Myricks

Lisa Nakamaru  
Born: 12/93 Died: 10/14  
Mother: Grace Nakamaru

Natalie Rose Nevarez  
Born: 5/90 Died: 11/14  
Parents: Gregg and Alison  
Nevarez

Richard Paul Negrete  
Born: 6/43 Died: 2/04  
Mother: Sally Negrete

Stephanie Sue Newkirk  
Born: 12/67 Died: 10/15  
Mother: Cindy McCoy

Trevor Mitchell Nicholson  
Born: 7/99 Died: 1/18  
Parents: Brad & Kendra  
Nicholson

Steven Scott Nussbaum  
Born: 5/61 Died: 11/15  
Parents: Will & Gloria  
Nussbaum

Sally Anne O'Connor  
Born: 12/62 Died: 2/11  
Mother: Grace "Darline"  
Dye

Isabella Ofsanko  
Born: 6/97 Died: 10/15  
Mother: Desiree Palmer

Dominique Oliver  
Born: 5/85 Died: 3/02  
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Steven Thomas Pack  
Born: 8/91 Died: 3/20  
Parents: Tom & Lisa Pack

Lilly Parker  
Born: 12/15 Died: 1/17  
Mother: Nicole Kawagish  
Father: J.D. Parker

Jessica Perez  
Born: 5/89 Died: 10/03  
Sister: Monica Perez

Andrew Periaswamy  
Born: 5/97 Died: 10/16  
Parents: Megala & Xavier  
Periaswamy

Dominic Pennington  
Roque  
Born: 8/02 Died: 9/09  
Parents: Kerrie & Ren  
Roque

Lindsay Nicole Pollack  
Born: 6/94 Died: 11/23  
Mother: Daphne Carroll-  
Pollack

Donnie Vincent Puliselich  
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18  
Mother: Maria Puliselich  
Sister: Michelle Pulislich

Shannon Quigley  
Born: 12/68 Died: 1/09  
Mother: Kathleen  
Shortridge

Dax Jordan Quintana  
Dantas De Oliveria  
Born: 6/17 Died: 8/17

Parents: Alexandar &  
Sanderson Quintana  
Dantas De Oliveria

Daniel Paul Rains  
Born: 4/72 Died: 3/91  
Mother: Janet Ferjo

Jeffrey Alan Rakus  
Born: 10/86 Died: 7/06  
Parents: Tony & Donna  
Rakus

Leo Joshua Rank II  
Born: 3/11 Died: 4/12  
Parents: Roberta Redner  
& Leo Rank

Cindy Ranftl  
Born: 8/68 Died: 7/97  
Parents: Pat & Bob Ranftl

Sarah Lynne Redding  
Born: 12/80 Died: 12/05  
Mother: Linda Redding

Aaron Rico  
Born: 12/89 Died: 12/10  
Parents: Cameron &  
Annette Rico

John Patrick Rouse  
Born: 1/78 Died: 7/02  
Mother: Sharon Rouse



Michael B. Ruggera, Jr.  
Born: 4/51 Died: 4/96  
Parents: Michael & Frances Ruggera

Patrik Stezinger  
Born: 1/89 Died: 8/17  
Parents: Paul & Rosemary Mosher

Carlos Valdez  
Born: 10/90 Died: 1/12  
Parents: Antonia & Refugio Valdez

Michael Jordan Zareski  
Born: 5/71 Died: 12/17  
Parents: Susan & Norm Zareski

Danny Ryan  
Born: 07/79 Died: 10/15  
Parents: Mike & Andrea Ryan

Jonathan David Streisand  
Born: 1/87 Died: 8/13  
Parents: Pricilla & David Streisand

Vance C. Valdez  
Born: 10/90 Died: 3/12  
Parents: Carlos & Maria Valdez

Kevin Zelik  
Born: 11/85 Died: 6/10  
Parents: Joe & Linda Zelik

Andrew Patrick Sakura  
Born: 3/90 Died: 3/08  
Parents: Bruce & Karen Sakura

Brittany Anne Suggs  
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/16  
Mother Camille Suggs

Lexi Noelle Valladares  
Born: 4/04 Died: 7/10  
Parents: Fausto & Erica Valladares

Christopher Zuchero  
Born: 5/85 - Died: 5/22  
Parents: Mike & Shelly Rudeen

Daniela Mora Saldana  
Born: 3/17 Died: 3/17  
Mother: Rosa Saldana

Elizabeth D. Szucs  
Born: 4/72 Died: 6/11  
Parents: Dolores & Frank Szucs

Manuel Vargas III  
Born: 3/95 - Died: 5/15  
Father: Manuel Vargas

\* For corrections or to add your child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and leave a message.

Lisa Sandoval  
Born: 9/76 Died: 12/92  
Parents: Susan & Ruben Sandoval

Kenneth Tahan  
Born: 2/66 Died: 7/16  
Parents: Shirley & Joseph Tahan

David Michael Villarreal  
Born: 11/90 Died: 2/18  
Parents: David & Barbara Villarreal

### Birthday Tributes...



Phillip Ruben Sandoval  
Born: 7/84 - Died: 6/16  
Parents: Valerie & Joe Desjardin

Anthony Tanori  
Born: 8/82 Died: 8/12  
Parents: Chuck & Sylvia Tanori

Eric Douglas Vines  
Born: 7/77 Died: 7/91  
Parents: Doug & Lynn Vines

In honor of your child's birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses.

Andrew Sankus  
Born: 4/71 Died: 8/15  
Mother: Mary Sankus

Jamie Taus  
Born: 5/85 Died: 5/21  
Sister: Jackie Taus  
Mother: Susan Taus

Matthew L. Weiss  
Born: 9/96 Died: 8/18  
Mother: Natalie Narumoto

Rennie S. Wible  
Born: 8/66 Died: 1/18  
Mother: Jinx Wible

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.

Gerald Slater  
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94  
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

Jacqueline Marie Taylor  
Born: 1/83 Died: 7/11  
Mother Jennifer Flynn

Dovan Vincent Wing  
Born: 6/83 Died: 9/17  
Mother: Becky Wing

### For Siblings...



Spencer Simpson  
Born: 1/80 Died: 6/13  
Parents: Rich & Shelly Simpson

Ryan William Thomas  
Born: 2/82 Died: 4/04  
Mother: Linda Thomas

Aaron Young  
Born: 9/74 Died: 6/15  
Mother: Sheila Young

### Sibling Bonds

Nicholas M Sinclaire  
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22  
Mother: Suzanne Sinclaire

Michael D. Toomey  
Born: 4/62 Died: 2/05  
Parents: Michael & Elizabeth Toomey

Steve R. Young  
Born: 7/57 Died: 2/90  
Mother: Marjorie Young

You are my brother and always will be  
Not even death can take that away from me  
The love we share is everlasting  
A bond that can never be broken.

Paul Slater  
Born: 10/71 Died: 11/16  
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

Catarina Sol Torres  
Born: 12/16 Died: 12/16  
Parents: Marcus & Vanessa Torres

Whitney Marie Young  
Born: 8/87 Died: 11/06  
Parents: Marlene & Steve Young

I hate saying I miss you,  
But it's true every day,

Dale Lee Soto  
Born: 7/94 Died: 5/11  
Mother: Monique Soto

Thomas Zachary  
Born: 12/85 Died: 7/11  
Father: Bob McGaha

The fights, the chats, the small things,  
 Mean even more now that they're gone.  
 I hold onto my memories,  
 Never do I want to forget your life,  
 You are my brother and always will be,  
 Not even death can take that away from me  
 --Tabitha Jayne, from Open to Hope, finding hope  
 after loss, [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

## The Courage To Let Life Go On

*"Courage is not the absence of fear and pain  
 But the affirmation of life despite fear and pain."  
 -Earl Grollman*

"Life goes on"....I have often heard this sentence, said perhaps to console me, or perhaps as a way to put an end to conversation about loss and death. Of course life goes on, no matter how shattered our lives are by the loss of someone we love so dearly. Life doesn't ask whether we want to go along. We want the world to stop turning because of our loss. Days turn into nights, again and again, and this is how we arrived at this day. Suddenly another month, another year has gone by, although we all probably asked ourselves how we would be able to go on living. It just happens. We do not die because of the pain. We keep on living and I still wonder how this can be.

I do not want life to go on, but to stop it right here, or better yet, to turn back to the day when I lost my sister and baby niece. I do not want the changes life brings. Each change seems to increase the distance between the life I knew with them and the life I live today. I cannot ask my sister's opinion about the new things that happen. I cannot share then with her, tell her about them, laugh or cry with her about them. Changes make me aware that in fact life does go on, without her.

My birthdays make me sad because they change the difference in age...my sister was always four years older than I was, and now we are down to three years.

Sometimes I feel guilty that I live on. I smell, breathe, touch, feel, see and experience life, while my sister and her daughter were ripped away from it.

My sister and I never talked about death or losing each other, but if we had, I am sure that we both would have said that we could not imagine life without one another. If it had been me, my

sister would have been forced to do exactly the same; go on living despite the agony, just because there is no choice.

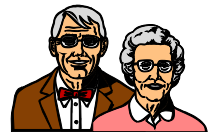
Before I lost them, I trusted life to be good. I believed in fairness; if we are good, life will spare us tragedies and besides, these tragedies only happen to other people, those I do not know, those I read about in the papers, distant, easy to forget about. I lost this sense of security and trust in life. I now find that living takes courage. Life becomes meaningful through love and friendship, but loving someone is what makes us vulnerable. Daring to invite love into our lives means to increase our vulnerability to the threats that seem to be around every corner. Instead of asking "why us?" I often find myself asking "why not us?" Tragedy hits good and bad people for no reason. It seems the world is just random and unpredictable. Just because I am a good person and I already lost so much does not mean that I will be spared from more pain.

Life goes on and because it does, with all the good and bad things that happen to us, it scares me to live and particularly, to love. What if more happens? The fear IS paralyzing. I pray to God, to my sister and my niece to protect us, although I know they don't have the power to prevent other bad things from happening. What then can I ask them for? Courage, I guess.

Courage to let life go on, to give myself a chance that new and good things will happen to me that will add JOY to my life.

--Britta Nielsen TCF, Manhattan, NY

## For Grandparents...



### Normal

Bereaved grandparents frequently report frustration with the expectation that they should return to normal quickly after the death of a grandchild. What friends, co-workers, and even extended family don't seem to understand is that normal will never be the same. We are profoundly changed when a grandchild dies. We approach life differently than before.

Many of us find our religious faith challenged, and comments regarding God's plan or our grandchild being in a better place anger rather than comfort us.

Friendships dissolve when people can't accept

that our grief is debilitating. The intensity of our grief, which is a reflection of the depth of our love, alarms people. Friends might avoid us because of their own discomfort with our grief. Family members may even make critical comments about getting over the loss. Our fast-paced society permits no time for mourning. Look at company policies on bereavement leave. Most companies offer one day for the death of a grandchild. One day off, and then we are supposed to function as though nothing happened.

Unfortunately, we also start to doubt ourselves. We worry that we are doing something wrong when we can't bounce back and return to normal, to life as it was before our grandchild died. Burying a grandchild is not normal. Seeing our bereaved child in pain that we cannot alleviate is not normal. Normal has to be redefined, and the process is gradual. A new normal will evolve, one that takes into account our changed family and our desire that our grandchild not be forgotten.

So the next time somebody questions when you are going to get back to normal, look them straight in the eye and tell them normal is a setting on a washing machine.

--Nina Bennett (AGAST: Alliance of Grandparents, A Support in Tragedy)

## From Our Members...



### Our Children May Not Be Forgotten After All

At one of our TCF meetings, we did the "ask-it-basket", and one question that I put in, which was read aloud, was "What do we do when it seems no one remembers our child?"

The answer walked right up to me the very next week when a friend of mine from work came to say good-bye since she and her husband were relocating due to a new job opportunity. She told me that she would never lose touch with me and especially would never forget my daughter, Alicia's date of death. She now has a little boy of her own. She did not have a child when she attended Alicia's funeral. She was still on maternity leave when Alicia's death anniversary date came this year. She wanted me to know that on this day of each year, she sits down quietly and remembers me and my family. Now that she is a mom, she is

surprised that my husband, Dave, our surviving daughter, Monique, and myself still continue to enjoy life. I told her that we support each other and remember Alicia in all we do. I told her that without TCF, I don't think we'd be this strong or focused.

My friend will be a dear friend for life. Maybe if she didn't have to move out of state, I would have never heard this story from her. So, feel blessed that she did share this with me. I couldn't help but think that maybe all of OUR CHILDREN have probably TOUCHED MORE LIVES than we can ever imagine, both personally, and even those who never met our children face-to-face. I don't think they are as forgotten as it sometimes seems on a lonely or sad day. I think they are in hearts everywhere!

--Becky Jordan, TCF South Bay/L.A , CA

### Heart Connections – No New Photos

This past summer was the ten-year anniversary of the death of my son, Connor. I was struck by the inadequacy I felt about how to describe this very unwanted milestone that came faster than I would have imagined. I didn't like the evident recognition of so many years passing since I last saw, hugged, spoke, and laughed with my only son. I struggled further when I looked for photos that I wanted to post on Facebook as I tried to express what was in my heart at that moment.

Photos tend to mark time and progress. Family photos are guideposts to our updated lives over the decades. How is that true when our child, sibling, or grandchild's photos are frozen in time, and we will never have new photos of them again? Where is that meaning when we have a finite number of photos to recirculate that must tide us over for a lifetime?

Most of us long for new photos that would display the physical growth of our loved one who died. What would our child, sibling, or grandchild look like when they were learning to drive, graduating high school or college, or walking down the aisle in marriage as we witness their friends do over the years? How would they look when cradling their firstborn child in wonder?

We somehow still grow during these years that they are physically absent from us and from our photos. Some of us have other children who pass through all the beautiful milestones and marking

points of their lives that we are privileged and honored to share. New things come into our lives that spring from the person we've become through our loss. We make meaning in our lives in unique ways that we would not have previously imagined. How we live in the world represents growth in honor of the lives we shared with them.

Perhaps when there are photos far in the future that they cannot be present in, their light shines through us in those photos even as their older photos age and date with time. Maybe we carry their light and their lives in significant enough ways that this helps us just a little with the pain of not having new photos. When someone tells me that I have a warm smile in a photo or an air of light in a photo, I know that exists, in part, because of the ways that I live from my love for Connor. May you find the shining light of your child, grandchild, or sibling, in your new photos, no matter how many years have passed, and may this bring you some comfort.

–Shari O'loughlin

Submitted by Linda Curtis

### The Compassionate Friends 47<sup>th</sup> National Conference...



**Will take place July 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in New Orleans, LA** More information will be available soon.

**Welcome New Members...** We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, the people and topics change and need to talk or share fluctuates between each meeting. The next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have

met at the meetings.



**Flash Zoom Meetings ...** are called on short notice, and are of shorter duration. The intent is to check in on each other and share, nothing more. The goal is to meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com) for the link.

**Birthday Table...** In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers or anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or whatever remembrance you choose, in memory of your child. Our child's, grandchild's, or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others. Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday month and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos.

**Newsletter Birthday Tributes...** During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Feb. first for March birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and let me know. I will try to fit them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.





**Get Your Photo Buttons...** Photo Buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at our monthly meetings. If you would like to have some made, call Connie at (310) 292-5381. You can mail her a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) and she can make them for you. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

**Memory Book...** Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book that is on display at each meeting. Each child is given a page in the book. Blank pages are located in the back of the book. Feel free to take a page home to work on. Pictures, poems, or a tribute you choose that will help us to remember your child can be included. Feel free to add your picture to the Memory Book at any of our meetings. This is one way we can meet and remember the new member's children.

**Library Information...** At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found helpful. If you wish to donate a book to our library, please let Lori know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles or poems for submission to the newsletter to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) Also, a friendly reminder, if you have books at home you have checked out and are finished reading them, please remember to return them to our library.

**Thank You ...** Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. A receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes if



you include your name. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter. For donations at the meetings, attach a tribute to your donation to be listed in the newsletter.

**Our Website...** Leo Licciardone is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Thank you to those who are willing to get your newsletter online. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your e-mail address. If you have not been getting a reminder e-mail, please let me know. To update our files, please call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 to update by phone. You can also e-mail Lynn at [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

**Phone Friends ...** Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child, sibling or grandchild with someone that understands and can share your pain. The following friends are on the telephone committee, and are available to talk when ever you need someone who understands.



- Connie Licciardone (chapter co-leader).(310) 292-5381
- Bonnie Mantyla (chapter co-leader).....(310) 530-8489
- Lori Galloway.....(760) 521-0096
- Linda Zelik.....(310) 370-1645
- Mary Sankus..... (310) 648-4878
- Nancy Garcia (Spanish speaking).....(310) 406-5163

**Local TCF Chapters:**

- Beach Cities/L.A. (Manhattan Bch): (970) 213-6293 Third Tue.
- Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.
- Newport Beach (917) 703-3414 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed.
- Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
- Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269
- Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206
- Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
- Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160
- San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
- South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue
- Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
- Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

**Local Support Groups...**

- Family & Friends of Murder Victims: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail [Roseydoll@aol.com](mailto:Roseydoll@aol.com)

**Alive Alone:** For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)

**Survivors of Suicide:** Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Rick Mogil (310) 895-2326 or 24 hrs: (310) 391-1253

**Our House/Bereavement House:** Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also Spanish Support Group, Loren Delgado 310-231-3196.

**Pathways Hospice:** Bereavement support and sibling group. Bill Hoy (562) 531-3031

**New Hope Grief Support Community:**

Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075

**Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place:** Various bereavement support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

**Torrance Memorial Bereavement Services:** (310) 325-9110 Weekly grief support.

**The Lazarus Circle:** Monthly grief support. Meets third Thurs of each month, 6-7:15 at First Lutheran Church, 2900 W. Carson St. Torrance

**Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss:** Contact: Megan Heddlesten (800) 821-6819

**Walk with Sally:** Cancer loss bereavement & art therapy for children- Monica Fyfe (310) 378-5843

**Camp Comfort Zone:** Year round Bereavement Camp for Children [www.comfortzonecamp.org](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org) (310) 483-8313.

**Other Grief Support Websites...**

thetearsfoundation.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivealone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)	
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)	



**A Special Thanks to:**

Staples for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

**Chapter Officers:**

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS: Leo & Connie Licciardone and Jarmo & Bonnie Mantoya

CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

TREASURER: Kristy Mueller

WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

**Steering Committee Members:**

Linda & Joe Zelik

Marilyn Nemeth

Bill Matasso

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Susan Kass

**National Office Information:** Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter: TCF National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters. We encourage everyone use the valuable information it holds to help you in your grief. To receive TCF's e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national website at <http://compassionatefriends.org> and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

**Save The Date:** July 12, 2024 - July 14, 2024 The 47th TCF National Conference will take place in New Orleans, LA from July 12th to 14th, 2024 More info to come.

**The National Office of TCF...** has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. For a complete schedule and to register for Online Support, visit <http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions to register. There is also a closed group chat for specific topics that you need to register for.

**Online Support (Live Chat)...** TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please Note: Times posted on the schedule are based on Pacific Time. Select "enter room" under the chat room you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up. You can keep abreast of any changes by going to:

[www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support)



# DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

The Compassionate Friends is a totally self-supporting organization. Our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, but we do have operating costs. Your tax deductible donation is what keeps our chapter going. When making a donation, please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. chapter.

Mail to: The South Bay/LA chapter of Compassionate Friends  
P.O. Box 11171 Torrance CA 90510

In loving memory of Jason Christopher Jenkins, April 1986 - November 2020.  
Love, Mom and Dad

With sincere gratitude and deep appreciation, we acknowledge the generosity of the previous individuals and companies. Your tax deductible donation, given, in memory of your loved one enables us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and they also help defray newsletter and mailing costs. Please help us reach out to others in this difficult time. Indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter.

**When making a donation, please make checks payable to:  
The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chpt.  
Mail to: The Compassionate Friends So Bay/ L.A. Chapter  
P.O. Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510-1171**

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Death date \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_

Tribute \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends  
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance, CA 90510

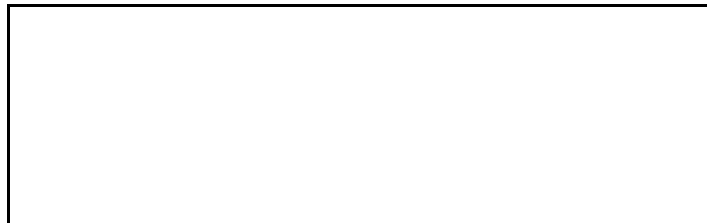
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– Return Service Requested –



February 2024

## Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly



### 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.  
©2024 THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS -- SOUTH BAY/L.A., CA CHAPTER

If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, need corrections, or  
have a new address, please contact us.