

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER No: 201

JUNE JULY 2024

We are the rememberers,
the people left behind,
to keep the one who's gone from us,
alive in heart and mind.
The people left to cherish
and preserve their legacy,
yes,
we are the rememberers
and we will always be.

Grief Watch
Lifted with love from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News

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

RETURN ADDRESS
72 TOTARA STREET,
NEWFIELD,
INVERCARGILL
9812
NEW ZEALAND

TO

OUR CHILDREN

Children's names appear in this column if parents ask when they complete their annual donation form. You are also able to e-mail, write or phone me to have your child's name included.

This column includes names of those children whose anniversary or birthday occur in the months that the newsletter applies for.

You are also able to contact me if you wish to have a poem or piece, with or without a photo of your child included. Once again, this is generally used for children whose birthday or anniversary occurs during the months of the current newsletter. I apologise for any omission or mistakes which I may make and ask that you contact me if this occurs.

Please contact me on 021 2155279, or TCF, Lesley Henderson, 76 O'Neill Rd., 17 D R.D., Windsor, Oamaru or by e-mail tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz

yesterday was a hard day. and i missed you.
today was a good day. and i missed you.
i don't know what tomorrow will bring.
but i. will. miss. you.

-sara rian

Our Children ... Remembered with love

Forever Young

Forever Loved

Forever Longed For

Matthew Alexander Birtles	Born 17/6/2004	Claire Benicarke (Mary Schiehse)	Died 10/6/2004
Richard Cowie	Born 1/6/1974	Lee-Roy Cavanaugh	Died 27/6/2017
Sophie Kate Elliott	Born 11/6/1985	Stefan Francis Cockill	Died 28/6/1994
Hayley Robyn Galpin	Born 29/6/1968	Heath Neil Colina	Died 1/6/2002
Daniel James Gillies	Born 22/6/1986	Randell Coster	Died 2/6/2013
Robbie Knight	Born 9/6/1975	Matthew William Ross Dryden	Died 24/6/2005
Claire Jillian Taiaroa	Born 25/6/1978	Ian Peter Foley	Died 24/6/1987
Ross Templeton	Born 22/6/1996	Allan Stephen Hobbs	Died 27/6/1998
Brendan James Vass	Born 30/6/1986	Callum Warwick Langley	Died 15/6/2006
		Keryn Sarah Langley	Died 15/6/2006
Mitchell James Beaumont	Born 13/7/1976	Shaun Mataka	Died 27/6/2003
Lee-Roy Cavanaugh	Born 12/7/2011	Jessie Adelaide Neaves	Died 5/6/2006
Heath Neil Colina	Born 18/7/1981	Claire Jillian Taiaroa	Died 19/6/1997
Te Ahu Aroha Foley	Born 2/7/1975	Melissa Jane TeHuia	Died 21/6/1998
Ben Paul Gillanders	Born 13/7/1977	Ben Watt	Died 3/06/2005
Matthew David Innes	Born 27/7/1987		
Jake Lucas	Born 10/7/1978	Terry Barnfather	Died 11/7/2000
Anna Ruth Iris Moore	Born 9/7/1974	Matthew Alexander Birtles	Died 1/7/2007
Brent Allan Stenton	Born 19/7/1974	Marcus Fitchett	Died 18/7/1996
Julie Barbara Warren	Born 9/7/1961	Te Ahu Aroha Foley	Died 2/7/1975
Timothy James Williams	Born 6/7/1980	Vicky Knight	Died 1/7/1980
		Aidan Samiel Konise	Died 23/7/2009
		Sara Loo	Died 19/7/2010
		Robert Shane McLaughlin	Died 4/7/2001
		Kirsten Jane Maydon	Died 23/7/1989
		Marie Anne O'Neill	Died 21/7/1985
		Julie Barbara Warren	Died 14/7/1985

Central Otago Compassionate Friends.

Hello Friends,

Hopefully you are holding out for the warmth of Spring,, as facing devastating grief with foggy, bone chilling days will have been far from easy....

The cold weather will certainly not have been encouraging you to seek out a listening ear on the First Sunday of the month at the Clyde Post Office Cafe at 10.30....

We will host an open meeting at my home, 8 Bodkin Rd. Alexandra, on Tuesday 30th July at 4.30 pm, and you would be welcome to join us for a meal at a local cafe afterwards!

Please remember that if you would like a home visit, or a chat one to one, I would be happy to arrange same ...Or reach out by email or phone, anytime

Jan Pessione (Chairperson)

Ph. 027 309 1246

Email: janpessione@xtra.co.nz

PLEASE take very best CARE of yourselves....

Jan



Hello everyone

I am writing to let you know that TCF's founder, Canon Simon Stephens, has been discharged from hospital and has been moved to a care home in Plymouth. His new address is:

The Manor House, 135 Looseleigh Lane, Derriford, Plymouth PL6 5JE United Kingdom

Alison Bender, who is one of our lovely volunteers living in Devon, called in to see Simon yesterday and found him more mobile than has previously been the case. He told Alison that he hopes to go home to his apartment on the Hoe at Plymouth in a month or two but of course this is not certain.

I know that he will continue to be grateful and appreciative of your thoughts, cards and letters.

With warm wishes
Carolyn

Carolyn Brice

Chief Executive TCF UK



Matariki – Maori New Year -- has been celebrated for hundreds of years. In 2022 it became a Public Holiday.

"Matariki will be a distinctly New Zealand holiday; a time for reflection and celebration, and our first public holiday that recognises Te Ao Māori." Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

Matariki is the [Māori](#) name for the cluster of stars known to Western astronomers as the [Pleiades](#) in the constellation [Taurus](#).



Puanga, the star Rigel. Māori in some locations favour the rise of Puanga because Matariki sits low in the eastern horizon and is therefore not always visible from their location. Puanga can be seen in the eastern sky and is celebrated by iwi in Whanganui, Taranaki, parts of the Far North, and parts of the South Island. (Ngāti Apa kaumatua Dr Mike Paki)

The word *Matariki* is the name of both the star cluster and one of the 9 stars within it:

Each star is named and has a traditional meaning in Maori culture.

In the Maori Lunar calendar, the Matariki stars can be seen in the early morning sky during June/July and bring the past year to a close, marking the beginning of the new year. It is also a time of harvest. Historically, the stars of Matariki were also closely tied to planting, harvesting and hunting. If the stars appeared clear and bright, it signified an abundant season.

The stars signify reflection, hope, our connection to the environment, and the gathering of people. Matariki is also connected to the health and wellbeing of people.

- **Waitī** is associated with all fresh water bodies and the food sources that are sustained by those waters.
 - **Waitā** is associated with the ocean, and food sources within it.
 - **Waipuna-ā-rangi** is associated with winter's water, rain, hail and snow.
 - **Tupu ā nuku** is the star associated with everything that grows within the soil to be harvested or gathered for food.
 - **Tupu ā rangi** is associated with everything that grows and lives in the forests: fruits, berries, and birds animals.
 - **Ururangi** is the star associated with the winds.
 - **Hiwa-i-te-rangi** is the star associated with granting our wishes, and realising our aspirations for the coming year
 - **Matariki** gathers people together and connections to the environment
- Pōhutukawa** is the star associated with those that have passed on.

Mātauranga Māori (ancestral knowledge and wisdom) is at the heart of celebrations of the Matariki public holiday and it will be a time for;

Remembrance - Honouring loved ones who have died.

Celebrating the present - Gathering to give thanks for what we have.

Looking to the future - Looking forward to the promise of a new year.



Pōhutukawa



- This star is the star associated with loved ones who have died.
- It is also a beautiful native tree known as the New Zealand Christmas Tree as it flowers brilliant red during our summery Christmas.

Let's remember with fondness and love our children who have gone too soon and look towards a New Year.

Keren Marsh Whanganui TCF June 2024

TEN NON-RULES FOR GRIEVING by Andrea Corrie

I have chosen the title ‘non rules for grieving’ because, from my standpoint of 18 years into grieving for James, and the more recent loss of my brother and three friends, I understand that there are in fact no rules. There may be guidelines, there is plenty of advice, but each person’s grief path is entirely individual, in the same way that our fingerprints are unique to each of us. There are commonalities in grieving but there is no single, blanket description of how it will be for me, for you, or for anyone else.

But pointers along this non-linear process are very helpful and here are ten of mine. I hope they are useful.

Don’t be afraid Grief attracts negative reactions and emotions: fear, anger, guilt, anxiety ... and a sense of isolation that is hard to overcome. The isolation of feeling that the world continues to turn without you having any part of its rotation can leave you fearful and lacking in confidence to do very much; particularly in the early days of loss. Well-meaning people trying to encourage you by saying, “Be strong” and “Be brave” may simply heighten your desire to say that you don’t feel strong or brave today; you feel scared. Don’t be afraid to voice your fears to give others a better understanding of where you are in the process. Naming fear can lessen it and if the worst thing that could happen to you has happened, what can make you truly frightened in the long term?

Stop asking questions We are innately curious creatures and want answers and reasons for everything. Want a recipe? Ask Google. Can’t remember the title of a song? Ask Alexa. But don’t keep asking yourself the questions “Why?” and “What if? ...” You may learn early in the process, as I did, that these questions are futile and never going to be answered. When you keep asking questions, it makes you angry that you can’t get the answers. Identify the anger for what it is and let it rest. Or figuratively throw it in the bin, you don’t need it!

Don’t sideline your grief If you try to ignore your grief, to ‘park’ it in a segment of your mind, you will at some point come unstuck. It is helpful to confront your grief in whatever ways work for you. Within my comfort zone was writing a journal; ranting really, letting all the sorrow and shock spill out onto the page – not for public consumption, but to lighten the weight of the cloak of grief that sat heavily on my shoulders at the outset. I also found, and continue to find, solace in being outside in nature. Nothing is demanded of me other than putting one foot in front of the other, and the lack of distraction means that I can work through whatever is on my mind. Nature doesn’t mind if you’re crying.

Don’t force yourself into meeting others’ expectations Today’s world is all about rushing, busyness, and ‘getting over it’ so you are ‘back to normal’ as soon as possible. People don’t realise, and this is especially true of child loss, that you are never going to be ‘over it’, and you will never again be the ‘normal you’ that they know. You are changed by your experience, and that cannot be undone. It means adapting to fit your new persona, which wears and carries grief. You will become adept at putting on a mask to face the world, particularly in the early days. Take your time, go slowly.

Don’t give up There is no doubt that grieving is hard work. It is tiring, demoralising and painful. It is distressing, sad and can be the loneliest place on earth. But ... don’t give up! Intense grief doesn’t last for ever. Hold onto the fact that you will heal, and you will feel better. Hold onto the store of memories that you have and that you can access any time; they are with you always. Take comfort from the familiar reminders of photographs, clothing, music ... anything positive that you can grasp will help.

Do reach out You do not need to go through this alone. The Compassionate Friends, for bereaved parents, was an absolute lifeline for me. It is therapeutic to be with others who are going through a similar scenario to you, whilst recognising that you are all on an individual route. Putting your emotions into words with others who truly understand offers an unparalleled level of healing, over time. Friendships deepen and grow and become less focused on the initial trauma; these are truly precious relationships. The internet can be your friend if you are seeking appropriate organisations for your situation, and ataloss.org is a useful directory to consult for signposting.

Do learn The more you know about grief and its processes, the more you will realise the normality of your feelings. The power of knowing that you are experiencing similar feelings to others is a confidence boost. Reading or listening to podcasts by bereaved people who are further along the line than you can be immensely helpful. I could not have written my two books without recourse to a great deal of research, reading and conversation about being a bereaved parent, sibling and friend.

Do embrace joy At first it can be hard to allow yourself to have anything approaching fun. Sharing a laugh with someone does not dishonour the memory of your loved one – rather it proves that you can still enjoy life, in spite of and alongside your loss. You are carrying on with life, and being able to look forward instead of back, is ultimately a privilege that has been denied to those whom you have lost, so you need to welcome it with open arms. When moving forward is hard, seek out what makes you smile, rather than be drawn into negative territory.

Do say “yes” and “no” Definitely “Yes” to becoming involved in new projects and activities when you are ready to tackle these; but “No” to anything that saps your energy, drains you, or makes you stressed. You are already stressed with the grieving process and certainly don’t need any additional worry. You may find that you wish to take entirely new directions after loss, challenging your confidence. New achievements will empower your new grief warrior role. You may have a sort of mad bravery that makes you do things like a parachute jump or get a tattoo: things that you wouldn’t have considered previously. Nothing is off limits really, as long as it is legal!

Do look for the light There are many descriptors for the worst aspects of grief and they’re always dark: a pit, a cave, an uncharted map, an unrecognisable planet, a cell... but light can and does dispel the darkness. Darkness does not extinguish light. Whether it is the flame of a candle you have lit, a sunny spring morning, a fragrant bloom in the garden, the birth of a child, or grandchild ... all these precious moments and experiences bring back the light into your world. The mourning light is my descriptor for it: never quite the same as the ‘before’ light but containing qualities I hadn’t truly explored before, such as resilience, memories, friendship, faith and above all, love. When you distil down the grieving process to its nub, what is at the heart of it? Love, of course... If we didn’t feel, we couldn’t love, and if we didn’t love, we couldn’t grieve.

The most beneficial results in grieving will come out of your own experience. You know yourself best and no one else can truly walk your walk. It’s true that loss, whether sudden or expected, upsets your equilibrium in a way nothing else can. Take a deep breath and stride out towards the mourning light. This can ultimately bring you peace and healing from your loss. Godspeed your journey!

Compassion TCF.UK

**Do not wait for life. Do not long for it.
Be aware, always and at every moment,
that the miracle is in the here and now.**

—Marcel Proust Winnipeg Chapter news

VOICES

A book of poetry

Written by

Margaret Gillanders and Sandi Legg.

Poems which feature in our newsletter from time to time.

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

with all proceeds to go to TCF.

To order your copy send \$5 to

TCF

C/- Lesley Henderson,

76 O’Neill Rd., 17 D R.D.,

Windsor

Oamaru

I have personally found that many of my friends and family have appreciated reading this book
as it explains so well the many feelings and emotions

I have experienced but been unable to explain.

Thank-you Margaret and Sandie.

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My grief will change me

My Grief will change me and my perception of life itself. It will have a profound impact on my mind, body, soul and identity. It will shake the cornerstone of my faith. It will throw me into a strange world, where the familiar will seem unfamiliar. It will impact every facet of my life.

My grief will lead me on what sometimes seems like a very solitary journey. It will encompass many emotions and leave me with deep longings and agonizing regrets.

It will open my eyes to the value of a moment. It will teach me to hold plans loosely and loved ones tighter. I will learn the hard way only to share my emotions with a chosen few. I will become less tolerant of some people and insignificant annoyances. It will command I choose my company wisely now and force me to accept who is in my circle of compassion and who isn't.

My grief reminds me of the value of a kind friend. It will prove the unconditional love of my husband and daughters. My grief will rock the very foundation of my identical twin relationship and shift the equilibrium between us.

I will realize I can no longer accommodate, practically or emotionally, another's expectations of me now. My grief is my own and cannot be governed by another. I will learn along the journey that I don't have to apologize for it or for the emotion it pulls, no matter who it offends.

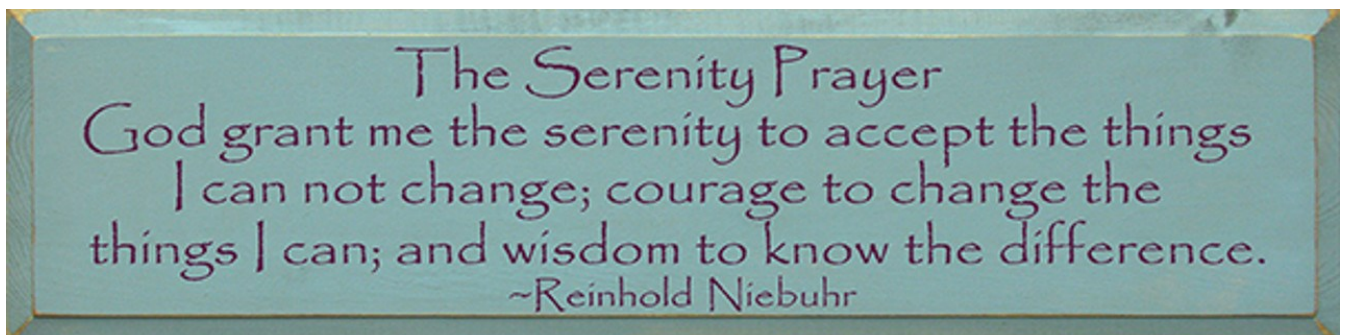
My grief will shift the dynamics between all my siblings. It will lean me towards those with whom I find support, understanding and empathy. It will beckon me to step away from those who disturb my inner peace and slow my progress. It will make me realize that it is not so much who it is that matters, but how they make me feel.

Yet, my grief is not my enemy. My grief is the result of deep love. It is just my ever present companion now and I must accept and embrace it.

It will change my focus to an eternal perspective as I redirect my hope to the things yet unseen. Constantly adjusting and finding a balance, my grief will demand my respect.

Through my grief, I will find the reason to embrace "The Serenity Prayer" like never before.

Reprinted with thanks from TCF/NSW



Soundings

The world may wonder:
are we bound by death,
we who have lost the child
whose breath we shared.

The world should know:
though we may cry at night,
we are not strangers
to the art of laughter.

And sometimes
we reach deeper into life.

Has death then left us
with a finer ear
for listening to the song
of other children?

Sasha
Reprinted from TCF Winnipeg newsletter

GRIEF TRIGGERS

Grief triggers are those reminders, often unexpected, that in an instant can cause a wave of grief to wash over you or even knock you down. You become distracted from what you were doing and find yourself in pain.

A grief trigger can be anything that brings up memories related to your loss. They may be obvious and easy to anticipate – like a birthday or a holiday – or they may surprise you – like spotting someone who looks like your loved one in a crowd. A grief trigger might be tied to an obvious memory or emotion or it may be something that flashes into consciousness and merely leaves you with a sense of sadness and yearning.

Knowing these triggers are out there can cause anxiety. You might fear being blindsided by reminders of your loved one, their death and their absence. Some grieverers will respond by trying to eliminate and avoid reminders such as objects, people and places. While others will try and battle their way through, growing less and less embarrassed by each public outburst of emotion.

Avoidance as a tactic to limit encountering grief triggers can seem helpful. However, when it interferes with your regular day to day functioning, you may need to work on tolerating the possibility of encountering a trigger.

Developing coping strategies can help you to adapt. Coping strategies can include things like having an escape plan or a “safe” person to call when it happens. Planning ahead when you know you will be somewhere that triggers happen for you can be very helpful in managing them and reducing their impact.

In spite of the anxiety that grief triggers can cause, over time, as you progress along your grief journey they can mellow into a positive experience, a reminder of your loved one.

Lifted from the Cope foundation and reprinted in TCF NSW focus

New Normal by Ullie Kay

I don't think we talk enough about how quiet the road gets. How long the waiting feels. How lonely healing can be.

I don't think we talk enough about how undone we become in the valley of grief. Or how enormously we must stretch just to fit ourselves into some kind of new normal and dare to call it life again.

And I don't think we talk enough about how we have no other thing left but to gather up our heavy limbs and carry on.

Because the earth keeps on spinning. The sun keeps on rising.

And the days keep on bleeding, one into the next, regardless of the moment that made all the minutes inside of our heart stand still.

Gratefully reprinted from TFC UK

I never left you

I watch you everyday. I am always very near. I know deep in your heart you realize I am here. I watch you while you sleep in your bed at home. I hear you when you speak to me. When you are on your own. You cannot understand the reason why I have gone. But I'll never leave you. I am there to keep you strong.

Talk to me, I hear you. Though you may not see, We share an unbroken bond, that will always be. Death won't keep us apart, for our love is forever. Just remember me in your heart. And one day we will be together. Love your life and live it full. Don't waste a single day. Remember I am always with you.

John F Connor
Facebook

Every step of the way.

TCF Otago June July 2024

Podcasts reviewed by Wayne Monkleigh (Ewan's Dad) NSW Focus

Losing a child: Always Andy's Mom—Andy's Dad Marcy Larson, M.D. Apple podcasts

With well over 200 episodes these podcasts have been very popular and it's easy to understand why after listening to some. Over time I'll probably review quite a few as each episode has a different guest and a different perspective but just about all of them seem to be specifically for child loss which is a bit rare. I decided to start at the beginning with the very first podcast in the series where Marcy interviews her husband about their son, Andy and the car accident that took his life. It's raw and a new experience when they did the podcast as they had only been dealing with Andy's loss for 12 months. There's some very heartfelt stories about Andy and their family as they remember him and everything he loved and lived for such as music and soccer. They have some amazing stories too and one in particular about a drawing Andy did once really affected me. Another was how Andy was the real force behind their family especially in terms of celebrations which again I could relate to. There are some practical moments too where they share things that helped and those that didn't for them after the accident. Definitely worth listening too and a good episode to start with these podcasts.

Good Mourning podcast Sally Douglas and Imogen Carr Episode, March 24 2023

This podcast is by two very good friends who talk about grief and are “real, truthful and little bit sweary and on a mission to help others feel less alone after loss” They talk openly about a range of topics concerning grief and also have a range of guests too. As I was flicking through the episodes looking for a place to start I saw who was interviewed on an episode from last year and I knew that's where I was going to start. Dr Joanne Cacciatore who I have mentioned many times before. A world renowned author and researcher into grief and also of course a bereaved mother of Cheyenne. I read her work very early on after losing Ewan and her work really struck a chord with me. And this interview is no different. Her insights are thoughtful and full of compassion and understanding. Dr Jo gets grief and can express very complex feelings in such a powerful and clear way even the hosts Sal and Em are surprised by this. It's that clarity she can bring to situations and feelings that always struck me. Dr Jo talks about loss, the complexities of grief and how animals can play an important role in not only companionship but also show us how to grieve. As always I was captivated by her for close to an hour. I'm definitely interested in listening to more podcasts the Good Mourning team have as I liked their open and honest communication. And of course more Dr Jo especially, her YouTube videos on her channel called “bits and pieces” which are short but excellent.

“People who don't understand what you're going through will tell you to 'let go' of a painful experience, as if it were as easy as opening your hand and all of your pain will simply fall away. It is almost as if they think you are willingly holding onto it, as though your feelings are your own fault for stubbornly clinging onto memories you should be forcing yourself to forget.

But painful experiences and the emotions they create within us don't work that way. There is no “delete” key.

What has happened - has happened and nothing can ever change that. And though the pain you are feeling is a heavy burden, it is not one you carry willingly and can simply 'put down' when you are too tired to go on.

It is within you, it is part of you and it has changed you permanently.

But over time you WILL grow stronger and you WILL smile again despite all you have been through. And that is when you will learn that it was never about learning to 'let go' ... it was about learning to carry it with you.”

— Ranata Suzuki (@ranata_suzuki on instagram)

POETRY / MEMORY CORNER

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

I don't know what grief
will look like tomorrow.
But I'll face it.
I'll feel it.
As your memory
washes over me.
One day at a time.
One wave at a time.
For such a love,
Grief is the price of admission.
The cost of the human condition.
So, I'll pay it over and over again
Until I see you again.
The love was worth it.

I Can Hold My Suffering

I sit by the shoreline and watch the
birds for a long time.

A strong breeze pushes in from a new direction.
The birds take one step, suddenly rise,
Turn with their backs to the wind,
and lift up as the currents beckon them.

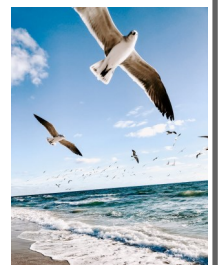
My thoughts flow back to an earlier time.
I was comforting my daughter by her bedside,
as I had done for nearly one year.
Then, one summer afternoon,
after she had held on for as long as she could,
she shifted, turned from this world,
and lifted away in the wind.

I sat alone shaking for a long, long time.
The seasons changed and I robotically followed them.
I felt the sting of the sand on my skin;
I felt the harsh November winds;
I felt the snow curled under me.

And slowly I changed as the seasons did.
I learned to live through each time,
through each cool night, and the bitter cold,
and through the warm, gentle rains.

Each season has a different beauty.
that does not escape me.
I appreciate the glorious moments,
and now, I can hold my suffering.

Faith R. Wilcox - The Compassionate Friends
Gratefully reprinted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter



Don't be afraid to get
back up, to try again, to
love again, to live again
and to dream again.
Don't let a hard lesson
harden your heart.



MyPositiveOutlooks.com

Boxing is a Man's Game



"Ladies and Gentlemen! In the red corner, weighing in at 10,000 pounds, fighting bare-knuckled, undefeated in millions of fights, GRIEF! GRIEF! And in the blue corner, fighting for the first time in his life, wearing six-ounce gloves, YOU! YOU! There is no three-knockdown rule, no standing-seven count, and the fight continues until YOU is dead. Shake hands and come out fighting!"

As a bereaved father, you are in the worst, and most uneven, fight of your life. You can do it all alone, or you can have some experienced trainers and managers in your corner. Take your choice! You wouldn't climb into the ring with Sugar Ray or Ali without all of the help you could beg, borrow or steal. So why do you think that you can fight the most experienced, the most savvy, the dirtiest and most vicious fighter man has ever faced, all by yourself?

By coming to support meetings, you'll meet other bereaved fathers who have fought GRIEF, and they can advise you in your fight. No, they won't get into the ring with you, but they can tell you how to bob and weave, when to duck and hold, how to grab and strike back. They can help to staunch cuts, they can recall strategies that worked for them, and if necessary, they can help you call in the ring physician.

Of course, you can fight it all alone; it is your choice.

The fight never ends. Finally GRIEF becomes tired, and the bout turns to an uneasy truce. GRIEF can still throw out a jab that will knock you to the canvas. But with friends in your corner, your eyes can clear faster, and you can get up quicker. With good handlers, the uneasy truce stage arrives sooner, but it is your choice! You can stay home and never go to a meeting or talk with another dad.

GRIEF vs. YOU. How long do you want to fight alone?

-Tom Crouthamel, TCF Sarasota, FL
Winnipeg



**Some people go through life trying to find out
what the world holds for them
only to find out too late that it's what they bring to
the world that really counts.**

UK Compassion

JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today I will try to live through the next 24 hours and not expect to get over my child's death, but instead learn to live with it, just one day at a time.

Just for today I will remember my child's life, not just her death, and bask in the comfort of all those treasured days and moments we shared.

Just for today I will forgive all the family and friends who didn't help or comfort me the way I needed them to. They truly did not know how.

Just for today I will smile no matter how much I hurt on the inside, for maybe if I smile a little, my heart will soften and I will begin to heal.

Just for today I will reach out to comfort a relative or friend of my child, for they are hurting too, and perhaps we can help each other.

Just for today I will free myself from my self-inflicted burden of guilt, for deep in my heart I know if there was anything in this world I could have done to save my child from death, I would have done it.

Just for today I will honor my child's memory by doing something with another child because I know that would make my own child proud.

Just for today I will offer my hand in friendship to another bereaved parent for I do know how they feel.

Just for today when my heart feels like breaking, I will stop and remember that grief is the price we pay for loving and the only reason I hurt is because I had the privilege of loving so much.

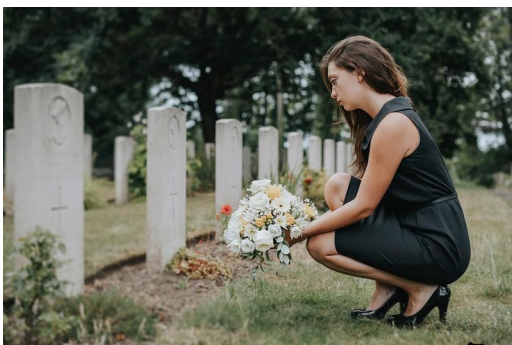
Just for today I will not compare myself with others. I am fortunate to be who I am and have had my child for as long as I did.

Just for today I will allow myself to be happy, for I know that I am not deserting her by living on.

Just for today I will accept that I did not die when my child did, my life did go on, and I am the only one who can make that life worthwhile once more.

by Vicki Tushingham <https://coylayr.tripod.com/pregnancyjournal/id19.html>

Lifted with love from TCF NSW Focus





Sibling Page



Siblings & Grief—10 Things Everyone Should Know

I'm an expert on siblings and grief. Not because I'm a psychologist who specializes in grief. No. I am an expert because I have lost two of my sisters.

As I write, it is September 8, 2013—20 years to the day that my youngest sister, McLean, or Miki as we called her, died. She died of cancer of the kidneys. She was eight years old. I was eighteen. We buried Miki on September 11, 1993, my mom's birthday—a date that would forever be marked for my family, a date that would become marked for the United States, and the world, just eight years later.

On October 17, 2007, my closest sister, Shannon, died. Just 16 months apart, we'd grown up together; we knew each other intimately, we were best friends. Losing Shannon was even harder for me than losing Miki, and not just because we were closer. For one, I was older when she died—I understood loss better—but even more, because her husband had died just two months prior and she left behind two young sons. My husband and I would raise her sons as our own. Tragic as it was—hard as it was to suddenly inherit two sons, and as much as I missed her—I still felt sorrier for my parents, for her children, for her close friends, for everyone but me. I'm just the sibling, I thought. How wrong I was.

How wrong so many of us are about siblings and grief. These two experiences have given me unique insight into sibling grief. I've experienced how the death of two different siblings, at two different times of my life, and in two unique sets of circumstances has impacted my family and me. These two death experiences were completely different. My understanding and the impact these deaths, based on my age when they died, was completely different. But, both of my sisters' deaths had a profound impact on my life.

10 THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SIBLINGS & GRIEF

There are many things people need to learn about siblings and grief. Here are ten I would like everyone to know.

1. Sibling grief is often misunderstood—by parents, families, friends, and counselors, even by the siblings themselves. So much focus is given to the parents of the lost child, to the children of the lost parent, to the spouse of the lost adult sibling. And, rightly so. But, what about the siblings? What about the ones who, like me, have grown up with the deceased? Who believed they would have a lifetime with their sister or brother? Who now face that lifetime alone?
2. Sibling grief "has been almost entirely overlooked in the literature on bereavement." [1] It's no wonder, therefore, that even mental health providers misunderstand sibling grief. How are families supposed to know how to help siblings through grief if even the research on the subject is lacking?
3. Common emotions siblings may feel when a brother or sister dies include: • Guilt • Abandonment • Loss of Innocence • Fallout from the Family • Somatic Symptoms • Fears and Anxiety.
4. Siblings may feel "trumped" by the grief of other family members. I sure felt this way, and it's common, since the focus is usually on the parents if a young sibling dies and on the surviving spouse or children if an older sibling dies. This may lead to minimizing a sibling's own loss.
5. Young siblings lose innocence when a brother or sister dies, which may lead to fears and anxiety; "Survivor guilt" is also common. Experiencing death as a child becomes a lifelong experience of processing and understanding the loss. Children grow up with grief, understanding more as they get older. Fear of death or dying is common. Anxiety or worry about getting sick may become prevalent. In young siblings, guilt for provocative behavior or for unacceptable feelings (jealousy) is common. Young children may think, before the death, "I wish my brother were dead!" then believe they somehow caused it to happen. Older siblings may wonder, "Why them and not me?" Because siblings are usually similar in age, it can bring up many questions about the sibling's own life and death, and guilt along with it.
6. Surviving children do, unfortunately, end up taking the fallout from parents', siblings', or other family members' mistakes, emotional blowups, or neglect. In many ways, siblings often experience a double loss: the loss of their sister or brother, and the loss of their parents (at least for a time, but sometimes, permanently). I know this from experience. Though my parents did the best they could, after my youngest sister died, our entire family was different. My mom retreated into her own grief, staying in her room, depressed and sick for years. My dad retreated into work and anything to take his mind from his pain. Luckily, I was already on my own, in college, at the time; my younger siblings weren't so lucky. At 9, 11, 14, and 17 years

old, they grew up with a completely different set of parents than I had. I tried to step in as a “parent” figure over the years, but the separation from my parents in their time of need profoundly influenced their lives. It profoundly influenced my life. It profoundly changed our family.

7. Siblings may manifest somatic symptoms of grief, including symptoms that mimic the deceased sibling’s symptoms. Especially in young children, symptoms like stomachaches, headaches, nightmares, body pain, digestive symptoms, and trouble sleeping are common. These should be seen as symptoms of grief, and hopefully, an adult in the family can help siblings work through their feelings and show them how to grieve.
8. Having someone explain the loss to younger siblings, to be there for them and help them grieve, is ideal. Little children don’t comprehend death in the same way adults do. It is therefore important to have somebody who can walk them through the loss and the grief process, to explain it wasn’t their fault, to validate what they feel. If parents aren’t able to do so, another family member or friend may, and hopefully will, step in.
9. Even adult siblings will feel the loss deeply. The pain isn’t less simply because you’re older. In fact, in many ways, it’s harder. You understand more. You know what it means to die, and you will feel the pain of the loss in a different way than young children, who still haven’t developed abstract thinking and understanding, will. Grieve your loss.
10. My best advice for siblings in grief: Feel the loss as long as you need to, and give yourself time to heal. Because sibling loss is so misunderstood, you may receive messages that make you feel like you should be “over it by now.” They don’t know sibling loss. Now, you do. It takes time. Lots of time. It’s not about “getting over” the loss of a sibling. You don’t get over it. You create your life and move on, when you’re ready. But you will always remember your brother or sister—the missing piece of your life. I once heard someone say, “When a parent dies, you lose the past. When a child dies, you lose the future. When a sibling dies, you lose the past and the future.”

That is the grief of a sibling—grief for what was past, and grief for what should have been the future. Just remember these things, my friends. Remember to be there for siblings in grief. You can be the difference in helping them create a bright future, even if they now must do so without their beloved sibling. <https://www.drchristinahibbert.com/dealing-with-grief/siblings-grief-10-things-everyone-should-know/>

Reprinted with thanks from TCF NSW Focus

Hands

Jonah Weiss – written for his sister, Emily, who died 12 years ago.

When I think to the past
Where we grew up too fast
Two children that grew up as one
Every hug every kick
every giggle and lick!
You and me
two sides of a coin

Secret walks in the dark
Snowball fights in the park
Normal things
that two normal kids do
But you had places to be
just not down here with me
A destination for one not for two

I don’t think I could stop you
God knows that I’d want to
But when I think of you out there alone
I’d have sat by your side
As the two of us cried
And held on to your hand as you go

Every place that I visit
Every person I meet
One hand will always stay free
And when all goes to black
And there’s no going back
Maybe an outstretched hand I will see ...

Because I know you’d keep it open for me





MISSION STATEMENT

The Compassionate Friends is a mutual assistance self-help organisation offering friend-ship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

The primary purpose is to assist them in the positive resolution of grief experienced upon death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings. The objective is to help those in their community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers and professionals to be supportive.



o you need to talk? Our telephone friends are willing to listen..

Telephone Friends

DUNEDIN	Anne Lelena (Son Colin 22yrs Suicide)	03- 455 9274
DUNEDIN	Ngair Penny (Marlene, 18yr old daughter MVA Nov '91)	03- 455 5391
DUNEDIN	Alexis Chettleburgh (22 yr old son, suicide.)	03-4777649
	Corinda Taylor (Son, 20 years, suicide)	021 2930094
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Pessione (Acting Coordinator) (16 yr old daughter, accidental) janpessione@xtra.co.nz (Marina, 54yrs, Airways Obstruction)	03-4487800
CENTRAL OTAGO	Pauline Trotter (Andre, 25yrs, Car crash)	0273960611
INVERCARGILL	Josie Dyer Vanessa Young (Jaylene 6yrs chemical poisoning) Southland Coordinators	0276321742 0273562271
TIMARU	Phyl Sowerby (Son Cancer 1998)	03 612 -6402
CHRISTCHURCH	Chris Guerin	02102931357
WELLINGTON	Lorraine Driskel Son (twin) 19yrs—car accident	021 688504 lorraine.driskel@gmail.com
KAPITI COAST	Anna Upton (Son, suicide)	04 2936349
PALMERSTON NORTH	Robyn Galpin (Hayley, motorcycle accident)	06 3535929
TAUMARUNUI	Marie and Ron Summers	07 8954879
CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	(Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	
WHANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WHANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yrs, car accident)	06 3443345 marshkandb@gmail.com
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 atsilvester@actrix.co.nz

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz



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