

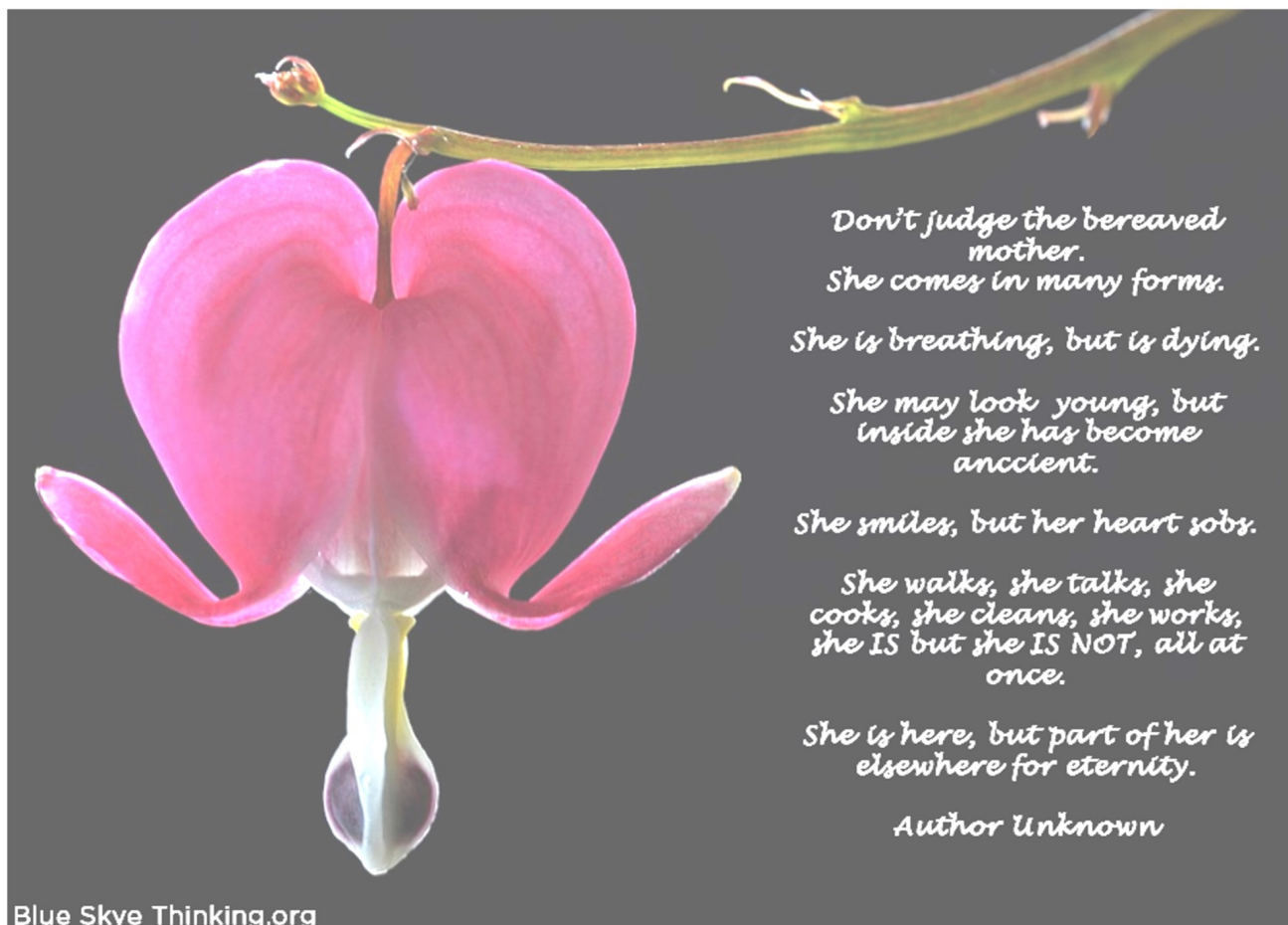
# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated  
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER No: 200

APRIL MAY 2024



*Don't judge the bereaved  
mother.  
She comes in many forms.  
She is breathing, but is dying.  
She may look young, but  
inside she has become  
ancient.  
She smiles, but her heart sobs.  
She walks, she talks, she  
cooks, she cleans, she works,  
she IS but she IS NOT, all at  
once.  
She is here, but part of her is  
elsewhere for eternity.  
Author Unknown*

Blue Skye Thinking.org

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](mailto:tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz)

## INTERNATIONAL BEREAVED MOTHER'S DAY

The first Sunday in May is International Bereaved Mother's Day, falling this year on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

This day is dedicated to all mothers who lost a child and those who cannot be mothers due to infertility or health reasons. Losing a child might be one of the worst traumas a human being can experience. In the United States, 10,000 children below 15 years old died in 2018. As a result, mothers tend to suffer physical and mental health issues linked with unresolved grief. The occurrence encourages mothers to seek help, whether from professionals or women support groups with similar experiences. IBMD was started in 2010 by Carlie Marie Dudley in honor of her stillborn son, Christian.

## Our Children ... Remembered with love

### Forever Young

### Forever Loved

### Forever Longed For

Andrew Meldrum Cox	Born 16/4/68	Rebecca Elizabeth Arnold	Died 6/4/02
Jack Stephen Dyer	Born 24/4/07	Rebecca Clare Halkett	Died 20/4/03
Simon Blair Marsh	Born 8/4/84	Greg Holley	Died 6/4/85
Nicholas Ian O'Hara	Born 17/4/74	Matthew David Hubber	Died 30/4/00
Caren Amanda Phillips	Born 16/4/81	Sally Verone Kitto	Died 23/4/01
Alan Bruce Scoringe	Born 26/4/66	Robbie Knight	Died 18/4/96
Anthony Mark Staite	Born 5/4/74	Jake Lucas	Died 26/4/77
Jonathon Upton	Born 15/4/68	Nikolaas Remmerswaal	Died 1/4/12
		Gary Brendon Thompson	Died 9/4/96
		Hayden Watson	Died 11/4/97
Rebecca Elizabeth Arnold	Born 9/5/1978		
Nicholas Evan Hood	Born 12/5/1985		
Vicky Knight	Born 21/5/1980	Paul Graham Albrecht	Died 19/5/2004
Paul John Nicolaou	Born 21/5/1964	Michael Barry Duke	Died 20/5/2005
Cindy Parish	Born 25/5/1965	Ben Henderson	Died 15/5/2003
Liam Vettors	Born 1/5/2005	Erica Kewish	Died 14/5/2014
David Jason Eugene Walker	Born 7/5/1993	Thomas Craig McDonald	Died 25/5/2008
James Wing	Born 31/5/1980	Maryann Gaye Pearce	Died 27/5/2000
		Wayne Edward Summers	Died 9/5/1999
		David Jason Eugene Walker	Died 13/5/ 2000
		Peter Gregory Warren	Died 17/5/1998
		Dan Wells	Died 13/5/2003
		Timothy James Williams	Died 29/5/2005

As Mother's Day looms again on the calendar let's remember the privilege it was - to have our child - for however long - hours, weeks, months, years.

We in Whanganui will honour bereaved mums next Saturday at our regular meet.

May 5 is Bereaved Mother's Day : May 12<sup>th</sup> is NZ Mother's Day  
We have a busy programme ahead which is made more difficult as we are a bit thin on the ground for personnel.

In August we will join with a local women's festival called Winter Wonderfest. We plan two events **Tear Soup** which is an amazing American, grief programme: likening our grief to mixing a pot full of ingredients for soup. We will serve real soup and rolls and then go through the programme. You can find this online under **Tear Soup**.

Also we plan a family workshop "Sad is not bad" in conjunction with the local library to showcase books on grief, death and emotions for kids. and do some activities too. (See the Bookshelf on our website)

Talking of online, besides **Tear Soup** there are 3 sites I have linked into and sometimes pick up some interesting ideas and clips.

**Griefwatch.com**

**Goodgrief.com**

**Whatsyourgrief.com**

All three are worth a look

**What's your grief** have a side project called

**Grief in six words-** here you can share your grief in just 6 words.

That is quite a discipline. Give it a go! eg,

Your single stone left infinite ripples - Jennifer

My heart beats and breaks simultaneously - Ilana

I dread Mother's Day without you - Me

Moving on. In September/October, when our newly planted tree blossoms at the Cemetery we plan to focus on baby loss. And decorate the Children's trees as we do annually.

Then it will be time for Candle Lighting in December if we are not rained off as we were in 2023.



A sincere wish from us all in Whanganui

*Dear Friends,*

*I recently received the following letter from TCF UK*

Dear Friends

Over last weekend I had an email from Simon Springett, who is a former Royal Navy Chaplain and colleague of one of the founders and patrons of TCF, Canon Simon Stephens. They both live in Plymouth. He wrote to let me know that Simon Stephens was taken ill earlier this year having had a stroke and is currently in hospital in Plymouth. As you are aware, Simon Stephens does not have close family and it took the hospital some time to get in contact with Simon Springett, who helps to run the Association Of Royal Navy Chaplains. Simon has been to see Simon Stephens in recent days and told me that he is in good form all things considered.

I have sent Simon Stephens a card from myself and all at TCF – as you know he was so instrumental in setting up our charity so many years ago and TCF is really like a ‘family’ to him. His foresight and intuition in putting the two sets of grieving parents – the Lawleys and the Hendersons - together in Coventry hospital was the start of TCF in 1969 and he will never really truly know the huge difference his act all those years ago has made to so very many bereaved parents. You can read a little more about the history of TCF and Simon Stephens’ part in the start of our charity here: <https://www.tcf.org.uk/our-history/>

Simon Springett mentioned that Simon Stephens would be so delighted to receive a card from anyone he knows at TCF and if you felt able to do that his address is as follows:

Canon Simon Stephens OBE,  
Wembury Ward  
Mount Gould Hospital  
200 Mount Gould Rd  
Plymouth  
PL4 7QD.

I thought you might wish to know. Please do feel free to share this information with anyone who know Simon Stephens or you feel should know about his current ill-health. Thank you.

With warmest wishes

Carolyn

Carolyn Brice  
Chief Executive

We have sent a letter (see next page) from NZ thanking Canon Stephens for his foresight in recognizing that Bereaved parents and siblings are generally the best people to support other bereaved parents and siblings. Without him there would probably not be The Compassionate Friends and personally I am so grateful as TCF have been pivotal in my doing as well as I have since the death of Ben. My thoughts and prayers are with Canon Stephens.

To all bereaved Mothers around NZ I wish you all a Mothers day filled with love. It can be difficult to have a “happy” day, depending on where you are in your grief journey but hopefully you have some happy memories of your beloved child/children to warm your heart and some loving family or friends to share these with.

Take care of yourself and your family,  
Lesley Henderson

*From all Compassionate Friends in NZ we have sent the following letter to Canon Simon Stephens.*

13th April 2024

Dear Simon,

I will take the liberty of calling you Simon as you are well known to me through my involvement with TCF in New Zealand.

Also, it is a blessing to use the name Simon as our son was Simon too. He died in a car accident 16 years ago at the age of 23. This year would have been his 40th birthday but to us he will always be 23.

My husband Barrie, myself and our elder son Andrew were introduced to TCF here in Whanganui not long after Simon died.

The group had folded here some years previously, but a faithful lady dreamt of the day it would restart. She was known to us and she encouraged us to take it on. She is in her 90s now and is still on our Trust Board as a wise mentor. Her name, Nina Sandiland.

We wanted to make sure our Simon had not died in vain and so for the last 13 years we have led the group here. We meet monthly for Coffee care and chat in a local café. We also facilitate some Grief-related workshops etc as well as the Worldwide Candle Lighting in December (We were rained off in 2023 as we hold it on our local lake and there is no shelter).

We keep in touch by email and post and have had contact with many people. We operate by using community funding which enables us to send memorial cards to our contacts on the anniversary of their child's death. And keep in touch on Mother's Day, Father's Day and other festivals.

We are a small group here in Whanganui but we host a NZ wide web site and a private face book page. The Whanganui and New Zealand TCFers join me in wishing you every blessing on your recovery and pray the Lord will grant you the peace and comfort you have given to so many.

Be encouraged. You do not walk alone.

Yours sincerely Keren Marsh

TCF Wanganui NZ

Dear Simon,

I am so grateful that you had the foresight in 1969 to introduce the Lawleys and the Hendersons who then founded The Compassionate friends with your encouragement and support.

I was introduced to TCF 21 years ago following the death of my 14 year old son Ben. When I did get up the courage to attend my first meeting I was immediately at ease with the other bereaved parents there and it was so comforting to talk with others who understood how I was feeling and things I was doing. As well as the meetings the comfort and hope I received from reading the 2 monthly newsletter helped me and my family so much. After a year, when the then editor stepped down, I took over as editor and this has been a privilege that I believe has also helped me in my grief journey.

In the South Island we have 2 chapters operating at the moment, Southland and Central Otago and so many bereaved parents and siblings benefit from their support.

Simon, your understanding that the shared experience would enable bereaved parents and siblings to connect and share their stories in a way that comforts and allows us to grieve as we should, has helped so many people world wide. I send you my love, thanks and prayers.

Thankyou,

Lesley Henderson.

### Central Otago Compassionate Friends.

Kia ora dear friends,

Mother's Day is something a lot of us face with anguish, but hopefully we will each develop strategies to help us get through it in our own way....

If any of you would like to like to meet up with one of our COCF committee over coffee, please feel free to come to the Post Office Cafe ( Clyde) at 10.30 am the first Sunday of the month starting on 5th May.

Should anyone like to access Able Minds  
Opportunity to discuss 'Grief' you are welcome to go to their rooms,  
28 Ashworth St Alexandra, on Thursdays, 10-12 noon. (0800 494262) with  
Jo Galletly our contact there.

Should you wish to have a visit, or would like to reach out for a listening ear, please either phone or email me at ANY time..

With snow on the hills, do keep warm, & please take best ever care of yourselves...

Jan (Pessione)Ph: 027 309 1246  
Email: janpessione@xtra.co.nz

## I'm a Grieving Mom.

This is The One Thing I Most Want To Hear On Mother's Day

By Danielle Roderick, Published on Huffpost, May 11, 2023

We think about our children all the time. We like to know you think of them, too.

“On Mother’s Day, I can think of no mother more deserving than a mother that had to give one back.” Erma Bombeck said that. I like Erma — I like that there is a writing retreat in her honor where a writer gets a free two weeks at a Marriott in Dayton, Ohio. I like that she didn’t give an inch when it came to writing, or motherhood. I also like that she paid attention to us bereaved moms, and wasn’t sappy about it.

Six years ago, my second son was stillborn. There is no sentence that can sum up such a thing, so just trust me, it was unimaginable. His death rearranged most things in my life, and I say with more than a little pride that it is truly something to be a functioning person again, to be a parent to my living children, to have survived the great lightning crack of grief that came for us and that still zips through me at a low current. But every year, Mother’s Day shows up, ready to wrestle with me.

My first few Mother’s Days as a new mom were bright and giddy — pancakes and flowers and finger-painted cards. It felt like a lovely (though very short) day of honor for the insane effort that parenting demanded. I slept late, I got a necklace with my kid’s name on it, I was a mom doing mom things. And then, our second son died, and Mother’s Day became this great huge bruise.

The first year of grief, I was afraid of the day. I wanted to hide, to avoid the sight of smiling women fêted with flowers or running away to a hotel room for the night to escape their kids. I was bitter, angry, offended by a world that was so joyfully uninterested in my loss. And I desperately wanted to be known not just as a mother, but as his mother. I wanted to hear his name. I wanted people to reach out and recognize that this day, of the many hard days in the year, might be a doozy, too. Nobody did.

In my half-decade of doing this holiday with the hard and unwanted title of “bereaved parent,” I’ve grown less bitter. I know people don’t keep catalogs of all of our personal tragedies, and I know that others do remember but choose not to say anything, in case it would make us sadder. Here’s the thing, though: Most of us bereaved parents don’t want that kind of protection. We think about our children all the time. We like to know that you think of them, too. Not hearing all your children’s names on Mother’s Day can feel like a great erasure. I have living children, and when folks don’t mention my child who died, I assume they don’t see him as part of my mothering experience. If I’m feeling really low, I can quickly jump to the conclusion that nobody remembers him except me, or even that my community doesn’t care about one of the most defining experiences of my life.

What I wish for every year are small nods. A text that says, “Hey, I know this day may be hard for you.” A note that wishes me a gentle day and includes my son’s name. Any acknowledgment that I am a mother who mothered in the hardest of ways, that I am and was a good mom to all my kids. It would be a wonder to know my friends still see the love I carry for my son, and love me for it. I don’t need accolades. What I really want is to know that my community sees me and the full package of what mothering has been in my life. I’ll double down on this request for the bereaved parents who don’t have living children. For a mom like that, Mother’s Day might become a giant question she can’t ask out loud — wanting to know if the world can reflect her own identity back to her as a mother. The worst thing to do for a person like that, unless she has specifically requested it, is to say and do nothing.

So here’s my Erma Bombeck-inspired plea, in the name of anybody you know who might be grieving their child this Mother’s Day, even if that child died decades ago. Be nice to us. Acknowledge us. Say something. Whether it’s your sister, friend, cousin: Reach out. Send that text and say her child’s name when you talk about her family. Be brave! I volunteer at a support group for bereaved parents, and I’ve never met a parent who didn’t want to hear their child’s name, or have somebody join them in appreciation for the love they hold for their child. The best Mother’s Day gift you can give is the nod that you see us as moms, and not just a version of a mom that makes you feel comfortable. The slightest gestures can be profound and joyful, an act of true connection.

Years ago, a woman I’d met once and friended on Facebook was enjoying her first Mother’s Day as a mother. She was a poet, and throughout the day, she posted 300 times, exuberantly shouting out all the variations of mothers in our culture. To single mothers! To those without mothers! To her mother! To those who mother the neighbor’s kids! It was an endless, glowing list of respect for the many versions of mothers there are. The recognition was breathtaking, life-giving. I think of her joy now, as I head into this next Mother’s Day. I want to coast off of her insistent exuberance.

This year, I will send out my wish for other bereaved moms, a really simple one: May you hear your child’s name today.

Lifted with thanks from TCF Focus NSW

## Mothers Day - Motherhood

(Taken from TCFV magazine, April / May 1997)

We clever creatures known as humans know lots of things. We know how to bury petty grievances, intolerances, the past and ‘the hatchet’, but we don’t know how to bury our children. This essential and vital part of us that by nature must live on and survive us, thus ensuring the continuation of the human race, has abruptly disappeared from our lives.

And we are left to flounder in shock, the pits of despair enveloping us like a claustrophobic perspex dome. We cope with normal grief – the loss of family and friends that sadly runs a natural course through our lives, albeit a seemingly unsatisfactory system and one we reluctantly go along with, but we cope. But our children predeceasing us is something else again.

Inexplicable in its harshness and abuse of our maternal senses, unfair in the extreme. We who had dreams of the future in our children have had to be parted from them with little or no warning or preparation for the ferocity of the hurting to follow. And Mother’s Day continues to come around with cruel and thoughtless regularity, forever more to remind us of the sweet joys of motherhood now turned sour.

But tolerate it we must, if only for the sake of our remaining children for whom we need a nudging reminder, in our pain, that we are still their mother. And we go on because something deep within us keeps needling us to believe that despite the impossibility of changing this situation, somewhere and someday we are going to feel differently to the way we do right now.

And life IS going to get better and become livable again. Our old world IS going to come together again like a jigsaw puzzle – always a piece missing but with a certain feeling of gratitude, satisfaction and relief that the other pieces fit together again.

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Shirley Tudor Bereaved mother of Dean  
Gratefully reprinted from TCF Victoria Newsletter

## Still a Mother by Angela Miller

*I dedicate this to each and every mother who lives without her precious child(ren), to every mother who has no living children, and to every woman who longs to be a mother. We see you. We remember you. And we honour your motherhood. You are a beautiful, beautiful mother.*

Mother's Day can be a wonderful day for many women. A day of celebration, honour and love. But for those of us who are mothers of children gone too soon, Mother's Day is often filled with dread, sorrow and insatiable longing. It's marked by a visceral ache that spills from our heart to the depths of our bones. It's punctuated by an ever-present hole in our hearts, in our lives, so deep and wide, that no one and nothing can fill it. Our arms are empty, yet we long for them to be full. We are mothers, but the world often forgets— especially if we no longer have living children to carry and hold outside our hearts. . . .

As bereaved mothers, our deepest cry and longing is for our motherhood to be honoured and recognized. For all our children, in heaven or on earth, to be remembered. Honoured. Celebrated. For someone to yell from the rooftops, or to quietly whisper in the silence: Yes, you are still a mother!!! You'd think this would be a simple request, something that would surely happen. You'd think anyone and everyone would give us this gift. But year after year, on this seemingly special day, bereaved mothers feel left out. We're left out of the pastors' sermons at church. Left out of the montage of flowers and chocolate and Mother's Day well-wishes. Left out of the conversations and celebrations of motherhood. Left out of the "Happy Mothers Day" messages that flood social media. And we bleed. . . .

It's hard being the mother of a dead child on Mother's Day. By hard, I mean torturous, and even that word falls short. You want your child recognized by name, validated as a real person who lived. You want someone to step in and offer to carry a piece of your pain for just a minute, an hour, a day— especially on this day. This day that is supposed to honour and celebrate all mothers. You want a shining soul to see you, to truly get it (for even just one second.) You want a brave and daring heart to compassionately climb in the ditch with you, lie down beside you, and just be with you, smack in the middle of your whirlpool of Mother's Day tears.

The sad truth? There are few who can do this. And even fewer who will. . . . I remember my first Mother's Day after the death of my only son like it was yesterday. Every cell in my body was dreading the day. The mere thought of Mother's Day filled me with palpable anxiety from the tips of my hair all the way down to my toes. You see, as loss moms we know and anticipate that the world will forget us. We know. We know because it happens all day, every day in our post-loss life. Our motherhood denied. Ignored. Stomped on. Crushed. Not recognized, honoured or even simply stated. We know on Mother's Day people will forget how to count. All our children. (In my case that only means counting up to three.) We know our children gone too soon will no longer be included in the routine 'how-many-kids-do-you-have' count. We know the gaping hole in our family tree will go unnoticed. We know the most important names will be missing from our Mother's Day cards. We know it's going to happen. Our children, forgotten— their existence, denied. And yet? No amount of preparing prepares the broken heart for the excruciating pain of more salt poured in its wounds. Even if it is with the best of intentions. It burns.

Knowing our motherhood and our children won't be recognized does not make it one ounce more bearable. At all. In fact, it makes the anticipation of, and the day itself, filled with dread. The thought of "celebrating" Mother's Day feels impossible. Surviving it is generally the goal. And even that feels like a lofty one. The Mother's Day landmines are too many to count. For some, staying in bed with the covers overhead until the day passes is the most reasonable solution. Having your motherhood ignored on a daily basis is torture; but on Mother's Day, the one day of the year all mothers should be celebrated, honoured and recognized? There aren't words for the ache, for the pain of being forgotten, for the dread of knowing you will be. . . .

All I wanted my first Mother's Day after the death of my son, was simple: for someone to remember him, for someone to remember I was a Mother, with a capital-M. To have both my motherhood and my son acknowledged was the only gift I wanted and needed that year. For anyone to kindly say, "Yes, you are still a mother." For someone to say, "I see you. I love you. You are an amazing mother to your precious son." Unfortunately, most people didn't remember that year. Most people didn't remember I ever had a son. Even though it had only been a few short months since he had walked the earth beside me. Most people forgot I was ever a mother, and still a mother, on a day that ironically was in fact founded by bereaved mothers themselves. The world's message to me was loud and clear: "No, you are not still a mother." . . .



That year I received one Mother's Day card. One. It came from someone I didn't even know well, but let me tell you, that card made my year. It made my life. It made breathing a little easier, a little lighter, every hour of that wretched day, and every day for the rest of that year. Inside the fibers of that paper held hope. I still have that card. And I will always keep it. That one acquaintance decided to step out in bravery and in love to acknowledge what no one else could or would: not only was I still a mother, but I always would be. Always. It was a message my heart longed for and desperately needed to hear. One I clung to and cling to still. That \$3.99 Mother's Day card became my lifeline. It gilded the cracks of my heart with love. With honour. With pride.

To be acknowledged as the mother of my precious son still— and always— was the gift of all gifts. Someone finally saw me, all of me, and my broken open heart will never, ever forget it. . . .

To every courageous loss mama, with an aching heart and empty arms, I leave you with this: Yes, you are a still a mother, and you always, always will be. The love you two share is forever, just as your motherhood is forever. No one can take that away from you. Not today, not on Mother's Day, not ever. You will always be your precious child's mother. Always. Even though heaven and earth separate you, even if no one remembers, even if the world tells you you're not. You are. You are. You are.

Lifted with love from TCF Johannesburg Newsletter

## I held a party the other week and grief came... By Becky Hemsley 2023

She wasn't invited but she came anyway - barged her way in through the door and settled down like she was here to stay.

And then she introduced me to the friends she'd brought with her - Anger. Fear. Frustration. Guilt. Hopelessness.

And they sang in the loudest voices, took up space in every corner of the room and spoke over anyone else that tried to talk. They made it messy and loud and uncomfortable.

But finally, they left.

And long afterwards, when I was all alone, I realised there was still someone here. Quietly clearing up after the rest.

I asked who she was and she told me, "Love."

And I assumed that's why she looked familiar - because I had met her before.

"Or perhaps," she said, "it's because I've been here the whole time."

And I was confused then because I hadn't seen her all evening. But when I looked more closely, when I looked into her eyes, I realised quietly that she had been here.

All the time.

She'd just been dressed as grief.

*"A mother's love for her child is like nothing else in the world. It knows no law, no pity. It dares all things and crushes down remorselessly all that stands in its path."*

- AGATHA CHRISTIE



TOWN&COUNTRY

Life doesn't  
come with a  
manual. It  
comes with a  
mother.

"A mother's love is  
eternal and  
unconditional."

ABC RADIO FM

## *When I'm gone*

When I'm gone and the minutes turn into hours, and the hours turn into days, the heaviness inside your heart may seem too much to bear. I know you will long to hear my voice, see my face, sit beside me, tell me you love me, hear my laugh, or just have those simple conversations we once had. I know that it probably hurts more than anything else ever has, and you feel like you just cannot go on.

I am sorry I had to go. What I want you to understand is that even though all of that physical stuff is gone from sight, our love will never cease to exist. The love that we share is what will carry you through. Our ties, our bond, and our love cannot be severed. Love is the most powerful force on Earth and transcends all...even death. Life will be different when I'm gone; you won't like it and you may want to fight it. You will want to scream out loud in agony, but when you pick yourself back up off the floor, like I expect you to, remember our love. Let our love emanate through your body. I am there, our love is there; I am just gone from sight.

I have high expectations of you now that I am gone. When every cell in your being wants to give up and wallow because the sadness and pain is unbearable, I want you to take some time and allow yourself that, but then I need you to put two feet on the ground for me. When you cannot do it for yourself, do it for me. I no longer have that privilege. You are going to want the world to stop turning, and you will want to holler at all of the people continuing their lives while you are stuck in this vast array of darkness; but when it is dark, I want you to wake up and watch the sun rise. I know that awakening from your slumber may be one of the hardest tasks because the reality of me gone is excruciating. Each day, when you feel like you cannot put one foot in front of the other, watch the sun slowly come up through the clouds and know that I am still there with you. When night falls and the sorrow rears its ugly head, go outside and look up at the stars and the moon and realize the intricacies of the universe and speak to me; I am there. With the change of every season, think of me and find a way to honor my spirit. As the spring showers start falling and birds start singing, take a moment to take it all in and appreciate the beauty. During the summer enjoy the warmth of the sun on your face, the flowers, and the insanely beautiful summer storms and rainbows. I will be in each one of these things. As fall begins to come around the corner...enjoy the crisp air, and as you watch the leaves fall from the trees, realize that this death will soon give way to a rebirth of life. When the snow starts falling for the first time, go outside and be mesmerized and let the snowflakes fall on your tongue...enjoy each breathtaking moment.

When you find yourself traveling the world, dip your toes into the ocean, feel my spirit there beside you. I am everywhere you are. We are always connected, you just need to find a way to keep that connection...it may be through a butterfly, or a song, a rainbow, or a beautiful sunset, or some crazy thing we did together, but it is there, and it will always be there. You now have the opportunity to expand your heart into something you didn't know existed; I have no doubt in your ability to do so.

Most importantly I need you all to live your lives with strength and love. I want you all to live boldly, with passion and determination. I expect you to love with everything inside of your soul, unapologetically. Love is all we have to give of ourselves, and love is what is going to carry you through this unbearable pain. So when I am gone, love big, love fully with every piece of your heart, and don't leave anything left unsaid.

Speak my name often. Close your eyes and open your spirit and you will feel me beside you...guiding you every step of the way. I don't want you to ever forget that even though I am gone from sight, our love is not, I am just a conversation away, so talk to me...tell me your joys and your sorrows, I still want to be a part of it all. When I am gone, and you are feeling lonely for my presence, read this quote over and over until you don't feel quite as lonely, and remember I will always love you!

“Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes. For those who love with their heart and soul there is no separation!” ~Rumi

Much love, Jill Kottmeier Reprinted with permission from Grief Digest, Volume 13, Issue #2  
Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter



# 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.

## When the Ambush Comes

You might be standing in line at the bank,  
Perhaps taking out the trash after midnight,  
the moon somehow too bright.  
If you can predict the quick tears,  
the tight throat, that's not the ambush.  
That's just grief.

The ambush comes when you're laughing.  
Or when you're eating popcorn.  
Or when you drive by a parking lot  
where once you practiced parallel parking  
with the one who is no longer here.

The ambush might come  
when you've just put on mascara.  
Or when you're talking on the phone  
to customer service.  
Or when you're dusting the piano  
where once your loved one sat  
and practiced the theme to Pirates of the Caribbean  
over and over and over.  
And over.

And then you're crying again.  
Not that you mind it.  
Not that you're surprised.  
You don't even apologize anymore.  
This is what happens now.  
It's what love looks like.  
You call it life.

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer from her daily blog,  
A Hundred Falling Veils  
Gratefully reprinted from TCF Winnipeg Newsletter

## WHEN WE REALISE

When we realise that it is not possible  
To turn back the clock.  
And we accept, however hard  
that this is now our life  
Without them.  
Then we open a door as the other shuts,  
A door to giving back.  
And somehow it seems  
as if our child has beaten us there,  
greeting us just inside that new door,  
Welcoming as if to say,  
"How could you have taken  
so long to find me here?  
We have work to do. You and I."  
And in the accepting,  
the giving up of the old reality,  
Now no longer real,  
Somehow we find ourselves  
And find again our children.

Carolyn Salter  
Lifted from TCF Focus NSW



## Journaling – How to Start

Journaling has long been viewed as an effective coping strategy for people dealing with grief. This is because privately filling a page with words, images or more can be a completely freeing exercise, allowing you to express your thoughts and emotions without fear of judgement from the outside world. It can help with self-reflection, giving you a way to sort through any muddled or complicated feelings, and it can help you to understand your grief from a different perspective when you start to write things down. Your journal can become your own private and safe place to let your thoughts out, and it's somewhere you can go whenever you need to. You are in control of what you write, how often you write and when you write. This can be really healing when life feels out of control.

**What is a grief journal?** Your grief journal can be whatever you decide you want it to be: a space to hold memories, a notebook of your personal feelings or a conversation with the person you're grieving for. It can be somewhere private for you to express your thoughts; both the ones you understand and the ones that don't make sense just yet. And it can also be a place for you to reflect on your journey through grief over time, recognising progress and noticing change. Ultimately though, it's yours to create and use in any way that feels right for you.

**The benefits of keeping a grief journal** The benefits that come with keeping a grief journal will depend on how you use it, but it's common for journaling to help people: become more aware of their emotions, make sense of their thoughts as they write them down, feel uncensored, unjudged and free to express whatever is on their mind, keep their memories safe, feel less stressed, find sleep more restful, reflect on their grief journey and notice how it is changing over time. The process of journaling in itself helps us to slow down and be more reflective. As you transform your internal world of feelings into words or images on a page, you might find that your grief starts to feel more manageable.

**What can you put in your grief journal?** There are no rules when it comes to what you can put in your grief journal. Three swear words might be enough for one entry, while another day might see you write three pages of thoughts instead. It's your personal space to write, draw, scribble or stick down anything that you want. Some things that come out might be unexpected or scary, but that's OK. It's just part of the process of expressing yourself, and you may even feel a sense of relief when they are out on a page rather than just inside of you.

**Grief journal prompts to help you get started** Although the freedom that comes with starting a grief journal may be exciting to some people, we also know that trying to fill a blank page with your thoughts or feelings can be intimidating too. That's why, we've pulled together a list of written prompts to help you get started.

*Today, I am really missing...* You may want to write about the person you're grieving for; what they look like, how you remember them, or what you'd want to say to them if they were here.

*The hardest moment today was...* You could focus your journal entry on what you found difficult about your day, or spend some time exploring how you might be able to cope differently next time.

*I have been feeling...* You might not always feel comfortable talking to the people in your life about how you feel, but your journal can be a safe space for you to express your emotions.

*Something that helped me cope today was...* Keeping a record of what has helped you feel better can be useful to refer back to during the more difficult moments of your grief. You might want to note down conversations with friends, podcast series or anything that's made you smile that day.

*My favourite memory of you is...* Use your journal as a way to collect and reflect on the photographs, moments or stories you want to keep close.

*I wish the people around me knew...* If you're not sure how to say the things you want to say to the people around you, try writing your thoughts down first. This can give you the chance to make sense of them before you start your conversations.

*Today, I'm going to practise self-care and try to...* It's common for people to forget to take care of themselves when they're grieving. That's why taking the time to set out what self-care activity you're going to try can be a helpful reminder to make your well-being a priority.

*Getting started with grief journaling* If you feel ready to try journaling, here are some top tips to help you get started. Pick your journal Do you want lined paper in your journal, or would you prefer blank pages instead? Do you want a particular colour or size, or are you looking for a digital way to journal instead? The choices may seem overwhelming, but remember that you can always change your mind. Sometimes it's better to start with what you have and figure out what's right for you along the way. Bianca says, "I worked

with a client on this and they started to write on loose pieces of paper, keeping them safe in a metal box. On the last day of every month, they would look at them to see if they wanted to take any of those thoughts and feelings into the new month. What didn't make it was burnt, and the rest was reviewed again a month later, alongside the newer additions. This way, the client could see and feel that things were changing and it helped them feel unstuck. It also made them feel like they had choice and control in a journey of mastering of their grief."

*Explore your thoughts* Remember not to be too strict about what you can or can't put in your journal and don't worry about making mistakes. Experimenting is all part of how you learn to make sense of your grief and what it means for your life moving forwards. Try to stay consistent Set achievable goals to help you stay motivated in the beginning. This might be trying to journal once a week or once a day if you feel like it, but don't be too hard on yourself if things don't go to plan. Take the time you need and pick it back up when you feel ready. Sometimes having a particular place and routine to writing your journal can help, or, you may want to have it nearby you so you can react to your feelings in the moment and use it spontaneously.

*Re-read what you've written* Don't worry if you feel differently when looking back over previous entries. That's all part of your grief journey, and taking the time to reflect on it can help you to realise just how far you've come. It can also be a place to collect special memories of the person you have lost, and re-reading this over time can be healing and help you to feel close to them.

Lifted from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter

## THE JOURNEY

And so it is said.

Provide a child with a strong foundation - Raise him with love.  
 Teach him honesty and integrity, thoughtfulness and concern for others.  
 Model independence and strength. Demonstrate the differences between right and wrong.  
 Communicate from the heart. Understanding consequences and wise alternatives.  
 Offer him choices. Supply him with directions to live a long life -  
 This is the foundation.

Well-built and strong. We believe it to endure all obstacles.  
 The child takes off on his journey -  
 Education, sports, religion, scouts, family, friends. Guide him along his way.  
 We, as parents, believe him well-equipped for his life journey.  
 Cheer for his accomplishments. Agonize over his forays of troubles and tears.  
 Rejoice as his destination draws him closer to the next step  
 On his journey toward a successful future.

Till his journey halts abruptly Comes to a deathly stop -  
 When he chooses to discontinue. Decides not to complete his life journey.  
 His future has ended. His journey forever incomplete -

Not all strong, well-built foundations  
 Can withstand everything.  
 In spite of us believing that if we build this strong structure, the outcome will be positive -  
 There are no guarantees.

His life journey over

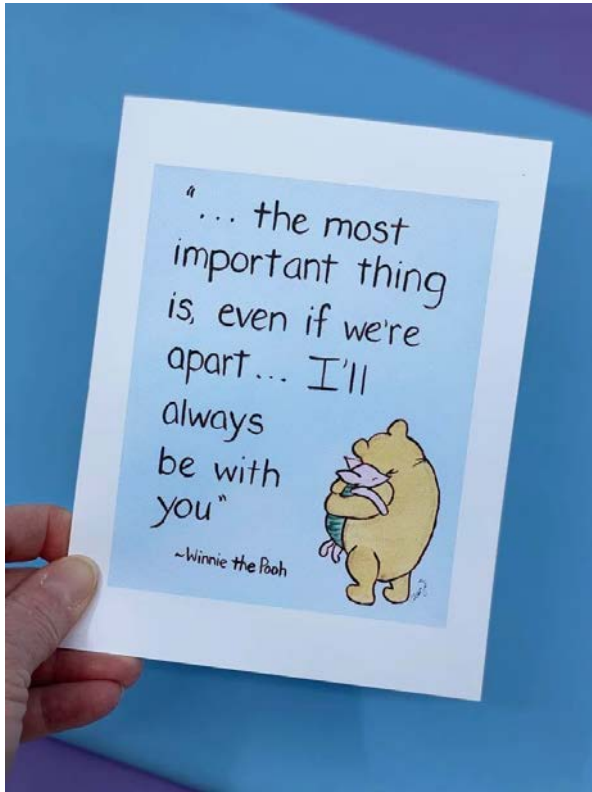
Our grief journey never-ending.

In memory of my son, James whom I miss more every day as I travel my life journey without him.  
 7/15/83 - 9/22/97 Meg Avery TCF/Lawrenceville, GA

Reprinted with love from TCF Winnipeg Chapter News

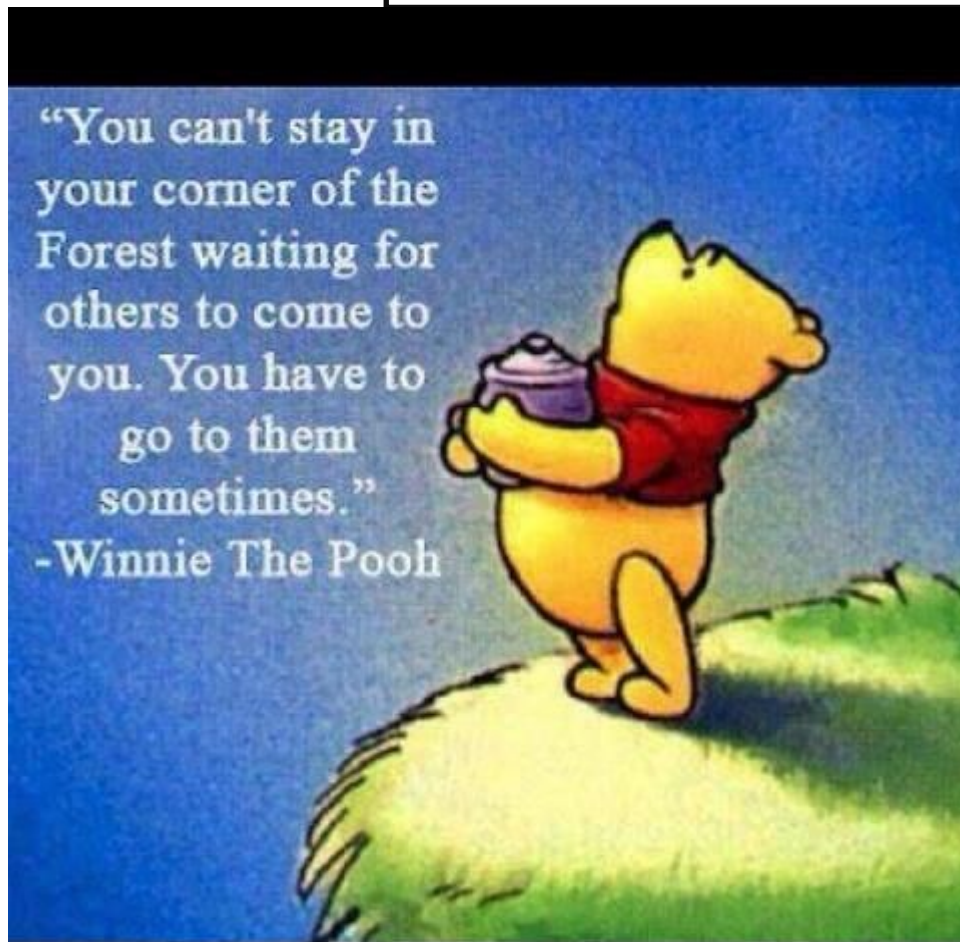


# Sibling Page



"Today was a Difficult Day," said Pooh. There was a pause. "Do you want to talk about it?" asked Piglet. "No," said Pooh after a bit. "No, I don't think I do." "That's okay," said Piglet, and he came and sat beside his friend. "What are you doing?" asked Pooh. "Nothing, really," said Piglet. "Only, I know what Difficult Days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my Difficult Days either. "But goodness," continued Piglet, "Difficult Days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you. And I'll always be here for you, Pooh."

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head his Difficult Day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little legs...he thought that his best friend had never been more right." A.A. Milne



goodbye..?  
oh no, please. Can't  
we go back to page one  
and do it all over  
again?

-Winnie The Pooh



When life throws  
you a rainy day,  
play in the  
puddles. ~ Pooh  
Bear



"The nicest  
thing  
about  
the rain is  
that it always stops.  
Eventually."

A.A. Milne

@wfac\_ppi



## MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

## Do you need to talk? Our telephone friends are willing to listen.. Telephone Friends

DUNEDIN	Anne Lelena (Son Colin 22yrs Suicide)	03- 455 9274
DUNEDIN	Ngairie Penny (Marlene, 18yr old daughter MVA Nov '91)	03- 455 5391
DUNEDIN	Alexis Chettleburgh ( 22 yr old son, suicide.)	03-4777649
	Corinda Taylor (Son, 20 years, suicide)	021 2930094
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Pessione (Chairperson) (16 yr old daughter, accidental) <a href="mailto:janpessione@xtra.co.nz">janpessione@xtra.co.nz</a> (Marina, 54yrs, Airways Obstruction)	027 309 1246
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 <a href="mailto:lorraine.driskel@gmail.com">lorraine.driskel@gmail.com</a>
KAPITI COAST	Anna Upton (Son, suicide)	04 2936349
PALMERSTON NORTH	Robyn Galpin (Hayley, motorcycle accident)	06 3535929
TAUMARUNUI CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	Marie and Ron Summers (Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	07 8954879
WHANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WHANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yrs, car accident)	06 3443345 <a href="mailto:marshkandb@gmail.com">marshkandb@gmail.com</a>
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 <a href="mailto:atsilvester@actrix.co.nz">atsilvester@actrix.co.nz</a>

[www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz)

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