



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated  
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER No: 186

OCTOBER NOVEMBER 2021

## A Beginning...

One day you wake up and realise  
you must have survived  
because you are still here, alive and breathing.  
But you don't remember the infinitely small steps  
and decisions you took to get there.  
Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of  
tears  
on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow.  
One day, one glorious day,  
you wake up and feel your skin tingle again.  
And you forgot, just for an instant,  
that your heart is broken...  
And it is a beginning.

By Susan Borrowman

SIBBS Newsletter TCF UK

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

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

**TO**

# OUR CHILDREN

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

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

You are also able to contact me if you wish to have a poem or piece, with or without a photo of your child included.

Once again, this is generally used for children whose birthday or anniversary occurs during the months of the current newsletter. I apologise for any omission or mistakes which I may make and ask that you contact me if this occurs.

Please contact me on 03 4326004, or TCF, Lesley Henderson, 76 O'Neill Rd., 17 D R.D., Windsor, Oamaru or by e-mail [tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:tcf.nz@hotmail.co.nz)

"Grief is the price we pay for love.

We did not lose our children.

They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future,  
but never, never taking away their love.

Though death comes, love will never go away.

Hold it tight, the love our children gave us.

Hold it tight through the storms of grief  
and bring it with you into today.

Love never goes away..."

Darcie Sims

Lovingly reprinted from TCF Minneapolis Chapter Newsletter

## Our Children ... Remembered with love

### Forever Young

### Forever Loved

### Forever Longed For

Tania Rose Baldock	Born 22/10/69	Jaylene Jessie Bennett-Young	Died 17/10/2001
Kyle David Edwards	Born 15/10/1980	Mark Peter Enright	Died 31/10/1993
Henare Wiremu Fielding	Born 8/10/1983	Kirsten Patrice Flynn	Died 23/10/2005
Sally Verone Kitto	Born 3/10/1991	Yvonne Kay French-Wollen	Died 19/10/2001
Tara Louise MacPherson	Born 13/10/1987	Daniel Philip Innes	Died 9/10/1994
Hayden Ivan Pope	Born 18/10/90	Matthew David Innes	Died 9/10/1994
David Massey Reid	Born 6/10/1981	Steven Micheal Jack	Died 23/10/2003
Hayden Watson	Born 21/10/1981	Jessie Lineham	Died 23/10/2010
Ayla Rose Whitaker	Born 9/10/1989	Andrew John Manson	Died 14/10/1991
		Stefan David Maydon	Died 12/10/2001
Greg Burns	Born 27/11/89	Grant Mills	Died 6/10/1999
Michael David Cox	Born 19/11/64	Shane Parish	Died 7/10/1974
Quinntin Albert Jason Crosswell	Born 10/11/03	Callum Robertson	Died 24/10/2002
Matthew William Ross Dryden	Born 30/11/90	Alan Bruce Scoringe	Died 30/10/1999
Mark Peter Enright	Born 30/11/73		
Krysha Helen Hanson	Born 18/11/64	Nicholas James Cox	Died 18/11/03
Callum Warrick Langley	Born 4/11/96	Rick Daysh	Died 17/11/95
Leonard Donald McLaughlin	Born 3/11/58	Pauline Anne Newall	Died 12/11/98
Robert Shane McLaughlin	Born 5/11/74	Cindy Parish	Died 26/11/01
Grant Mills	Born 9/11/62	Marlene Joy Penny	Died 30/11/91
Marie Anne O'Neill	Born 18/11/61	Craig Noel Campbell Radka	Died 11/11/00
Peter John Oxley	Born 29/11/75	Ross Templeton	Died 29/11/17
Thomas John Poplawski	Born 25/11/97		

## Sweet Peas Sweet Grief



There is still time to plant *sweet peas*.

Sweet peas are botanically named *lathyrus odoratus*. The word *odoratus* immediately gives a clue to the secret of a traditional sweet pea - it's intense unique fragrance which evokes memories of an old fashioned rambling cottage garden.

Part of the *legume* family, sweet peas are native to the Eastern Mediterranean. A Victorian gent., Henry Eckford, a Scottish nurseryman cross-bred and developed the sweet pea in the 1880s. The town of Wem in Shropshire England is the "home" of the sweet pea and has street signs with sweet pea symbols plus an annual Sweet Pea Show. Imagine the perfume?

As well as the fragrance sweet pea flowers look like fragile fringed butterflies as they catch the breeze, inviting bees and other pollinators.

The plant is an annual climber. The flowers are determined and strong and will seek the light, pushing through other plants.

Even although strong the plants can be easily snapped and broken as a well meaning gardener tries to help it on it's way up the trellis

As they grow, tendrils look for a structure or support to cling to. These wiry tendrils twine around and cling on tight to support the flower stalks as they bloom.

After flowering, a seed pod forms, dries and bursts, releasing seeds for the next year. They are great self-sowers.

Unlike edible peas, the sweet pea pod is toxic if eaten, but there is something in the peas that is used in medical skin grafting to avoid skin disfiguration.

Seeds benefit from chipping with a sharp blade before planting and it is helpful to soak them overnight.

As the wee plants grow they benefit from pinching out new shoots to promote a higher flower yield.

They can suffer from aphids which will suck the sap from the plant weakening it and reducing growth.

I guess you can see where I am going....

As bereaved parents we can identify with a sweet pea.

Those seeds need to be chipped at with a sharp pain before growing.

Soaking overnight - how many of us have soaked our pillows with our tears.

Then more pain as the new shoots are pinched out to promote healthy growth and blooming.

Our grief can suck the very sap from our core and heart reducing our growth and strength as we face a future with a huge hole in it.

These painful experiences can be turned to a good strength on our grief journey.

We can be strong and determined as we push though the depths of sadness looking for light. We are easily broken and hurt and misunderstood by well meaning folk.

Let us be encouraged that the pain and brokenness will help us to grow strong and bloom and have a fragrance about us as we live through our grief.

Then as we come to another anniversary of the death of our child we can be super self sowers as we face another year.

Copyright: The Compassionate Friends  
Wanganui Chapter October 2012

## Southland Report

Nau mai haere mai. Tena Koutou Katoa e te Whanau. Toku aroha ki te katoa.

With a year of Covid 19 still in the mix, and many family members not being able to be visited or have visits from loved ones overseas, the distances can cause personal grief, frustration and a try on patience. At least with technology we are able to keep in verbal and visual contact. One small thing to be thankful for in these trying times.

At our Southland dessert AGM we discussed that our group no longer are able to meet kanohi ki te kanohi, face to face but we, albeit small, are surviving. With our 'get to gethers' a couple of times a year (levels permitting), the AGM and the candlelight service we are still holding our own. Our numbers not increasing is a bitter edge sword. Glad we are still going without new members, but sad we don't have new members, but again glad we don't. 35 members on our facebook page so far. This is also a great way to keep in touch, get support or a platform to express yourself with social media. Our numbers may also be because in Southland we are lucky to have an organisation called The Grief Center. A 'one stop shop' to access the help you need for any sort of grief or support.

Christmas is just on the horizon and that means another year has disappeared in the blink of an eye. This only means for us that it is another year that we are without our beloved children, another year of missing what should have been. We are grateful for small things, things that others take for granted. We see special moments around us and hold onto them. We see glimpses of messages or signs that there is more to this world than what we know. A small window of hope for our future in the beyond.

Aroha mai, aroha atu. Love in, love out. Vanessa Young

## CENTRAL OTAGO COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

This is my final report to Central Otago Compassionate Friends. The period covered in this report spans from the beginning of October 2020 until the end of June 2021 which was my retirement date. Sue Tait was contracted to undertake my responsibilities with COCF and while Jan Johnson continues to be contracted for 10 hours per week.

Our objectives have not changed. We aim to provide opportunities for bereaved parents and their families to work towards mutual self-help; we give support where possible; and when needed, education and information.

We held several group meetings throughout the year. In October we were at Millbrook with our Arrowtown/Queenstown and district members, held our annual Candlelight Evening in December to remember children who have passed, kicked off the New Year with afternoon tea at Orchard Gardens, met at Millbrook again in April, and held an evening meeting in May with Sue Tait as guest speaker. The Millbrook luncheons are always popular, we remain grateful to Margaret Wilson for helping to organise these. It was great to have Murray Radka and Sue Tait as guest speakers at two of our group meetings. With so much knowledge and experience amongst our own members it has been wonderful to have them available to talk to us.

Coffee meetings held once a month at Monteiths have also been really popular.

Heoi ano, kua mutu taku mahi mo inaianei, kia kaha tonu koutou i te mahi no Compassionate Friends. And so, I have finished my little job for now. Continue with strength everyone and keep up the good work of Compassionate Friends.

Louise





*Whanganui calling. Daffodils are a lovely sign of spring and hope.*

What an interesting year it has been COVID and all and it has flown by.

Can't believe we are planning our Candle Lighting at our next Board meeting.

In November 2011 we recommenced TCF in our city after a break of some years so we are celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. I guess we don't really 'celebrate' the length of time this group (that no one wants to belong to) has been functioning. We will have a get together and a cake next month. Also our AGM in October which takes the form of a Brunch; pancakes and all the trimmings.



**The Compassionate Friends  
Whanganui 2011- 2021**

*We need not walk alone*

We aim to make a difference to grieving families here.

After receiving some community funding early this year we have been able to revamp our brochure, poster and business card and we are in the process of distributing these around our area. Happy to share copies with anyone.

**The website** continues to bring response.

We are extremely grateful to Kiwiwebs Whanganui who do the maintaining and updating of the site free of charge. This is most generous of them. We still need to pay hosting rights which costs us over \$200.00 per year so if any TCF groups would like to contribute we would appreciate it- even just a small amount. The site is for all of TCF NZ. South Island queries go to Lesley and North Island to me.

A reminder to you to have a look at the site and see if there are any changes needed. Also let me know about any of your events Candle Lighting etc. so I can put them on the site. **Grief Jottings** is a forum where little personal articles about grief are added. I would love some more contributions.

Send them to me or Lesley : [www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz)

We can only plod on in the hopes that life will ease and we can beat this wicked virus. Keep well and Keep safe and get Vaccinated.

Keren Marsh, Chair. Whanganui Chapter. October 2021

The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond his departure. You will always feel that life touching yours, that voice speaking to you, that spirit looking out of other eyes, talking to you in the familiar things he touched, worked with, loved as familiar friends. He lives on in your life and in the lives of all others that knew him.

Angelo Patri Madison Area Chapter Winnipeg Chapter News  
Reprinted in Compassion UK

## The Isolation of Grief Now,

I've never been a stranger to the isolation that comes from feeling like you just don't fit into your surroundings. But I've never felt as isolated in my whole life as I have after the death of my daughter.

As a child, I was a shy, introverted person and often felt different than the people around me. At the time, I never really knew why. While I didn't like the feeling of isolation, I didn't understand what caused it so it just became a fact of life. Over the years my shyness has lessened, but I still prefer interacting with small groups or one-on-one in-person conversations, and still look forward to time alone. I've learned to accept it as my personality, and it works for me.

After my daughter died, my sense of isolation grew exponentially as a result of grief. In the immediate aftermath of her sudden death, our house was filled with family and friends who were showing their support for us and helping us do what had to be done: planning the memorial, visiting the cemetery to secure a plot, working with our insurance company requirements, etc. They prepared meals, made sure we were left alone when we needed our space, gave us hugs, and shed tears with us. The phone rang often, and I found myself doing most of the talking when the other end of the phone was uncomfortably silent as people struggled to find the right words to say. Even in my numbness, I was able to understand the dilemma of "I'm sorry" doesn't seem to be enough when someone has just lost a four-year-old little girl. A few days after the memorial service, everyone went home. Less sympathy cards arrived in the mail until there were none. The phone stopped ringing. Our daughter's preschool arranged a weekly meal donation and then my work did the same, which was a huge help...but eventually those stopped coming too. We were left alone to figure out how to pick up the pieces of our shattered hearts and shattered lives. We went to counseling and support groups. But we were forced to accept the fact that life was going to keep moving forward without our precious girl in it. It was devastating.

That devastation led me to a self-imposed isolation from a world I could no longer stand to be a part of. I didn't want to talk to people who couldn't understand my pain because I didn't want to have to explain myself. The sound of laughter or gossip produced outright anger in me. The everyday acts of going to work, chores, grocery shopping, or even something as simple as showering were agonizingly painful and almost impossible. I wanted nothing to do with any of it. I found myself not answering the phone and not returning messages. I turned down invitations to get together with friends who weren't sure how to help me. I managed to make sure that I fed my surviving kids and took them to school and practices, but I was no longer the mom they were used to. They stopped wanting to talk to me about how they felt because they knew it would make me even sadder, and they were frightened that not only did they lose their sister, but there was a potential that their mom was losing her ability to take care of them.

Over that first year or so, the suffocating pain began to lessen, though not by as much as I would have hoped. I got better at doing those everyday tasks that didn't seem so impossible anymore. I began to adjust to the "new normal" any grieving person must accept. Then the isolation of grief began to change.

While I started answering the phone and accepting some of those invitations, I felt isolated in the sense that I continued to think of my daughter and experience the pain constantly, but very few people talked about my grief or even mentioned her name any more. I felt completely alone. Support groups and counseling helped. So did reaching out to other parents who had lost children, and I preferred their company over others. I found myself part of the secret society of grieving parents who mostly keep their grief to themselves and only share it with those who understand because they are faced with the same loss and pain. I found that sharing my feelings with these people helped me immensely.

Now that more time has passed, I am learning how to balance becoming fully reinvested in life while respecting my continuing needs for grief support. I still look forward to support groups and talking with other bereaved people, but I also appreciate that when I allow myself to enjoy and appreciate everyday life, joy will come even without my daughter being physically here. Despite my continued longing for her to be at my side and the ability to experience the wonder of watching her grow, I know that she will always be with me in spirit. She is forever in my heart, my memories, and my thoughts. And these days, I don't mind sharing that with anyone who cares to get to know me.

Maria Kubitz, TCF Contra Costa County, CA In Memory of my daughter, Margareta

Lifted with love from TCF Minneapolis Chapter newsletter



Book Review : by Keren Marsh

**Grief on the run** by Julie Zarifeh

published Allen & Unwin NZ 2021 :

ISBN 9781988547367



How active grieving helped me cope with devastating loss writes the author. What happens when your life is rocked by unimaginable loss and grief:

How do you survive and how do you keep going?

The Christchurch author shares the tragic story of her 27 year old son Sam, who died in a whitewater rafting accident just 16 days after her husband Paul had passed away with cancer in 2017.

How she and her two surviving children dealt with this double whammy is openly and honestly recorded

Julie's account of learning to live with grief is raw but inspirational as she embraced the idea of "active grieving"

\*\*\*An extra to this book review \*\*\*check out Julie speaking with Lucy Hone (both NZ mums, both psychologists, who have suffered terrible grief) speaking on You Tube – Accepting the good

PS I reviewed Lucy Hone's book "Resilient grieving" in the TCF Newsletter August/September 2020.last year

### 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.

## **Life has irrevocably changed. What to Expect and Do**

<https://live-evermore.org/what-to-expect-and-do/>

There is no recipe or timeline to follow. Your grieving process is yours to own. Take one day at a time. There is no returning to life as you knew it. Every day there will be reminders that your loved one is no longer with you. It may be an empty chair at the breakfast table or a regularly scheduled check-in call that no longer comes. The early days will be an emotionally chaotic and unpredictable time. Eventually, while the grief and pain will still be present, they will become less overwhelming. During this time, you may fear that you are "losing touch," not respecting his or her legacy, not honouring your love. Your grief and its challenges will evolve as life moves forward. Keep in mind that no two experiences are the same. No two losses are the same. What works for you may be different from what works for someone else. Be kind and patient with yourself as your needs and perspectives change. What works for you on Monday may not work on Tuesday. Based on our conversations with bereaved individuals, researchers and therapists, here are nine considerations that may help manage:

**1 Take care of yourself** Care for yourself in a way that is nourishing, gentle and kind. There is no right way to cope, no ideal time frame, no best method. Recognize healthy relationships and create boundaries by saying yes to people and things that support you, and no to those that don't. Preservation of self will continue to evolve with time. At first, this may simply mean to remember to eat or shower. Over time it may become a conscious decision not to participate in a birthday party, baby shower or relationship.

**2 Know you are not alone** No one knew your child like you. No one can relate to your pain and grief. While you may feel profoundly isolated, know that many bereaved individuals surround you. We are all invisible. However, when you find someone with a similar kind of loss, we speak a common language, regardless of our culture or community. We share an experience that requires no words.

**3 Find ways to remember your loved one** Remember and honour your loved one in ways that embody their spirit, culture, life and passion. It may be creating a keepsake, going to see their favourite rock band, inviting their friends over for dinner or visiting a part of the world they always dreamed of seeing. Many bereaved individuals look to nature for signs of remembrance as they continue their exploration of or commitment to spirituality. Whether it is through sunrises, rainbows or rainfalls, looking to nature can offer solace, remembrance and hope.

**4 Re-emerge into the world, at your pace** As the world continues to move forward, often in a callous, unrelenting way, it can be devastating to the newly bereaved. Re-emerging into social media communities, going back to work, helping others understand how best to support you and more – all pose challenges. Initially, the newly bereaved may find that being in loud or crowded venues is overwhelming. Over time, the challenges change and our grief becomes less debilitating as we learn what is helpful and what is not. Taking the dog for a walk, going to a local yoga class or planting a garden may help you reemerge slowly.

**5 Navigate society and find support** In the beginning many may say, "Let me know what you need" or ask, "How can I help?" Yet, you may have no idea how to answer those questions. Searching for and finding resources or activities that support your restoration will be important. Many bereaved individuals try new activities, engage in therapy or other locally based support networks. There are many support groups, camps and retreats that actively support bereaved family members.

**6 Connect with others, if and when you wish** Engagement and connection with others can help you cope. Whether through an old friend or new, a pet or volunteer engagement, or another avenue



altogether, find ways to help diminish grief's toll and let yourself feel renewed and refreshed.

**7 Share your story** At the time, pace and in a manner you are comfortable with, share your story and perspectives with those who love you and want to hear more. You do not need to share the whole story, nor do you need to enter situations that can lead to further trauma. You might start a blog, talk to close friends and family, or choose an open mic event. Bringing light to your loved one's story can help as you cope and support your restoration.

**8 Reminders happen** Painful reminders will continue to be a part of your world. Managing these moments will be critical for your coping, health and wellbeing. For example, people may ask you questions like, "How many children do you have?" It can be helpful to think about your response before being asked, especially for the first time. Simple tasks like grocery shopping may become unbearable, particularly when you approach the cereal aisle and you no longer have to purchase your loved one's favourite cereal or meal. Understanding what you can and cannot do will be important in protecting yourself from additional stress. Yet, the most concerning times may be those that we cannot predict – when our loved one's favourite song comes on the radio or a scent brings on a cascade of memories. Being present in those moments is important. You should not feel ashamed for wanting to hold onto them.

**9 Life changes** It will be hard to see life in the same way again. Maybe you no longer cry every day, maybe you can manage to sit in your loved one's room or on their bed or buy their favourite cereal once again. Coping is a lifelong process that will be full of surprises and disappointments. As life changes, you will encounter new hopes, remembrances and moments of loss. Being patient with yourself while finding ways to include both the absence and presence of your loved one in your daily routine may help. Gratefully lifted from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter.

## Grief of Grandparents

I am powerless, I am helpless, I am frustrated, I sit here and cry with her. She cries for her daughter and I cry for mine. I cannot help her. I can't reach inside and take her broken heart. I must watch her suffer day after day and see her desolation.

I listen to her tell me over and over how she misses Emily, how she wants her back. I can't bring Emily back for her. I can't buy her an even better Emily than she had like I bought her an even better toy when she was a child. I can't kiss the hurt and make it go away. I can't even kiss a small part of it away. There is no band-aid large enough to cover her bleeding heart.

I used to listen to her talk about a boyfriend and tell her it would be okay, and know in my heart that in two weeks she wouldn't even think of him. Can I tell her it'll be okay in two years when I know it will never be okay, that she will carry this pain of "what might have been" in her deepest heart for the rest of her life? I see this young woman, my child, who was once carefree and fun-loving and bubbling with life, slumped in a chair with eyes full of agony. Where is my power now? Where is my mother's bag of tricks that will make it all better? Why can't I join her in the aloneness of her grief? As tight as my arms wrap around her, I can't reach that aloneness.

Where are the magic words that will give her comfort? What chapter in Dr. Spock tells me how to do this? He has told me everything else I needed to know. Where are the answers? I should have them. I'm a mother. I know that someday she'll find happiness again, that her life will have meaning again. I can hold out hope for her someday, but what about now? This minute? This hour? This day?

I can give her my love and my prayers and my care and my concern. I could give her my life. But even that won't help.

Taken from AGAST (Alliance of Grandparents, a Support in Tragedy) website, an organization that supports grieving grandparents. <http://www.agast.org/>

Lifted with thanks from TCF Queensland Chapter Newsletter

## How to Release Guilt After Loss of a Child By: Catherine McNulty

After the loss of a child, a mother's guilt is inevitable. There may be things she wishes she had done. There may also be things she wishes she hadn't done. She may have made serious mistakes that carried grave consequences. She likely feels guilty. If you feel guilt, too, you know what I mean. In the weeks and months after losing her child, a mother often struggles to be patient with herself. She struggles to forgive herself. She experiences the emotional torture of never knowing if her actions could have changed anything. The uncertainty haunts her as she tries to figure out how to go on living without her child.

It seems unfair that the pain of her loss is amplified by feelings of guilt. She feels alone, imprisoned by grief and doesn't know where to turn. I feel for her because I was her. As mother's, we love our children and we do our best to keep them safe.

*We feel a primal obligation and a fierce sense of responsibility to keep them healthy, to keep them safe, to keep them alive. We are evolutionarily wired to protect them to continue as a species.*

So, when our child's health fails, or they are hurt, or they die, we are immensely affected. Intense pain washes over us and sends us spinning out of control as we try to make sense of what has happened. We hold our stomachs, grip our chest and drop to our knees because of the intensity of our pain. We feel as though we have failed as parents in protecting our child. We failed and we feel guilty.

It's not uncommon to think of the five stages of grief as a linear series of emotions we have to get through to grieve successfully. The first four, Denial, Anger, Bargaining, and Depression are better thought of as fluid feelings that are part of a much larger set of emotions that come and go as they please, like waves that torment us with their unpredictability. But what about the fifth stage of grief? Acceptance. Acceptance means coming to terms with what has happened and accepting the loss as part of our new reality that we learn to adapt to. To find true acceptance, we must learn how to move past failure and release our guilt.

So how do we release guilt? We start with forgiveness. Forgiveness for our actions and inactions. Forgiveness for the actions of others. And, forgiveness for what did and didn't happen. Next, we explore why we feel guilty and what makes us feel guilty. We may feel guilty because we believe in our hearts that we have failed. We may feel guilty because we are still here and our child is not. We may also feel guilty because we hold ourselves to extremely lofty standards. We may feel guilty and not understand why. So, what do we do?

First, we need to remind ourselves that feeling guilty is a natural part of the grief process. This is particularly true when we are grieving our children.

Next, we need to ask ourselves the following questions. Can we accept our feelings of guilt as natural? Can we accept that we may not be perfect? Can we accept that we may have failed and still be okay? Can we tell ourselves that we did the best we could with the situation we were given?

THIS ACCEPTANCE is the very path we need to release our guilt. Let's begin by forgiving ourselves for being less than perfect. Let's begin by forgiving ourselves for our failure in each moment. We can practice forgiving ourselves each time we are reminded of failure. We can practice being gentle with ourselves one moment at a time. We can practice accepting ourselves as imperfect.

Forgiving ourselves is a practice. Releasing guilt is a practice. It is a practice where we can begin to find some safety and certainty. We can actively choose to participate in this practice each time we are reminded of our guilt. We can acknowledge our guilt as a natural response to grief. We can begin to forgive ourselves for all the things we should have done. We can forgive ourselves for the things we didn't do. It takes time but this level of acceptance is possible. There is hope as the pain of our loss begins to lessen to a dull ache to make room for something new.

And, as we practice forgiveness, we learn more about ourselves. And as we learn, we grow. We begin to see ourselves in a new future in a new reality. We grieve. We feel guilty. We can even find acceptance that our child is forever gone. In time, as we forgive ourselves, release guilt and find acceptance, we begin to look for ways to move forward with our lives as they are, not as we want them to be. We heal and are healed.

With Love and Prayers, Catherine Reprinted with thanks from TCF Johannesburg

# 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.

## THE ROOM

I stepped into your bedroom  
And tiptoed by your bed,  
Remembering the many times,  
I tousled your blond head.  
Remembering the smiling glances  
We exchanged when our eyes met,  
Without words ever spoken -  
Those memories I'll never forget.  
It's harder now to step into your room -  
Won't see that smile anymore.  
I turn around with tear-stained eyes  
And gently close the door.

Cathy R. Seaver, TCF/Western, AU  
Winnipeg Chapter news



## Mother and Son

I would give my life to have you back Said his Mum  
I know you would, said her Son.  
I cry each night for you, My Son  
And I catch all of your tears said her Son.  
I pray for the day that I can see you again, Said his Mum  
Close your eyes and you can see me, Said her Son....  
You are the first person who loved me  
And you are the first person I loved.

You were always there when I needed you  
And you always know when I needed a hug.  
I am here for you now, Mum  
In your heart and in your soul.  
I did not take your heart with me  
Instead I left mine with you to hold.  
One day I will take your hand and lead you to paradise,  
But until then, my beautiful Mother,  
When you want to see me  
You only need to close your eyes.....

Author unknown  
UK Compassion

## Summer Breezes

There's a hint of girlish laughter  
Wafting past the porch.  
For a moment I pause and listen  
In the warmth of summer sun,  
Memories are to bask in.

Trees you climbed, kites you flew,  
Bikes you raced, waves you splashed in.  
At night we wrapped time around us  
As we blanketed the grass

And gazed toward heaven.  
The stars were full of wonder then,  
And lazy days seemed endless.

Life spread before you,  
Laughter filling the wind with happiness.  
Just now I thought I heard you once again.  
How pleasant this breath of summer,  
The breezes hold such memories. Lovingly lifted from Madison Area Chapter Newsletter



## **Sharing the Grief**

A series of Pamphlets from TCF UK

Excellent: Sensitive: Well-documented: Practical

Download from [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

The Compassionate Friends in the UK have made these available to all bereaved families coping with the death of a beloved child, grandchild, brother or sister.

TCF Worldwide shares it's resources and we in New Zealand are permitted to download and print these for our own private or TCF use.

\* Always bearing **copyright** in mind these cannot be altered, though you could add a NZ contact.

\* Some facts will be specific to the UK.

\* Costs for printing as a booklet in colour about NZ\$6.00 plus (depends on size)

\* Alternatively you could read them on line.

L0	<b>Introducing TCF</b>	£0.00
L0	<b>A father's grief</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>A mother's grief</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>After suicide</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>Childless parents</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>Coping with judgmental attitudes</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>Coping with special occasions</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>Grief of the newly bereaved</b>	£0.50
L0	<b>Grieving couples</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Grieving for our baby</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Helping your grandchildren when your child has died</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Living with grief</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Grieving for our disabled child</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Our child's friends (for younger children and teenagers)</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Our surviving children</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>Preparing your child's funeral (available online only at <a href="http://www.tcf.org.uk/">www.tcf.org.uk/</a>)</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>The bereaved lone parent</b>	£0.50
L1	<b>The sudden death of our child</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>When our child has died of a long term illness</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>When our adult child has died</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>When our child has been murdered</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>When your grandchild has died</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>Death of our Stepchild or our Partner's Child</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>Back to work</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>Death abroad</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>A sibling's grief</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>Our Child's Digital Legacy</b>	£0.50
L2	<b>Prolonged and Intense Grief</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>Grieving child loss in blended and step families</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>Bereaved through drug or alcohol use</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>Our adult child's partner and friends</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>Coping with Legal Proceedings Following the Death of Our Child</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>When Our Child has Died Following a Road Incident</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>The Bereaved Parent and Their Faith</b>	£0.00
L3	<b>Grieving for Our Young Child (2-10 years)</b>	£0.50
L3	<b>Grieving our Pre-teen or Teenage Child (11-18 years)</b>	£0.50

L3 Grieving our Pre-teen or Teenage Child (11-18 years)	£0.50
L3 Grieving For More Than One Child	£0.50
L3 Grieving the Death of a Twin Child	£0.50
L4 Grieving For Our Child Who Experienced Mental Health Problems	£0.00
L4 Grieving the Death of our Child During the Coronavirus Pandemic	£0.50
LP Helping Bereaved Parents (for professionals)	£0.50
LP Remembering our Child - Leaflet	£0.50
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## Accepting Different Ways of Grieving

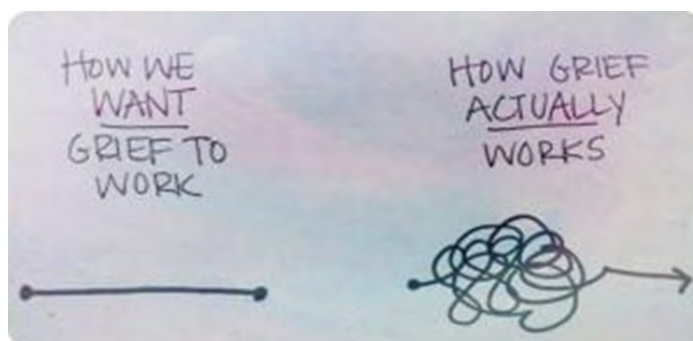
“There are many different ways in which individuals express, experience, and adapt to grief. Understanding and accepting different ways of grieving lies at the heart of surviving your loss as a couple. Understanding is helpful but not absolutely necessary. Acceptance of your partner’s approach however is a necessity. If you have not reached acceptance, make it your first priority.”

— Nathalie Himmelrich, ‘Grieving Parents: Surviving Loss as a Couple.’

“When dealing with the pain and grief of a child’s death, take time to do the work of grief. Grieve in the way that works best for you, talk about your feelings, be gentle with yourself, and remember that this is not a path that needs to be walked alone. There are loving and caring people who are willing to be there with you. Reach out, get support, and know that only the strong know how to ask for help.”

Howard Winokeur, PhD, and Heidi Horsley, PsyD., TCF USA

When your mind cannot find an answer, open your heart and ask for peace.







# Sibling Page



## Losing My Superhero

I was in the middle of finishing a 6 page paper for my last assignment in my abnormal psychology class. Around 2:00 I was in the middle of my 5th page when someone knocked on my door. I opened the door to see my dad's best friend frantic with blood shot eyes. Before I could even get a word in he said "There's been an accident. We lost Trent."

I imagined my little brother off in a field somewhere lost after a car accident because he was scared, but that wasn't the case. He was gone. 4 days before his 6th birthday, he was gone. At 1:11 on Saturday June 11th, 2011 my world was shattered by a 19 year old girl that over corrected, drove across the median, and killed my brother and an elderly couple.

I'm a Criminal Justice/ Psychology major. Nothing I ever learned had prepared me for the feelings that overcame me as I gave out a scream and slid down the door. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't speak. I couldn't believe this was my reality. I went to make a phone call but couldn't find the words to tell my mom I needed her to come home. I couldn't tell her that I had just lost my little brother and that my dad, stepmom, and sister were in Tallahassee in ICU with injuries caused by a fatal accident. My dad's best friend gave her the news and she came home. I had to call my brothers and tell them. My brother Tadd came home as soon as I called him and sat in the drive way and sobbed. Many people showed up to my house and watched me as I sat numb on my couch not knowing what to do or say. I watched my brothers pack for Tallahassee and before they left we held each other and sobbed. I was still in disbelief.

My little brother. The baby that was a surprise when I got home from school one day. The baby I spent my summers with. The chubby toddler that played in the dirt all day. My little Batman with a speech impediment and baby blue eyes. My 5 year old brother Trent was gone. No one ever said the right words or did the right things. I just wanted to be left alone. I never wanted the text messages that said "Thinking of you" or "praying for you". I wanted it all to be just a bad dream. He would never be 10, 16, or 18 years old. He would never grow up to be a NASCAR driver or football player. He was truly gone and there was nothing I could do about it.

For a very long time I was angry. I blamed the girl for not paying attention. I blamed God for taking someone so young and full of life. I blamed myself for not being in the car to keep him safe. With the pain of losing him came pain from being a sibling. He wasn't my child. He wasn't my parent. Surely I wasn't in as much grief as everyone thought I was in. I was there for my dad and my stepmom but no one asked how I was doing. No one asked how my step sister, my brothers, and I were taking this. It was like only my dad and my stepmom had lost a child. I felt guilty for awhile feeling this way, but we lost him too and it wasn't fair. The only person that was fully understanding was our mother.

Through the loss of my brother I have found the silver lining to my dark storm cloud. Such a beautiful, wonderful, and pure soul will never have to truly witness the horrors of the world. Though his life was short, it was full of love and kindness. There are still teachers of his that speak on how precious he was and how generous he was. He is with me always now. Sometimes when I close my eyes I can hear his giggle, see his smile, or hear his foot steps running across the hardwood floors. It's these thoughts that keep me going. I feel that with my name will always come his and when I succeed, he will succeed.

I want to live a beautiful and prosperous life not just for myself, but also for my personal superhero,

Trent Logan Thompson.

Lifted with love from TCF Queensland Chapter Newsletter





## 5 Grief Myths About Children and Teens By Angela Morrow, RN

Many myths exist about how children and teens experience and process their feelings of grief and loss following a death. Often motivated by the desire to protect children from traumatic, emotional events in general, parents and guardians sometimes assume their child is simply too young to understand what's going on, or worry that a funeral or burial service will trigger fears about dying and death afterward. This article offers the truth behind five common grief myths concerning children and teens to help you understand their needs and better comfort and support a grieving child.

**Young Children Don't Grieve** Children grieve at any age, which can manifest itself in many ways depending on the child's age, developmental stage and/or life experiences. Children generally do a very good job of grieving intensely for a time and then taking a break, often in the form of play. This might account for why parents/adults often mistake a child's play as a sign that the child isn't grieving or remains unaware/unaffected of the death that occurred.

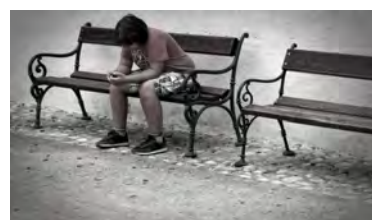
**Children Under a Certain Age Should Not Attend Funerals** Every child handles his or her feelings of grief and loss differently based upon numerous factors, so there is no universal or "one size fits all" answer to the question of whether or not your child should attend a funeral, memorial service or interment based solely upon his or her age. Your child's age can certainly play a part, but so too does his or her maturity level; what and how a parent or guardian has told the child or teen about the death; and even how the significant adults in his or her life are coping with the loss.

**Children Quickly Get Over a Loss** The truth is that no one ever really gets over a significant loss due to death. Despite the intense pain triggered when someone we love dies, and the wound it creates on our hearts and souls, we really only learn how to live with the reality of that forever-loss and the void it creates. Children and teenagers might emotionally or mentally revisit their loss at later stages in their development and, as their understanding of the permanence of death changes, their grief might arise at various points later in life.

**Significant Loss Permanently Scars a Child** Children, like most people, are generally resilient. While a significant loss can certainly affect the development of a child or teenager based upon many different factors, loving parents, guardians and/or other adults who create an environment of support and continuing care usually help children and teens deal with their feelings of grief in a healthy manner. Often, this starts with how you talk to a child about death and the example you provide, as an influential role model in your child's life.

**Parents Should Not Discuss Death/Grief with Children** It is important to promote open, honest communication with children and teens concerning their grief and/or their understanding of death and loss. There are many ways to help your child express grief, but depending upon your child's age or maturity level, non-conversational approaches that encourage expression might prove more effective, such as art projects, reading a book, playing a game, music or dance. Children and/or adolescents might find these methods more effective in helping them express their feelings, which can lead to a more positive outcome for you and your child.

Gratefully lifted from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter





## MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

## **D**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	Ngairie Penny (Marlene, 18yr old daughter MVA Nov '91)	03- 455 5391
DUNEDIN	Alexis Chettleburgh ( 22 yr old son, suicide.)	03-4777649
	Corinda Taylor (Son, 20 years, suicide)	021 2930094
CENTRAL OTAGO	Wilma Paulin (Son & Daughter, 6yrs & 3mths)	03-4493213
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Pessione (16 yr old daughter, accidental)	03-4487800 janpessione@xtra.co.nz
CENTRAL OTAGO	Jan Johnson, Adult son, Neville, cancer	03 4488360
CENTRAL OTAGO	Sue Tait Natasha (29) Medical Event Central Otago Co-ordinator	sue.tait@xtra.co.nz 027 4420156
INVERCARGILL	Linda Thompson. (Ryan, 16yrs, Cardiac Failure. Dec 2001) Southland Co-ordinator*	03-2164155 027 390 9666
TIMARU	Phyl Sowerby (Son Cancer 1998)	03 612 -6402
CHRISTCHURCH	Chris Guerin	02102931357
WELLINGTON	Lorraine Driskel Son (twin) 19yrs—car accident	04 9387212 lorraine.driskel@gmail.com
KAPITI COAST	Anna Upton (Son, suicide)	04 2936349
PALMERSTON NORTH	Robyn Galpin (Hayley, motorcycle accident)	06 3535929
TAUMARUNUI CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	Marie and Ron Summers (Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	07 8954879
WHANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WHANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yrs, car accident)	06 3443345 marshkandb@gmail.com
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 atsilvester@actrix.co.nz

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



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