



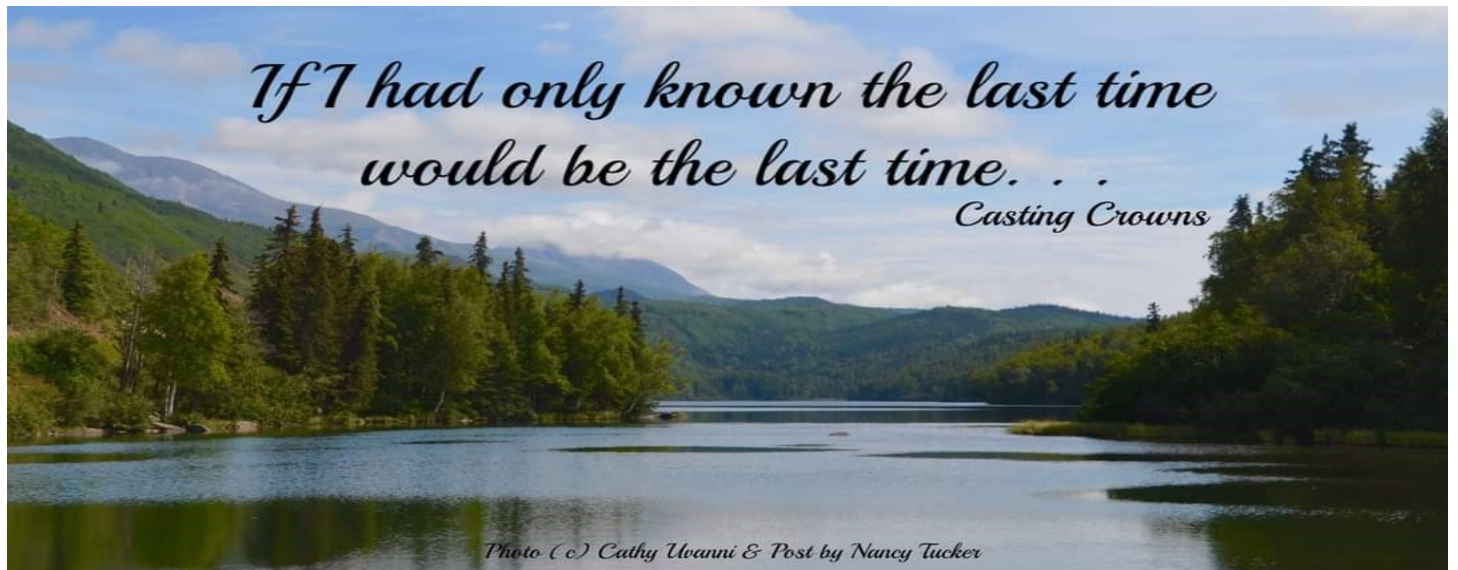
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

(Otago Chapter) Incorporated
Founded December 1989

A WORLD WIDE FAMILY OF BEREAVED PARENTS CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

NEWSLETTER NO: 188

FEBRUARY MARCH 2022



Found on facebook—Healing hearts.

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

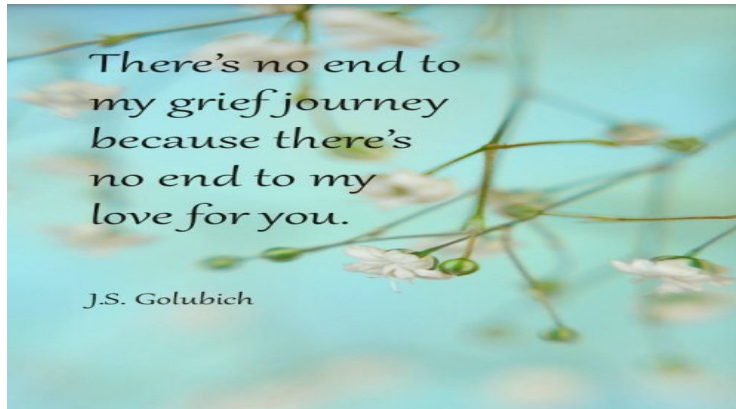
Children's names appear in this column if parents ask when they complete their annual donation form. You are also able to e-mail, write or phone me to have your child's name included.

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



HealingHugs

Our Children ... Remembered with love

Forever Young

Forever Loved

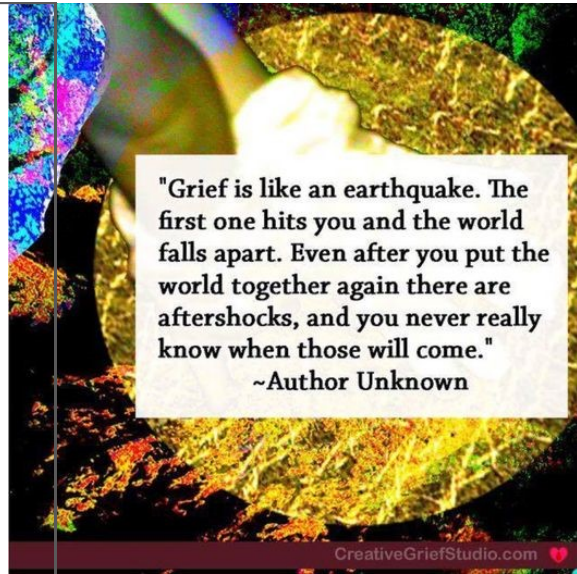
Forever Longed For

Paul Graham Albrecht	Born 28/2/84	Jaylene Jessie Bennett-Young	Born 19/3/95
Yvonne Kay French-Wollen	Born 4/2/64	Simon Charlton	Born 26/3/96
Rebecca Clare Halket	Born 22/2/84	Shane Elliot Davis	Born 18/3/82
Allan Stephen Hobbs	Born 20/2/56	Marcus Fitchett	Born 11/3/70
Faye Marie Joyce	Born 5/2/61	Sharyn Maree Jones-Sexton	Born 9/3/67
Keegan Lineham	Born 14/2/94	Aidon Samiel Konise	Born 2/3/88
Hughan Scott Norton	Born 9/2/63	Sara Loo	Born 2/3/92
Vaughan Arthur Nuttall	Born 17/2/87	Thomas Craig McDonald	Born 3/3/91
Logan Scott O'Hara	Born 17/2/78	Anthea Gail McDowell	Born 1/3/79
Marlene Joy Penny	Born 5/2/73	Jessie Adelaide Neaves	Born 9/3/90
Melissa Jane TeHuia	Born 23/2/72	Georgia Rose Poplawski	Born 30/3/00
		Quintin Christie Reid	Born 23/3/92
		Callum Robertson	Born 8/3/82
Glenn Arscott	Died 1/2/02		
Tania Rose Baldock	Died 6/2/09		
Hayley Robyn Galpin	Died 13/2/89	Mitchell James Beaumont	Died 29/3/96
Ben Paul Gillanders	Died 18/2/77	Kyle David Edwards	Died 4/3/98
Daniel James Gillies	Died 18/2/03	Tineke Foley	Died 25/3/10
Krysha Helen Hanson	Died 6/2/03	Ricky George	Died 19/3/04
Bevan Andrew Hookway	Died 17/2/08	Faye Marie Joyce	Died 14/3/94
Kai Klein	Died 20/2/98	Anna Ruth Iris Moore	Died 19/3/06
Keegan Lineham	Died 14/2/94	Paul John Nicholaou	Died 21/3/98
Nicholas Ian O'Hara	Died 8/2/00	Hughan Scott Norton	Died 9/3/01
Brent Allan Stenton	Died 12/2/94	Vaughan Arthur Nuttall	Died 14/3/06
Jonathon Upton	Died 11/2/02	Quintin Christie Reid	Died 26/3/07
		Trinity Lea Taylor	Died 12/3/05
		Nicole Leigh Templer	Died 30/3/11

Today I went through your things.

So many memories....
 so much of you in everything I touched
 It still doesn't seem right that I am doing this.
 I cried. I laughed
 I felt you nearby
 I held things that you had loved. I held them to my face.
 I wished they still smelled like you.
 I wished you were still here in this room.
 I closed my eyes and pretended that you were.
 You left so many things behind.
 When God took you away.
 Yours clothes...your books...pictures...
 And ME
 Until the day I join you, I will be missing you.

Heavensbook Angels Grief Support.



Grief and Healing in the Afterloss
 theafterloss.com

Hello my Friends,

Reading the above poems resonated with me recently as I had just gone through a box of school books, cards etc belonging to my son Ben. This box had been sitting for several years in our garage, originating from a desk he had in his room. When I moved the desk I just emptied the drawers into the box and had not actually looked through the contents.

I knew there would be a few tears as I read some cards I had sent Ben at various times and also some letters Ben had sent us. What I wasn't prepared for was finding a copy of the Coroners report and also a copy of words from his Unveiling. Even 19 years after Bens death I sat there traumatised. I think it was made worse because I hadn't expected or been prepared for these things to be in the box. The letters, cards and school things I knew were there and I knew that many of these would bring a smile to my face, even if some would bring tears, so felt that after this time I was in a position to go through them and carefully store those that I wanted to keep. I also felt I was in a space to discard some things that were not important.

I do think that during this journey it is often the unexpected that throws us. At the start I still remember the first day I had my younger son at a playground and someone asked me if I had other children. I hadn't prepared for the question (it was 2 days after Ben had died!) and so was caught off guard, however on subsequent occasions I knew to expect this question and so was prepared.

It is like we are able to put up a shield or some armour when we know an occasion is going to be difficult and thus keep emotions at bay but when it comes out of the blue, even 19 years later we are caught off guard. I think this goes to show that this journey is lifelong and that we will always remain vulnerable to times of unbelievable sadness and distress, but also we learn to cope and as time goes on we become stronger and more resilient.

I wish you all strength and love.

Lesley Henderson



5 Truths for Parents Grieving the Death of a Child It goes against life's natural order.

By Kristi Hugstad, Contributor

When you experience the death of a child, your life will never be “normal” again. As a grief recovery specialist, I understand that life is filled with losses, and as someone whose husband completed suicide and who has experienced the death of a father and sibling, I know what it’s like to grieve. If you’ve experienced the death of your child, you know your life will never be “normal” again. But it’s my hope you’ll find some solace in what I’ve learned as a grief counsellor and through my own journey to find peace after loss. For many, the death of a child is unimaginable. That said, it’s important to note that there are no “levels” of loss. No two relationships are the same, so it’s important not to compare one person’s experience to another’s. With that in mind, the following candid, honest, no-nonsense lessons are those that I have found most important and helpful to my clients grieving the death of a child – and to anyone who has experienced excruciating loss.

Grief is personal If you’re reading this, you’ve likely already heard of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. But in my experience – and in many others’ – grief doesn’t conform itself into a neat, linear pattern. There are no stages to grief, but there are common responses. When you experience the death of a child, that trauma manifests itself in countless ways – and perhaps several ways at once. A 2015 Psychology Today article demonstrates how the “stages” of grief can vary widely, citing that one mother who lost her 20-year-old son never felt denial – only nothingness. This feeling of numbness is just as normal – and valid – as any other. Don’t hold yourself to a standard of grief. Grief is, above all else, personal.

It’s not just sadness I already mentioned that grief manifests itself in many ways. For many, post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) is a real and even natural by-product of the death of a child. According to Carol Kearns, PTSD can manifest itself through recurring recollections of the event, distressing dreams, flashbacks to the event, and intense psychological distress and physiological reactivity when exposed to internal or external “cues” of the death. This might seem like a normal psychological reaction to anyone who experiences such trauma. That said, parents can experience PTSD even if they weren’t present at the time their child died. You might experience flashbacks to happy or sad times with your child, regret and reliving of past events and dreams or recollections of the death as you imagine it.

Trust is everything In my book, *What I Wish I’d Known: Finding Your Way Through the Tunnel of Grief*, I speak openly about my faith. I’m Christian, but honestly, that doesn’t really matter. Learning to trust in a higher power is a critical part of grieving. Spirituality as we know it is really a manifestation of what or whom you trust, and it influences your fundamental views of life. This trust is a source of strength and support, and can be a powerful antidote for the loneliness that accompanies loss. Trust doesn’t immunize you from pain or grief, but can offer peace, comfort and clarity – welcomed friends at a time of loss. If you have faith, trust in it.

It doesn’t get “better” I don’t write this to be pessimistic. In fact, I believe there is hope in accepting the fact that your heart will always ache for your child. When your child dies, there is no “getting over it.” You’ll laugh again. You’ll enjoy life again. You’ll love again. But you also might cry every Christmas morning, every birthday and sometimes just because. That’s okay. You’ve experienced a wound that doesn’t ever fully heal. You loved with your heart and soul, and your grief is simply a manifestation that your love is still alive – forever.

Age isn’t a factor Losing a child – whether that child is a child or that child is a grandparent – is a traumatic event. It goes against life’s natural order. I experienced this first-hand when I witnessed my mother grieve my brother’s death. Scott wasn’t a teenager. He was a 60-year-old grown adult who died unexpectedly last year. The death of a brother is a difficult experience, but for my siblings and me, the most heart-wrenching part of the process was witnessing our 84-year-old mother’s complete devastation. My mother buried her son, and it didn’t matter that he had lived a full life. In that casket – or urn, in this case – he was still her child. After Scott’s death, my mother beautifully expressed her journey through grief in a poem I hope will offer you solace.

Ode to My Son

Val Hugstad

You are gone.

My body aches.

My heart is empty.

My soul seeks yours in despair.

No joy is mine.

Then hope appears, grows into faith,
transforms into truth...

We are one.

Your warmth heals my bones.

Your memories fill my heart.

My soul embraces and releases yours.

Joy is ours

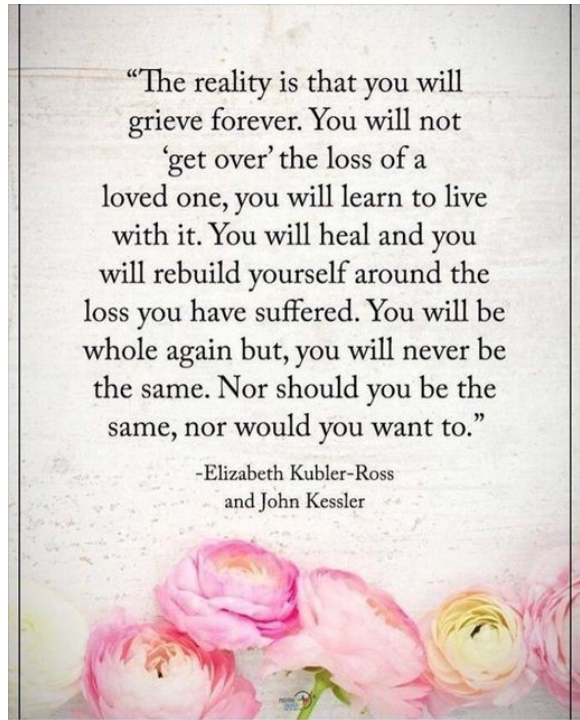
We are all alike and, at the same time, we are very unlike. Our stories are different, our solutions are different, our ways of handling our grief are different, but we are all alike in that we all hurt to the depths of our capacity to hurt. We experience many of the grief symptoms alike, and we are alike in our need for help. While we cannot give each other definite answers or take away from each other's pain, we can help each other simply by being there and listening to each other.

Dennis Klass, TCF St Louis, USA
Childless parent newsletter London



“The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not ‘get over’ the loss of a loved one, you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but, you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same, nor would you want to.”

-Elizabeth Kubler-Ross
and John Kessler



‘Grief and healing in the afterloss’

So what has been happening in Whanganui of late?

Like all of us we have been dealing with this pandemic as best we can. We have had to cancel our Candle Lighting 2021 and our planned workshops in February 2022 to tie in with COVID restrictions. We have also called a halt to our Trustees meetings so we now communicate by phone email and letterbox drops. Next will be pigeons !

We still meet for our monthly Coffee Care and Chat as long as things are OK with the Café but this does restrict the unvaccinated from attending.

Grief and Epidemics don't go well together.

What if there was a vaccine and booster for our Grief?

Days are blurry, control of routine is lost, time is lost, access to places and people who help us to grieve may be lost. Social distancing, travel restrictions, masks - all these have impacted on our grief that occurred before the virus.

Reality may be close to home, we have renewed worry about others. We need to set short term goals. The old 'norm' has gone and we haven't really sorted out a new 'norm'. Remember it's OK to NOT be OK.

As I write my beloved sister lies in a deep irreversible coma in Auckland. Pre- COVID there was no need to decide how to cope with this I would have up there like a shot. But.....

WEBSITE. www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz

There is a current update happening to our website. BIG thank you to Kiwiwebs who are doing this free of charge. We do still have to pay our web hosting fees so if anyone would like to contribute to this on-going TCF NZ publicity let me know. Not easy with cheques gone but Whanganui TCF is sorting on-line banking so contributions could be paid direct to our bank. The new site is not active online yet but PLEASE check the old site out and let me know any of the following. (Email me marshkandb@gmail.com)

to update contacts or information
your area/chapter events and news

I have put Candlelighting for this December on just as a general date.

if you have any contributions to add to the Jottings.

Remember: NZ newsletters to date from 2017 can be read on the site.

Good Grief, Books I am planning to add a recommended books section

Please send a brief review on any books that have helped you and may be of help to others.

Go well and gently in these strange days. From all your friends in Whanganui

<https://healgrief.org/grief-is-and-grief-is-not/>

Sometimes in our grief it can be challenging to navigate the expectations of others around us. We may feel pressured to “move on” or hide our grief from others in fear of being judged. Maybe, even, someone gives you some well-meaning advice that actually makes you feel worse. We have put together the following chart to help you educate family and friends who may not understand what you are going through and as a way to validate your own grief experience. We hope these will help you see that you are “doing grief” the way that is right for you, and that it is ok to struggle, but we are always here to support you.

Grief is...

Grief is
... a journey and can sometimes feel pretty messy.

Grief is
... wanting to still say your person or pet’s name.

Grief is
... having waves of emotion hit you at the strangest times.

Grief is
... needing to give yourself a break now and then.

Grief is
... asking for support.

Grief is
... sometimes putting your needs first.

Grief is
... an individual experience.

Grief is
... finding what feels right for your journey.

Grief is
... sometimes pretty trying.

Grief is
... getting out of your comfort zone to find connections.

Grief is
... sometimes dealing with the tough stuff.

Grief is
... something that grows and changes as we do.

Grief is
... normal.

Grief is
... feeling foggy somedays.

Grief is
... finding your new normal.

Grief is
... allowing yourself to do what is right for you.

Grief is
... a judgement free zone.

Grief is
... taking time to remember your person or pet.

Grief is
... learning it’s ok not to always feel ok.

Grief is not...

Grief is not
... a liner set of stages to go through.

Grief is not
... moving on and having to forget them.

Grief is not
... just getting over your feelings.

Grief is not
... always needing to just push through.

Grief is not
... having to always do it by yourself.

Grief is not
... ignoring your needs and hoping they will go away.

Grief is not
... the same for everyone.

Grief is not
... feeling the pressure to do things a certain way.

Grief is not
... always hard. Some days might feel more “normal” than others.

Grief is not
... isolating yourself because no one understands.

Grief is not
... ignoring it and hoping it will just go away.

Grief is not
... something that just ends.

Grief is not
... something you should have to hide from others.

Grief is not
... judging yourself for feeling that way.

Grief is not
... struggling to have to keep everything exactly as it was.

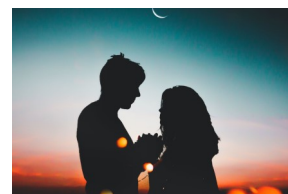
Grief is not
... sticking to other people’s expectations.

Grief is not
... on anyone else’s timeline.

Grief is not
... putting their memory on a shelf and walking away from them.

Grief is not
... always putting on a mask of happiness.

Gratefully lifted from TCF Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter

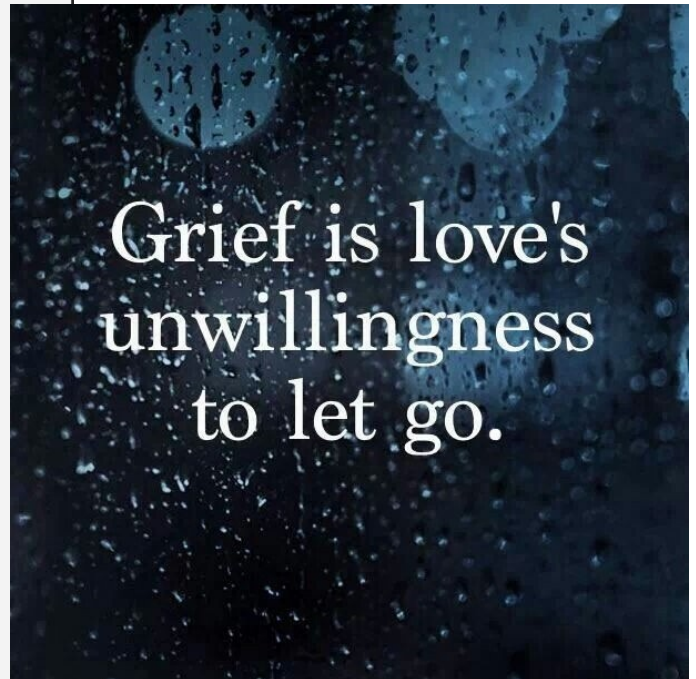


Things to do when Desperate

1. Breathe
2. Get my teddy bear
3. Call other bereaved people (Keep their phone numbers handy)
4. Call close friends
5. Call a counsellor
6. Get in a rocking or comfy chair (And let it support me)
7. Take a hot bath
8. Go for a walk or run
9. Listen to soothing music
10. Take a nap
11. Put on a relaxation tape
12. Ask someone to hold me
13. Cry
14. Yell into my pillow
15. Say to myself: "Others love me" or "I have the right to survive" or "Others have gotten through this, I can too"
16. Pet a dog or cat
17. Watch an old movie on TV or read a book
18. Lie on the floor & feel the floor support me
19. Pray
20. Start again at the top

Ellen Bass and Laura Davis
 Edited by Barb Seth

Gratefully reprinted from TCF Winnipeg Chapter Newsletter



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.

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 re-emerge 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.

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. Life has irrevocably changed.

Reprinted with love from Johannesburg Chapter Newsletter

The Final Goodbye by Adam Farrell

A flippant "see you later"
 No thought for the future or the past.
 A child's mind is now.
 A conversation starts,
 "there has been an accident"
 You immediately know something is wrong.
 But what?
 You hear the words,
 but do not process them.
 Disorientating.
 Confusing.
 Disbelief.

It can't be real.
 Why am I not crying like everyone else?
 How do you say goodbye?
 You hardly have words
 to describe yourself at this young age.
 The journey begins.
 You are alone.
 You are lost in the grief your family is going
 through.
 You become invisible.
 You are not a grieving parent.
 You find your own ways to come to terms with
 the loss.
 Child's Goodbye

An angel walked the beat

A drunk man in an Oldsmobile
They said had run the light
That caused the six-car pileup
On 109 that night.

When broken bodies lay about
And blood was everywhere,
The sirens screamed out eulogies,
For death was in the air.

A mother, trapped inside her car,
Was heard above the noise;
Her plaintive plea near split the air:
Oh, God, please spare my boys!

She fought to loose her pinned hands;
She struggled to get free,
But mangled metal held her fast
In grim captivity.

Her frightened eyes then focused
On where the back seat once had been,
But all she saw was broken glass and
Two children's seats crushed in.

Her twins were nowhere to be seen;
She did not hear them cry,
And then she prayed they'd been thrown free,
Oh, God, don't let them die!

Then firemen came and cut her loose,
But when they searched the back
They found therein no little boys,
But the seat belts were intact.

They thought the woman had gone mad
And was traveling alone,
But when they turned to question her,
They discovered she was gone.

Policemen saw her running wild
And screaming above the noise
In beseeching supplication,
Please help me find my boys!
They're four years old and wear blue shirts;
Their jeans are blue to match.
One cop spoke up, They're in my car,
And they don't have a scratch.

They said their daddy put them there
And gave them each a cone,
Then told them both to wait for Mom
To come and take them home.

I've searched the area high and low,
But I can't find their dad.
He must have fled the scene, I guess,
and that is very bad.

The mother hugged the twins and said,
While wiping at a tear,
He could not flee the scene, you see,
For he's been dead a year.

The cop just looked confused and asked,
Now, how can that be true?
The boys said, Mommy, Daddy came
And left a kiss for you.

He told us not to worry
And that you would be all right,
And then he put us in this car with
The pretty, flashing light.

We wanted him to stay with us,
Because we miss him so,
But Mommy, he just hugged us tight
And said he had to go.

He said someday we'd understand
And told us not to fuss,
And he said to tell you, Mommy,
He's watching over us.

The mother knew without a doubt
That what they spoke was true,
For she recalled their dad's last words,
I will watch over you.

The firemen's notes could not explain
The twisted, mangled car,
And how the three of them escaped
Without a single scar.

But on the cop's report was scribed,
In print so very fine,
An angel walked the beat tonight on
Highway 109

May the angels watch over you
and your loved ones
today and always.

TCF/Okanagan, BC

Reprinted from TCF 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.

Hollow

I hope you never know
The hollow of my chest
The emptiness within
Where my Angel rests

I hope you never suffer
The consuming visceral pain
That tears your heart to pieces
Never whole again

I hope you never feel
That you want to fade to black
Step back into obscurity
Sink and not come back

I hope you never wake
From a dream where she's alive
To slip back into darkness
When you realize.....

And I hope you never sit
On the front row of those pews I
t's just the wrong way round
Generationally confused

I hope you never walk
In the shoes I have to wear
For these shoes are weary
Each step is hard to bear

I limp along in hope
That we will meet again
United with my Angel
And shedding all my pain

So thank your lucky stars
That you have your angels here
Hold them very close
Whisper love into their ears

For life is very precious
And we all must make the best
But I pray you never know
The hollow of my chest

Sam Linake, Mom of Angel Emmy x

Lifted with love from TCF Winnipeg

Tomorrow will come

By Carolyn Salter

Tomorrow will come, like it or not
And we don't
For our loved ones won't be with us
We must find our way without them
Make a future without them
Live our lives without them
And without them we must find new meaning
Sing new songs, make new dreams
Without them.

Yet they are somehow here -
We are not without them.

Our lives will have meaning
Because we once held them close
We had them in our lives
And now they watch our lives.

Unseen
Sometimes unfelt
As if they may have deserted us.
They have not.
It is we who cannot see the wood for the trees
Who cannot see that they remain with us
Working little miracles on our lives
And if we can't see them
Know only the things we find have meaning
Have been touched by their presence
A flower, a sunset,
A moment full of the poignancy
Of a presence.

Tomorrow will come
And because of yesterday
We will carry on
Eventually we will find a way.

We will live our lives well
Until we are together again.

Lifted with love from TCF Johannesburg.



I get great joy in Autumn from seeing the leaves changing colour. Driving down our main street in Wanganui will be a blessing. Guess the Council doesn't think so. There will be some picturesque vistas in our country at the moment as the leaves change especially in the South Island.

Locked down here, my husband and I sit in our garden having long morning and afternoon teas, watching the birds and enjoying the leaves on our ornamental grape which is weaving it's way through an apple tree, producing brilliant red leaves. In the sun they look like jewels. Also the colours on our beautiful maple are gradually changing daily before they fall. What a myriad of gorgeous colours? What an artist Nature is? Nature's colour palette is amazing, creating an autumn masterpiece. Talking of artists – Look at the stunning picture my clever daughter in law, Chantelle made out of our grape leaves.

Beauty can be seen in everything even fallen leaves.



Gardeners with pristine lawns find leaves a pest and rake them up and dispose of them. I rake them up and spread them on my garden as a life giving mulch.

There are nutrients in leaves that seep into the ground giving plants assistance with growth. If left around a tree the leaves put goodness back into the roots of the tree so nothing is wasted in nature.

It's no mistake that the leaves change to such brilliant hues in Autumn.

During summer, the tree is making food inside the cells of the leaves.

Green leaves of summer need chlorophyll and that needs light, warmth and moisture to work. As the season changes there is less warmth and light and the chlorophyll breaks down and causes other colour pigments to show as the bright colours we see.

Trees protect themselves from Winter damage by dropping their leaves, the colours change as the elements that make them green are no longer there; light, warmth and moisture. The tree doesn't need leaves in winter as the chemicals are not needed as it has a time of dormancy. So trees can enjoy a time of rest living off the energy they have stored up.

These pigments are already in the green leaf all along but as weather conditions change so does the colour. The leaf is dying really.

As the autumn leaf dies, it is often more beautiful than when it was green. Bursting with colour yet dying.

Autumn has some messages for us as we travel on this grief journey.

I guess we are dying daily. We must build up our 'chlorophyll' we need to produce greenness - faith and strength which can be stored up for the hard times when our 'leaves fall' This is when we can become beautiful.

Like autumn leaves, our child too has died. Like a tree, seasons change in our lives. The chill of grief or loneliness or depression or sadness can be very real. There seems to be less light and joy in our lives. We have a dry spell. Let's not think of autumn as a melancholy time but a time of hope and comfort - It can be a cosy, drawing-together time.



So what colours do we see in Autumn leaves?

Red: Vibrant; rich; colour of love and passion

Orange: Warm; comforting; pumpkin soup; Are you someone that people feel comfortable to be around.

Yellow: Happy; cheerful; Laughter is good medicine

Purple: Grief; extreme sadness: We all know this.

Brown: Stable; boring; Brown is there to enhance and show up the bright colours. Some of us are the ones who are in the background showing stability and enabling others in their Compassionate Friends ministry.

Whatever colour you are, be the best 'autumn leaf' you can.

The Compassionate Friends Wanganui April 2017 revamped 2020



Feb March 2022



Sibling Page



The Grief of Losing a Sibling By Shannon Jaccard

When your sibling dies, you lose a part of your past, present and future. My mother said that I became a second mommy at the ripe age of 4, which was the moment my brother was placed in my arms. As he grew, naturally he had to follow my rules. I was the oldest — need I say more.

I remember when he first came to kindergarten and I was in the third grade. I would watch the kindergarten playground to make sure he was OK and if anyone was teasing him. I taught him how to tie his shoes, to sneak candy, to be daring. It seemed like from the moment he learned to walk, I would find him coming into my bed at night. Although, I made sure to take the side of the bed by the wall since he was a mover and I didn't want to fall off.

Christmas morning, I was the one that kept him entertained by grabbing our stockings and giving my parents some extra time to sleep. I had dreams for our future. I wasn't surrounded by cousins growing up and decided that we would have kids at the same time and create a larger family for our children. I, of course, would have to approve of whoever he married. Remember, I was the oldest.

Siblings may take different paths and life may separate them, but they will forever be bonded by having begun their journey in the same boat.

A few years ago, my husband and I were about to put on a movie when my mother called. She was talking to my husband, but I could hear her screaming with tears. After he hung up, he looked at me and said, "Jeff was killed." In one moment, with one phone call, the world tilted. For everyone else, the world keeps going; but when your brother or sister dies, so does a piece of you.

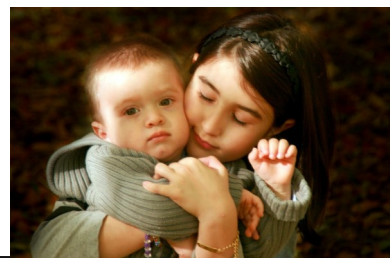
My brain couldn't rationalize his words. He knew I was going to go visit my brother the next day, therefore he couldn't be dead. Grief isn't reserved for the parents. I have often felt like people asked me how I was doing as an afterthought.

What my parents, and all the parents I know who have lost a child, have gone through is the most unimaginable loss. As a mom, I never want that experience. However, I lost my best friend, my past and my future. Siblings deserve to be asked, "How are you today?"

In fact, grief is unique to each person and loss comes in many different forms. When my brother died, I didn't just lose a brother, I lost an uncle for my children, a caretaker for my aging parents, a part of my team. I lost the person who held the memories of my childhood; a person who could embarrass me by telling my husband stories of the past. I lost a piece of me. And when you lose a piece of yourself, it doesn't just heal — you learn to adjust without it.

For me, the hardest part is looking at pictures and knowing I have memorized all the pictures there will ever be with him in it. The years of new pictures and memories will be without him. But then my daughter smiles, and while she will never have met her uncle, she carries a piece of him in her smile. In that moment, I have a new memory of my brother.

For all those who have lost a sibling, no matter how young or old, recently or years ago, let me ask, how are you doing?



Family Fragility: A Sibling's Reflection

I wanted to share my observations as a surviving sibling about the fragmentations that occur in families when a child dies. My purpose in writing is not to suggest that every family and/or surviving sibling has the same experiences. Mine is just one perspective and shared so other surviving siblings who might have lived similar experiences know that they are not alone.

Everyone grieves differently. Our grief manifests in different ways. We grieve at different paces. Our grief journey is as unique to each of us as we are. The family unit can be altered because of the different grieving journeys.

Parents or partners might drift apart as the difference in grieving over the loss of a child becomes divisive. A sibling's grief can add to a parent's grief, as the parent is on their own grief journey and unable to support the surviving children in their grief journey. This can add negatively to the parent's grief. Parents, children, and other family units can find themselves being divided as the different grief journeys diverge.

As a surviving sibling, I have witnessed parents separate over different viewpoints and experiences. These might include views such as, why are you not grieving in the same way that I am? Did you not care about our child the same way I did? A romanticising of the child who died, which can overshadow the surviving child's/children's connection with the parents.

While I am not a parent, nor have I lost a child, these are some fragmentations that can occur in families that I have witnessed as a surviving child in a family unit. I have witnessed similar situations in other families who have lost children, of any age.

These additional family struggles add to the surviving child's/children's grieving process as they witness the family break apart. There can be a sense by the child that they are somehow at fault. This can be a very lonely and isolating journey for each member of the family unit. Reaching out to support groups, family, friends, and those who can understand offers hope to families. An organization such as Compassionate Friends is an excellent example of such a support network.

After a sibling passes, family traditions change. Birthdays, life milestones, vacations, and special events are never the same. As a surviving sibling, I took the approach to remember my brother Craig and to celebrate him. I take his picture to family events, often putting it on the dinner table. The family offers up toasts in celebration of his memory. I talk about him with those I connect with. I relish an opportunity to speak with those who knew him and can share their memories of him. These give me different insights and perspectives of who he was and who he might have become.. I take it as my responsibility that he is spoken about when the family gets together. I reminisce with those around me about who and where he might be now with family and friends. On Craig's birthday and anniversary, I make a point of celebrating and remembering him. I cook his favourite meal, wear his favourite colour, light a candle, watch his favourite movie, and look at photos of him - remembering our life together. These are examples of activities I have personally adopted as part of my grief journey. I know I cannot heal the family. I can hold out my hand to another family member with empathy, love, and support. Journeying together is richer than journeying alone.

My life, as his brother, was altered the day he died. I remember vividly the moment I was told as if it happened just 5 minutes ago. I felt lost and confused. It all felt surreal. And from that moment on, it was just me, in my grief journey. I don't share my moments of grief or the loss of my brother to random strangers. For those I know and trust, I share my experiences. But there is a heavy part of my heart that breaks from time to time with a passing memory, someone's smile or act of kindness, or a passing butterfly that reminds me of Craig and my deep sense of loss of his passing. There are moments I am angry that he left - I needed him. I still do. I speak with him regularly and take comfort in knowing that we are connected but in two different forms.

We are the surviving siblings of brothers and sisters who passed before us. Their age is not as important as their impact in and on our lives. We are who we are as a direct influence of their presence, whether it be a short or long life shared. We too mourn the loss of a precious angel, who graced our lives. Through our thoughts, actions, deeds, and words we carry their memory forward. It is ok to ask surviving siblings how their grief journey is going, do they need any support, would they like to reach out to someone at Compassionate Friends or attend a meeting.

We are a bit lost. We are a bit broken. We are different. But we need love, and the family is a bedrock for the foundation of love.

By Adam Farrell

Craig's brother

TCF/North Vancouver

See page 9 for a poem by Adam.

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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	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	Marie and Ron Summers	07 8954879
CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND	(Son, Wayne 23yrs, Suicide)	
WHANGANUI	Nina Sandilands (Debbie, 16yrs, Brain Virus)	06 3478086
WHANGANUI	Keren Marsh (Simon, 23yrs, car accident)	06 3443345 marshkandb@gmail.com
WHAKATANE	Trish and Alan Silvester	07 3222084 atsilvester@actrix.co.nz

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.nz

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