



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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JUNE 2010

WALKING THIS VALLEY—Tucson Chapter VOL. 27, NO.06

For Parents and siblings who have experienced the death of a child or sibling

TUCSON CHAPTER MEETINGS

Catalina United Methodist Church
2700 E. Speedway Room H-232
7:00 —9:00 PM

JUNE 9

JUNE 23

July 14
July 28

Save the Date!

TCF's National Conference will be held

July 2-4, 2010 Arlington, VA

For more information, check the TCF website.

FATHER'S DAY

(Excerpts from *A Father's Grief*, by David Pellegrin, TCF of Honolulu, Hawaii. Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 1999.)

At my second meeting of The Compassionate Friends one of the mothers said how nice it was to see a man attending, since "men grieve differently from women." Her remark was no doubt meant to help put me at ease. I hadn't said a thing so far, and might have been intimidating in my silence. But it caught me off guard. What I was feeling after George's death was so absolute, so awful, how could it possibly come with any "differences"? Would one grieve differently for an infant than for an adolescent? For a son than for a daughter? Surely, grief was absolute for both mothers and fathers.

Over time, I came to acknowledge the differences the well-meaning mother had in mind:

- Neither I nor the other men who occasionally attended talked much. The women talked freely.
- I sensed I was better at compartmentalizing my grief than the mothers, better at keeping a lid on it socially and at work.
- My male friends seemed less comfortable talking about George, bringing up his name or even looking at his pictures than female friends.
- I came to see how intensely I felt I had let my son down as a protector, the father's primary role.

Shortly after becoming editor of my chapter newsletter, I sent a copy to my friend, Jack Knebel, in California. Jack and his wife, Linda, had been involved with a chapter of The Compassionate Friends after the death of their daughter, Hollis. He replied, "*It's good to see that a man is taking an active role in the group.*" Then he went on to write movingly about those male-female grieving differences. The rest of his letter, which touched me deeply, follows:

Several years after Hollis died, Linda and I were being trained by The Compassionate Friends to be 'buddies' for newly bereaved parents. One of the exercises was to list all the unhelpful things that others had said in trying to comfort us so that we wouldn't make the same mistakes. The other trainees, all women, made long lists, and did it with enthusiasm. When the lists were read aloud, they nodded knowingly at every entry and eventually hooted and howled with derision at the worst (some of which were pretty bad). When it came my turn, I held up an empty page and said:

"People may have said such things to me, I just

(Continued on page 3)

Welcome

All bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are welcome at our support group meetings. You will find a place of comfort, caring people, and most of all - HOPE. Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and much to gain. We urge you to give it a try. For many it is the first real step toward healing. Although it may seem overwhelming, we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable. We are not professional counselors. We are bereaved families who want to help each other. Please join us as we heal together.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Feel free to call **(520) 721-8042**. A member will contact you.

Visit our WEBSITE at:
www.tucsontcf.org

Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Kathie Davis & Carl Luikart

- Editors*.....Sam & Phyllis Turner
 - Contributing Editors*.....Sara Moore & Caroline Dodge
 - Outreach*.....Kathy Parfrey
 - Corresponding Secretary*.....Allie Mathews
 - Database Coordinator*.....Noelle Rohen
 - New Attendee Coordinator* Cindy Walter
 - Library*..... Guy Walter
 - Treasurer* Audrey Russell-Kibble
 - Fund Raising*..... Scott Parfrey
- Facilitators:** Noelle Rohen, Scott & Kathy Parfrey, Maureen & Carl Luikart, Kathie Davis, Carol & Larry Tilton, Sam & Phyllis Turner, Audrey Kibble, Sal Cataudella

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Barb & Gene Caligari
Chandler, AZ

If you would like someone to receive a copy of this newsletter, call (520) 721-8042. or www.tucsontcf.org
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Bring Funeral Homes, 236 S. Scott Avenue Tucson, Arizona 85701 For partial underwriting our World Wide Candle Lighting Service.

TO OUR “COOKIE & TREAT PROVIDERS”

Or fruit or veggies:

(Two volunteers per meeting, please!)

Remember to sign the **COOKIE SHEET**.

JUNE 09 Don & Allie **Cindy Walter**
JUNE 23 Shirley Beene **Fay Pierce**

July 14 HELP! **Phyllis Turner**
July 28 Kathy Parfrey **Paul & Jill Bosseler**

Love Gifts are a way of remembering your child and supporting your local Chapter.

Thank you to all who contribute and support . Checks should be made payable to The Compassionate Friends, Tucson Chapter, and mailed to **TCF, P.O. Box 30733, Tucson, AZ 85751. (Please designate how you would like your donation to be used—room rent, public address system, etc.)**

Check with your employer how you can donate to The Compassionate Friends through non-profit payroll deduction.

From United Way: in memory of all of our children
Pamela Horn, Briana Horn, Rebecca Pape-in memory of all of our children

If you would like to help underwrite the cost of our new public address system, a donation of \$50.00 will sponsor a memorial plate in your child’s name to be placed on the side of the speakers.

Mercer Johnson in memory of his son:

Mercer Johnson, III

Jack and Dorothy Krage in memory of their son,

Keith Krage

Cindy and Guy Walter in memory of their son:

Kenny

Carl and Maureen Luikart in memory of their son:

Ken Luikart

Joylene Taber in memory of her son:

Matthias Enlow

(Continued from page 1)

don't recall. What I do remember is that people tried to tell me how sad they were for us. I remember being told how much they loved Hollis and how much they cared about us. I remember one of my partners hugging me in the halls of my very stiff and proper law firm. I remember men who had never told me anything more personal than their reactions to a Giants' loss crying at our loss and their fears.

You women are used to talking to each other about your emotions and about personal things. I wasn't and my friends weren't either. So the fact that we could do so was a great gift, and it wasn't marred in the slightest by someone's choice of words."

Now, the shell has been broken and I find it easier to talk about my emotions, my hopes and fears, about those things that really are important. And that, for me, was one of Hollis' greatest gifts.

I know that even after George's death, he is a major part of your life. My guess is that you're becoming more open to the gifts that he and those who care about you are able to give.

*Yours, with compassion and friendship,
Jack*

THIS MIGHT HELP

By

Sam and Phyllis Turner

I've been reading ***Catching the Light,***
Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child

By Genesse Bourdeau Gentry © 2009.

On her introductory page she says:

***A prism is only glass until light catches it.
The more light hits it,
the more colors are revealed,
and the more rainbows reflected.***

After tragedy huge enough to break us, to shatter the pieces of beautiful glass that were our lives, we have a choice. Let the glass stay broken on the ground, covering the graves of our dead hopes and dreams forever, or pick up the fragments, really look at them, and put them together in a new way

so we may heal and grow. And since it can never be put back exactly the way it was, the glass now has the potential to become a prism. Instead of shining light straight through us, it is captured by all our facets, each finely polished by our deepening into grief. And as the fragments catch the light, more colors are revealed, and rainbows are formed, reflecting the pools of deep love and renewed hope we find inside.

* * *

We see these rainbows happen continually at our TCF meetings. With each meetings new rainbows appear as members feel comfortable with their circle of friends.

One evening, a group of eight sat in a circle and talked about "strange" things that seemed to draw them to the meetings. One person told of making a last-minute decision to come to her first meeting and how she felt relieved for having come. Her smile was radiant by the end of the session.

Another expressed comfort in the sense of her child's presence with her. There was no proof and some may say that these happenings of love are mere coincidence, but we don't care what others think. For us, we have found a new prism, a new rainbow of color that helps us through another day in this eternal walk through our valley of grief.

However, like mining for precious gems, one must be persistent. Twice monthly meetings may not be enough at the beginning of your journey. Having an understanding partner or friend may help to fill the spaces. Walking together, sitting in the shade, sipping iced tea and crying or just sitting quietly is perfectly all right. It's important to know that you must take care of yourself. Joining with friends who are walking this path with you just might help and...you may just help them at the same time.

May you see rainbows this month.

Sam and Phyllis Turner

The Statement of One Bereaved Father

I did not choose to become bereaved. Painful as it is, I choose to allow grief to work progressively in me.

I grieve because I love much. My child died, but my love for my child did not.

Since I loved, and still love, very much, I expect my grief to be severe.

I realize that each person grieves differently. I expect that my wife and child will grieve differently than I do.

As a father and husband, I do have a responsibility to my wife and child. I can best fulfill that responsibility if I grieve and allow them to grieve.

Grief, while very real, is not rational. I accept the irrational in my thoughts and actions. Grief need not drive a wedge between me and my family.

I choose to allow grief to strengthen our family ties.

Unresolved grief continues to produce mental and physical symptoms. I must allow the grief process to proceed in me.

Crying is part of grief, and therapeutic. It is not unmanly to cry. I must allow myself to cry even openly. Grieving does not answer the question "Why?" Since there are not acceptable answers, I must accept the unanswered question.

My child was a person, is now a person, and will be a person in the future. I can never forget my child.

I cannot return to the normal that existed before my child's death. I must go on to what is now to be normal for me.

Getting on to a new normal doesn't mean forgetting my child. My child remains in my thinking and my talking now, and will in the future.

I cannot be grateful that my child died. I am grateful that my child lived and I choose to express that gratitude.

I cannot forget the events surrounding the death of my child. I choose to recall the happy moments associated with my child.

I could not control the past, which included the death of my child. I do have some control over the future, as I build the future with my family.

My child's death did not happen so that I might become a better person. I choose to allow my child's death and my grief to make me a better person.

I did not understand before I joined the fellowship of the bereaved. I choose to become understanding, tolerant, and compassionate now.

My grief has created and brought out many emotional needs for me. I can help meet those needs by meeting the similar needs of others.

My spiritual beliefs did not die with my child. I choose to use them to help me through these difficult

years.

Questioning those beliefs and values is wrong. I must, as a result of my questionings, strengthen my belief system.

I did not choose to become bereaved. I choose to allow good to come out of what is now so severe for me.

Robert F. Gloor, MD, TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

What is Left?

When a child dies, you ask, among other questions, what is left? A beautiful, sensitive, intelligent son has chosen to end his life. What can be left after such a crushing blow? Others will point out that you have a spouse, other children or grandchildren, perhaps relatives and friends. They are all left. Perhaps you have a career that is left. And yet, how meaningless all of those are to a bereaved parent, to one who is suffering the most devastating loss of all. So you continue to search for what it is that is left.

You read books on bereavement, scarcely remembering what you have read; you attend meetings, talk with others who have suffered a loss like yours. If you are fortunate you have one or two good friends who, while they cannot fully understand, are there to love and listen. Perhaps there is a therapist who guides you in your search for an answer. But for a long while everything you read or hear has little meaning and certainly cannot provide the answer to your question.

Or can it? Does all that you have read and hard and experienced finally come together and answer the questions of what is left? For me it does. The answer was 13 months in coming, but how clear it seems now. I am left. That's it! I am left and I have been left with the love of Scott. It is a new love, it is different, more intense, it is undemanding, it need not be reciprocated, there are no strings attached. I love this love of Scott's. It warms me and comforts me. It is a wonderful love, but I cannot keep it. It would be wrong to do so, this love is too precious to keep to myself.

I am left with love to spare and love to share. It will never run out. He will always be with me to replenish it. I have found my answer! I am left to share Scott's love with you.

Betty Stevens, TCF Baltimore, MD

About Being Strong

By Sascha The Sorrow and The Light

Many people are convinced that being strong and brave means trying to think and talk about “something else.” But we know that being strong and brave means thinking and talking about your dead love, until your grief begins to be bearable. That is strength. That is courage. And only this kind of “being strong and brave” will help you heal.

TO THOSE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND ME

I know you think it's morbid that I have pictures of my stillborn daughter.

I know you think I'm crazy for hugging and holding her blankets to my chest.

I know you think I'm weird for not washing the cap she wore (with tiny streaks of dried blood upon it), and for putting it against my face to smell it.

I know you think I'm sick for dressing her and holding a funeral for her.

Please let me tell you how I felt, and just maybe you'll understand.

The pictures are all I have to look at, since she is not here for me to see.

The blanket is the only thing I have to hug and hold, since she is not here for me to hold and cuddle.

The cap has her scent, and it was the only article of clothing that ever touched her skin. To wash it would take away her scent.

I had her dressed because she was a human being. I know I wouldn't want to be buried naked, so why should she?

I had a funeral for her because she was very much alive for 9 months within me, and I felt her life. She deserved to be acknowledged as a human being who departed this world. She deserved this last farewell.

So, you see, I did all of these things to acknowledge her existence. If I didn't do these things, it would be like saying she never existed, and 9 months of my life never existed.

It really doesn't matter what you think. It's what I think that matters—because I'm the one that lost my daughter. And I think everything I did, and everything I do, is quite normal.

I do what comforts me and gets me through this loss! These things that I did (or do now, from time to time) feel good and right to me. And that is what's important.

Shirley Beck, Anne Arundel Ch., BPUSA, Annapolis, MD

JUST AN INFANT

We had a fine discussion, you and I, talking about those who don't understand our loss and how we feel. Peers in grief.

Then you asked my son's age at death, and I could see your changes of attitude as I replied “three months.” Our talk was over.

Having lost an older child, you decided that what we both felt could not be the same. For your child was with you longer. And my child was “just an infant.”

But our loss and our pain are not different. Through the death of our children, we have both lost the same thing: Dreams of the future.

Yes, you have more memories than I. But we both have lost the tomorrows of our children, and that pain knows no minimum age. God, it hurts.

All the things we wished for our children, without regard to age, now will not come to pass. That future is gone.

Yes, my child was an infant. But that does not lessen the love that I have, just as the age of your child does not affect your love. Love is an ageless emotion.

And when my young son died, he carried away in his little hands many dreams and hopes, and as much love as your child did when he left. I miss you, Alex.

Doug Hughes, TCF, Cincinnati, OH

Sibling Page

Ask Dr. Paulson

Q: My 8 year-old sister died almost 8 years ago. I think that I have worked through my grief quite well, but I still can't stop thinking about her. Her birthday is coming up shortly and I feel the need to celebrate it just as if she were with us. I'd like to have a party, cake and candles. My parents have never suggested anything like this before, so I don't know what their feelings would be. It's just that I want to do something to show that she has not been forgotten. Should I suggest this to my parents or forget the whole thing?

A: Celebrating your sister—her life, your relationship, the terrific person she was—sounds like a great idea. It's difficult to let her birthday go unnoticed. It might be a good idea to talk to the rest of your family and ask them how (and when) they might want to celebrate. We celebrate my brother's birthday every year by having **RTTFG Day on that day--Refuse to Take For Granted Day**. This is a day we not only celebrate him, but also each other. We take this day to remind each other how special we think they are and how much we love each other. We give each other gifts that are especially meaningful - favorite books, favorite activities, wishes, etc. I whole-heartedly recommend choosing a special day to remember her and celebrate her!

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.

What the caterpillar
calls the end,
the rest of the world
calls a butterfly.

Lao Tzu

To Honor You

To honor you, I get up everyday and take a breath. And start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile And the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love, I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked, And sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back, Risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance. You were my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source.

So everyday, I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love. Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you.

Connie F. Kiefer Byrd (Lovingly lifted from TCF Southwestern Manitoba)

**The heart knows many songs.
and sings them well.**

**The heart knows images
and sees them, even
when life is much too dark
to light the eyes.**

**The heart knows many songs,
we cannot hear.**

The heart is wise.

Sascha

COMING THIS FALL:
TCF YARD SALE

A special thanks to **U-STORE-IT** 7070 E. Speedway Blvd. for the donation of a larger storage unit for The Compassionate Friends. Call Sam Turner at 798-6088 (voice mail) OR Carl Luikart 749-3361 OR Larry Tilton 298-9708 to drop off donations.

Our lending library expands every month, and we welcome your favorite book donations, as well as your favorite book reviews. Feel free to check out the books and DVD's, but as a courtesy to others, kindly return them within 60 days.



EMAIL YOUR PHOTOS
for the
October 17th Candle Lighting
Slideshow Tribute

If you would like to have your loved one remembered and shared in the slideshow at this year's Tucson TCF Candle Lighting in October, please email (as .jpg attachments) a photo or two of your child or sibling to TCF contributing editor Sara Moore at Sara_Therese_Photography@yahoo.com
by September 30th.

TCF Now on Facebook! The Compassionate Friends national organization now has a Facebook page. You can find us by going to TCF's national website home page at:

www.compassionatefriends.org

and clicking on the Facebook link on the left side. Or, you can go to Facebook and do a search for "The Compassionate Friends/USA." The new Facebook page will provide an additional means of communication with not only our members, but also others who may not be aware of The Compassionate Friends. It is designed to be informative and supportive. We hope all members will join in and contribute to the conversations.



A special THANKS to:
BIG LOTS! 7025 Tanque Verde, Tucson, AZ 85715
Twenty storage bins @ 20% discount.

BUTTON LADY and NAME-TAG MAN

Here's how to get your **FREE** picture buttons and name tags (with your child's picture on the tag): Make a copy (on regular computer paper) of your child's picture. Give it to Shirley Beene - **The Button Lady** - and she will mount it for you. See her for the details about size and quantity, etc. **Or call her 520-885-8398.**
Pick up a template and directions at the next meeting.

For your name tag, you need a similar, but smaller copy of your child's picture including the birth date and death date (and your name, of course!). Kevin Trapp - **Name-Tag Man** - will produce the tag for you - FREE.
Email your picture and information to him at: kjtrapp2001@yahoo.com

Why the name tag? As you continue your journey through this valley, you will get to know many of the members and, often times, you recognize them by their child's name. Your child is the important connection with the faces. What a comfortable way to remember.

THE TCF CREDO: We Need Not Walk Alone

We are *The Compassionate Friends*. We reach out to each other with love, understanding and hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds and relationships. We are young; we are old. Some of us are far along in our a grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of *The Compassionate Friends*, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other grieve as well as to grow. **WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS!**

TCF MISSION

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

OTHER TUCSON SUPPORT GROUPS

Listed are some local support groups besides *The Compassionate Friends*. In addition to these organizations, Tucson has a number of general grief support groups.

Information & Referral Services.....325-2111

Arizona SIDS Alliance.....800-597-SIDS

Survivors Of Suicide.....323-9373

Homicide Survivors, Inc740-5729

FOOTPRINTS - Pregnancy and Infant loss 873-6590

AGAST (Alliance of Grandparents,),888-774-7437

Tu Nidito/Children to Children322-9155

Alive Alone for (now) childless parents,

www.alivealone.org

MISS FOUNDATION www.missfoundation.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tucson, AZ 85751-0733

PO Box 30733

THE TUCSON CHAPTER



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

A national self-help, non-profit organization for families who have experienced the death of a child.

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