



A Self-Help Non-Profit Organization for Families Who Are Grieving the Death of a Child

(The Best of) **Ask Dr. Paulson**

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*.

Q *My sister and my father have both died. They are the only people my mother has pictures of on display. Mom has four living children and many grandchildren, but their pictures are never displayed. What can I do?*

A I often hear from surviving siblings that their parents put up lots of pictures or very large pictures of their brothers or sisters who died. This is often very difficult for the surviving children. They ask questions like: *What about me—I'm still living, don't I count? Aren't you proud of me? How do I compete with a ghost? Don't you care that it's difficult for me to see his or her picture all the time? How can I ever get them to love me as much as they love my brother or sister who died?* This is the important part that you need to talk about—how it makes you feel and what you think when you see these pictures up around the house. What *do* you feel? What *do* you think about yourself? What *do* you think about your relationship with your mom? What *do* you think about your mom's love for you? We can talk about why your mother only puts up pictures of your father and sister who died, but the most important part is how this is affecting you. This is what you need to talk about with your mother.

Although understanding why parents only put up pictures of their children who died should not be the main focus of my reply, a brief explanation may be helpful.

Cont'd next column

Generally there are two main reasons: 1) Parents are afraid that their children who died will be forgotten and everything will go on as if they never lived; and 2) this is one way to keep them in their lives everyday. Parents see, talk with, or know they can reach their living family members anytime, but this is one way that they can keep their children who died alive in their hearts everyday. But again, understanding why should be only a small part of your focus. The main thing is that you communicate with your mom how this makes you think and feel. Talk with your mom about your thoughts and feelings. You'll be surprised how this will help your relationship grow stronger.

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Am Always With You

When I am gone, release me, let me go.

I have so many things to see and do,
You mustn't tie yourself to me with too many
tears,

But be thankful we had so many good years.
I gave you my love, and you can only guess
How much you've given me in happiness.

I thank you for the love that you have shown,
But now it is time I traveled on alone.

So grieve for me a while, if grieve you must
Then let your grief be comforted by trust
That it is only for a while that we must part,

So treasure the memories within your heart.

I won't be far away for life goes on.

And if you need me, call and I will come.

Though you can't see or touch me, I will be near

And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear

All my love around you soft and clear

And then, when you come this way alone,

I'll greet you with a smile and a "Welcome
Home".

Unknown



**A Self-help Non-Profit Support Organization for Families Who
Are Grieving the Death of a Child**

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help international organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:45 P.M. at the Grand Strand Senior Center. The next meetings will be July 1 and August 5. If you are reading this newsletter for the first time you may find it very difficult to come and share your grief. Please know that there will be others present who are ready to listen and understand what you are going through. Try it. It may help. **You need not walk alone.**

The chapter newsletter is normally published every other month and mailed to those in their first year of grief. We hope that it brings comfort to those who read it. If you wish to remain on the mailing list after that period you may do so by attending a meeting or sending a love donation. The distribution of the chapter newsletter is solely dependent upon love gifts.

SIBLING CREDO

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.
Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.
At other times we need our families to be there.
Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.
When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.
Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as

Surviving Siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children unites us. Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope....But whatever hope we bring to this gathering of the Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we will share with each other our love for our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the pain as well as the joy, the anger as well as the peace, the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.
We are the Compassionate Friends.

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- NOTES FOR REFLECTION -

on Parental Grief and the Value of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) Working to Fulfill our Hope: "NO REGRETS - NO DESPAIR"

SOME THINGS WE RECEIVE:

- (1) Outpouring of support
- (2) Remarkable compassion and encouragement
- (3) Demonstration of the abiding power of hope

WHY WE ATTEND: * *Hunger for help from hopelessness, lost feelings and despair

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN OTHER BEREAVED PARENTS:

- (1) Those willing to encounter others' sense of bewilderment and to continue to be there in order to help rebuild lives that have been crushed by loss.
- (2) Those willing to press on in spite of the personal trauma of their own loss or losses. Those with ideals, integrity and the vision which embodies hope and is dedicated to an ideal still in the future.
- (3) Those who are compassionate and great enough to rise above their own pain and grief in order to help and inspire others, yet humble enough to really listen and to be inspired by others.
- (4) Those willing to embrace each other as models of persistence, faith, dignity, and passion to our cause of promoting concern, and ongoing support and caring for others.
- (5) Those willing to accept the challenge that is worthy of inspiring others and dedicating ourselves to building a chapter that is working to fulfill the hope that others see in us.

*** *WORKING TO FULFILL OUR HOPE: "NO REGRETS, NO DESPAIR"**

Grief Support After the Death of a Child

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.

The Compassionate Friends is a national non-profit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal. *The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.*

Support Group Meetings

Monthly support group meetings are the heart of The Compassionate Friends. These gatherings provide a safe and caring environment in which bereaved parents and siblings can talk freely about the emotions and experiences they are enduring. Parents and siblings receive the understanding and support of others who have "been there."

Through the years, the hope for the future that is provided through these sharing sessions has been more helpful than anything else in resolving the grief of bereaved parents. Siblings, grandparents and other adult family members are also welcome at TCF meetings.

The death of a child of any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, to whom does a family turn for the emotional support it will need during the grief journey that lies ahead? The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer and is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Other grieving parents can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person's grief is unique.

Waccamaw Chapter News

A MOMENT WITH MARIE

Those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer are upon us and we all have precious memories of those who are absent. As we reflect back on those memories, please plan to do something to honor your child(ren) by submitting an article for the newsletter for September/October 2008. (Just a couple of suggestions—What I think my child would be doing today, a poem expressing your joy for having had your child (ren) in your life, or simply your feelings of love, grief, loss, etc..) Email your article/poem to Vonda at: slunkie724@yahoo.com

with TCF in the subject line.

I know she already has some, and plans to include them in the next issue. Last year, almost an entire issue was filled with your articles or poems dedicated to your child(ren). It helped us to get to know you better and gives you a release, as well as honoring your child. We gratefully accept articles/poems from siblings.

For those of you who braved the elements—whether rain, cold or heat to clean our portion of Hwy 31, thank you for honoring your child this way, so that others may know where to come for help.

Think about a love donation for your child's birthday. Although the newsletter is put together at no cost to the chapter, and most months is printed by Grand Strand Regional Medical Center, Emergency Services Administration, your donation helps defray the postage costs.

When someone loses a child and an article is published in the local newspaper, a letter goes out to that grieving parent and the newsletter is mailed to them at no cost for the first year.

Being the chapter facilitator has taught me that by giving in the capacity that I do, that it helps me in my recovery process.

You need not walk alone

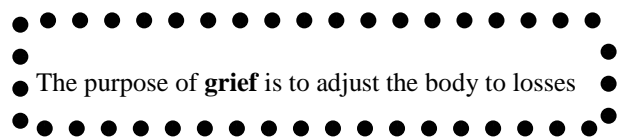
Children

Dedicated to Bereaved Parents everywhere.

Children aren't supposed to die.
Certainly not before their parents.
Not before their grandparents
Not before the 93-year-old lady down the street
But they do.
And hearts are broken
Lives forever changed
Families shattered.
Dreams and hopes stolen.
The death of a child robs its parents of
That which they love most.
It comes uninvited and sometimes unannounced
Leaving behind confusion, sadness,
and gut wrenching pain.
It shatters any once-held illusions
Of goodness and fairness
And being able to protect those we love.
And leaves us feeling as though we have failed
And angry that it should've been us, not them.
It leaves us with questions without answers and
friends and family who don't know what to say
And with us feeling so alone
Struggling to find a reason to stay.

Deb Kosmer,

In Memory of her son, Shawn Jeremy Schmitz



● The purpose of **grief** is to adjust the body to losses ●

Please

*If you would like your child(ren)'s name
Acknowledged in the newsletter,
Make sure that you have filled out the form on
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*We regret that we are unable to publish
His/her name without written permission.*

While Waiting for Thee:

Don't weep at my grave, for I am not there,
I've a date with a butterfly to dance in the air.
I'll be singing in the sunshine, wild and free,
Playing tag with the wind, while I'm waiting for thee.
~~ We are as the wings of a butterfly, bound together with the love of God~~
Jenn, The Butterfly Box

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me
 And I'm not there to see,
 If the sun should rise and find your eyes
 All filled with tears for me.
 I wish so much you wouldn't cry
 The way you did today,
 While thinking of the many things
 We didn't get to say.
 I know how much you love me,
 As much as I love you;
 And each time that you think of me
 I know you'll miss me too!
 But when tomorrow starts without me,
 Please try to understand
 That an angel came and called my name
 And took me by the hand.
 He said my place was ready
 In Heaven far above,
 And that I'd have to leave behind
 All those I dearly love.
 And as I turned to walk away,
 A tear fell from my eye,
 For all my life, I'd always thought,
 I didn't want to die.
 I had so much to live for,
 So much more yet to do;
 It seemed almost impossible
 That I was leaving you.
 I thought of all the yesterdays,
 The good ones and the bad;
 I thought of all the love we shared
 And all the fun we had.
 If I could re-live yesterday
 Just even for a while
 I'd say good-bye and kiss you,
 And maybe see you smile.
 But then I fully realized
 That this could never be,
 For emptiness and memories
 Would take the place of me.
 And when I thought of worldly things
 I might miss come tomorrow,
 I thought of you...and when I did,
 My heart was filled with sorrow.
 But then I walked through Heaven's gate,
 And felt so much at home,
 When God looked down and smiled at me
 From his great golden throne.
 He said "This is your eternity,
 And all I've promised you -
 Today your life on earth is past,
 And here it starts anew.
 I promise no tomorrow,

Cont'd next column

For today will always last;
 And since each day's the same day,
 There's no longing for the past.
 You have been so faithful,
 So trusting and so true -
 Though there were times you did some things
 You knew you shouldn't do.
 But you have been forgiven
 And now at last you're free;
 So won't you come and take my hand
 And share this life with me?
 So when tomorrow starts without me,
 Don't think we're far apart;
 For every time you think of me,
 I'm right there - in your heart.

Submitted by Leo & Barbara Dwyer, TCF Gwinnett
 in loving memory of their son Matthew Dwyer

Remembering

Go ahead and mention my child
 The one that died, you know
 Don't worry about hurting me further
 The depth of my pain doesn't show.
 Don't worry about making me cry
 I'm already crying inside
 Help me to heal by releasing
 The tears that I try to hide.
 I'm hurt when you just keep silent
 Pretending it doesn't exist
 I'd rather you'd mention my child
 Knowing that he has been missed.
 You asked me how I'm doing I say
 "pretty good" or "fine"
 But healing is something on-going
 I feel it will take a lifetime.
 By Elizabeth Dent

*There is a place that we call Memory
 A province by itself
 Which, though unseen,
 Is home and haven to the heart...
 And there, in peace and beauty,
 Waiting,
 Are those with whom we shared our yester-
 days.*

Empathy and Brain Pain Relief

One of the many lessons we can learn from a death is to reserve our opinions until we have walked in another person's shoes. Despite this, many people react almost instinctively to reduce their own pain caused by the empathy they feel as they listen to the story of the tragic death of a child, sibling, partner, or other beloved person.

Reading this, you might be saying, "I don't judge anymore. The death of my child or sibling has taught me to accept." This article is written with caring and concern to shed some light on an area that few people talk about. Let me begin by telling a story.

I have worked with hundreds of bereaved parents for more than two decades. For five years I was a clinician with the University School of Nursing parent Bereavement project in which we worked with more than 100 parents in small groups for a 10 week period in the early months following the death of their child by accident, suicide, or homicide. By the end of the project I had heard what seemed to be every imaginable story of horrendous death.

I wasn't prepared for my reaction to the following story which I have modified to protect the confidentiality of those involved.

Sitting with a group of seven parents, I listened to a father describe the death of his son in a freeway auto accident. I sat, as did the parents, empathetically listening to a story of monumental tragic proportions, watching this man struggling to express the details of his son's final moments. It was a scene not unlike many I had experienced over the past 20 years, but the pain was no less excruciating. Then I heard this father say, ". . . and he had alcohol problems."

At that instant, I remember feeling a shift in my response to his story—almost a relief. And I caught myself saying in my head something

Cont'd next column

like, "Oh, I see." And then catching myself and saying, "I see? What am I doing? This father is describing the death of his son and I'm feeling somewhat relieved?" It was as if a part of my brain was trying to ease my pain by saying, "He had alcohol problems—*that's* it. *That* explains how this senseless tragedy could have taken place." For a moment the senseless seemed to make at least some sense.

If our brain could speak to us during the exact moment that a fellow human being is crying, telling the story of the loss of their child, and describing the intense pain of grief, it might say something like, "My God, this is terrible. I can't take all this pain. *Do* something to make it not hurt so much." I believe our response to this plea of our wounded brain is to make a desperate attempt to reduce the pain and try to make *some* sense of this. I like to call this: "Brain Pain Relief."

--Bob Baugher, Ph.D. Des Moines, Washington

Bob Baugher is a psychologist and certified death educator who teaches course in psychology and death education at Highline Community College in Des Moines, Washington. He is co-author of several books including A Guide for the Bereaved Survivor and A Guide to Understanding Guilt During Bereavement.

An important way to cope with grief is having an outlet, be it interpersonal, be it artistic, that will allow you to not have to contain your grief, but will give you an opportunity to express it, to externalize it to some degree.

R. Benyamin Cirlin, Grief counselor

You need not walk alone

I only ask to be free. The butterflies are free.

~Charles Dickens

OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED

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<u>CHILD'SNAME</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>BIRTHDATE</u>
Joshua Stephen Walters	son of Stephen & Robbin Walters	07/17/1981
Jeremy Ruth Cox	daughter of Vonda Cox	07/24/1984
Michelle Martin	daughter of Jayne Matlock	08/02/1984
Jimmy Kirkland Gerrald	son of James & Hazel Gerrald	08/04/1958
Paul Schabot	son of Edward & Barbara Schabot	08/06/1957
Amanda Mae Moore	daughter of Carolyn & Gardiner Moore	08/08/1983
Jeremy L. Smith	son of Bonnie J. Harrington	08/09/1979
Jimmy Tyson	son of Charles & Betty Byrd	08/13/1957
Christopher Nichols	son of Janice Zaklukiewicz	08/25/1981

LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a gift of money to Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but can also be from individuals to honor a relative or close friend., a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well—or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of The Compassionate Friends.

The distribution of the chapter newsletter is solely dependent upon love gifts.

If you would like to have your child's name added to our list, we request that you complete & return the form below. A love gift is not required, but please consider one as a memorial to your child.

<u>CHILD'SNAME</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF LOSS</u>
Adele Spring	daughter of Adele McWatters	07/04/2007
Light Kinney	son of Mr. & Mrs. William Kinney, Jr.	07/21/1989
Matthew Steven Isel	son of Michael & Beth Isel	07/22/2007
Kayla Marie Bennett,	daughter of Greg & Connie Bennett	07/26/2007
Thomas A. Chase	son of Tom & Debbie Chase	08/07/2006
Michael Bennett Nash	son of Linda Given	08/10/1993
Jimmy Kirkland Gerrald	son of James & Hazel Gerrald	08/10/2007
Philip M. Cherven	son of Ren & Anna Cherven	08/17/1991
Darryl Shurow	son of Lewis & Sharon Richards	08/18/2006
Quentin Mitchell Stacy	son of Barbara & Tim Stacy	08/20/2004
Christopher Nichols	son of Janice Zaklukiewicz	08/22/2006

Memorial Love Gifts

The following gifts have been received since the last newsletter

A brick has been added in loving memory to The Wall of Love on our website:www.tcfmyrtlebeach.com

James & Hazel Gerrald, in memory of son, Jimmy Kirkland Gerrald
 Barry & Frankie Highsmith, in memory of daughter, Jennifer Marie Highsmith
 Vonda Cox in memory of daughter, Jeremy Ruth Cox's birthday
 Ren & Anna Cherven in memory of their son, Philip M.Cherven 's birthday, 8/17/91
 Ren & Anna Cherven in memory of their niece, Adele Spring, who passed away 7/4/07
 A donation was received from the First United Methodist Men's Group of Myrtle Beach

As stated before if you have previously donated a love gift, you do not need to complete the form. We will continue your child's name in our active file. Please accept our apologies if we include or omit a name in error. Let us know so that we may make the necessary correction.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

LOVE GIFT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ **IN MEMORY OF:**

CHILD'S NAME _____

BIRTHDATE: _____ **DATE OF LOSS:** _____



Please include my child(ren) as listed above in "Our Children Remembered" list as published in the newsletter. **YES** **NO**

Return this form to Jane Alirie, Secretary/Treasurer, 706 Bonnie Drive, Myrtle Beach, SC 29588



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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P.O. Box 2893
Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

BEYOND THE SUNSET

*Should you go first and I remain
to walk the road alone,
I'll live in memories garden dear,
with happy days we've known.
In spring I'll wait for roses red,
when faded, the lilacs blue.
In early fall when brown leaves fall,
I'll catch a glimpse of you.
Should you go first and I remain,
for battle to be fought.
Each thing you've touched along the way
will be a hallowed spot.
I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile,
though blindly I may grope,
The memory of your helping hand
will buoy me on with hope.
Should you go first and I remain,
one thing I'll have you do:
Walk slowly down that long long path,
for soon I'll follow you.
I want to know each step you take,
so I may take the same.
For someday down that lonely road
you'll hear me call your name.
~Author Unknown~*