



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST

NEWSLETTER



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

March - April 2022

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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory. will be on:

March 15th. & April 19th.

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. ***Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last Monday or earlier if you plan to attend.***

Directions....On Route 16 (Main St.) going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church.

Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room.

March 29th. & April 26th.

WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the 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 for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with 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, just 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, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our 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, while 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 the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a 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 to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2022

Weather Cancellation

**In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:
Ed or Joan Motuzas at
(508) 473-4239**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239
 * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Secretary

* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

* Al Kennedy 508/254-5450

Librarian

Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

* Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/612-0259
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085
 Mitchell Greenblatt 857/225-7135
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998

The chapter address is:

The Compassionate Friends
 Metrowest Chapter
 26 Simmons Dr.
 Milford, MA 01757-1265

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator
 Dennis Gravelle
 638 Pleasant St.
 Leominster, MA 01453-6222
 Phone (978) 660-7906
dennisg@tcf.email.com

The Compassionate Friends has a national office that supports and coordinates chapter activities. The national office can be reached as follows:

The Compassionate Friends
 48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
 Wixom MI 48393-7736
 Toll-Free (877) 969-0010
 Fax (630) 990-0246

Web Page:
www.compassionatefriends.org

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

There are no dues or fees to belong to *The Compassionate Friends*. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to send information to newly bereaved parents, purchase pamphlets and books, support our outreach program, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

THANK YOU to the friends who help keep our chapter going with their contributions.

Love Gifts

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Fox in loving memory of their son **Maxwell A. Dell-Olio Lavenskie**. "Forever missed".

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Baisley in loving memory of their daughter **Stacey Ann Mahoney** on her anniversary March 21st. "Always on our minds, forever in our hearts and everyday closer to you."

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Cote in loving memory of their Two sons' **Preston Garrett Cote** on his birthday February 6th. And his anniversary January 31st. And their son **Timothy Joseph Cote**.

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel J. Scott Sr. in loving memory of their Son **Daniel J. Scott Jr.** on his birthday April 19th. "You will always be with us, like a handprint on our hearts."

Mrs. Diane Sears in loving memory of her daughter **Sheril Sears Jones** on her birthday March 6th. "Always loved, forever missed."

Mr. & Mrs. Berry Buchinski in loving memory of their son **Adam J. Buchinski** on the anniversary of his passing March 27th. "Your light will shine forever in our hearts."

Bob & Ida Eldredge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldredge** on his anniversary March 24th. "Love you and miss you forever."

We need not walk alone

No Death or Tragedy So Sad. The Death of One's Child.

As Compassionate Friends, we gather with our hearts, minds, and hands extended in love to share our caring and understanding with each other in our grief. Hand in hand we walk together, one step at a time, from the depths of despair to renewed hope and peace for the future.





Our Children Remembered

As a regular feature, the newsletter acknowledges anniversaries of the deaths of our children/siblings and their birthdays. This issue covers the months, March and April. If information about your loved one is missing, incorrect or our chapter files are in error, please send the correct data, including your name, address, and telephone number, the name of your loved one and the birthday and date and cause of death to the newsletter editor, Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265.

Anniversaries

March

NICHOLAS J. FREEL
JASON L. MILLIGAN
TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN
PAULA BETH WATERS
STACEY ANN MAHONEY
MICHAEL J. HAVER
KEVIN R. ELDREDGE
ADAM J. BUCHINSKI
TYLER PARMENTER

April

JOHN GARVEY
CHRISTOPHER ALLEN LILL
SHANNON A. McTIERNAN
KELSEY MULKERRINS
JOHN ANDREW GEORGE
TARA M. RAYMOND
ERIC T. BURROUGHS
JUSTIN MAYER
KATHLEEN ANN STETSON
PETER RAYMOND LANDRY

Birthdays

March

ALAN R. STUCHINS
TIMOTHY JOHN KOVALCHIK
IAN GREENBLATT
SHERIL SEARS JONES
ANDREW RYAN WEGLINSKI
MATTHEW W. LODI

April

MICHAEL JOSEPH McALLISTER
LARRY DUGAN
SEAN PATRICK COTTER
MICHAEL D. DOW
DANIEL J. SCOTT Jr.
PAULA BETH WATERS
ANDREA RENEE BOSWORTH



Softly...may peace
replace heartache and
cherished memories
remain with you always on
your child's birthday.



THE SIBLING CORNER



This page is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief thru encouragement & sharing

"Siblings Walking Together." 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.

The Aftermath of Suicide (A Sibling's Viewpoint)

I had never experienced the death of a close loved one before my brother died. When David died, my world came crashing down around me, shattering me into a million pieces. My brother and I were close, but I had no suspicion that he was contemplating suicide and had been for a long time. The night my sister called to tell me he was dead is etched into my memory forever. If I shut my eyes, I can go back to that time and place almost three years ago and still hear her voice. It is a very painful memory and one that I don't call up, but it is there, nonetheless. The overwhelming feelings of shock, disbelief, numbness, despair and sadness are very vivid. At the same time, I was outraged at what he had done to us, to me.

"I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, I can't believe this is happening".

How dare he do this? I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, I can't believe this is happening. The first six months was a confusing and emotionally draining period for me. I was obsessed with wanting to have answers, especially from him. I read many books on suicide and finally, after reading Iris Bolton's book, "My Son, My Son", I came to realize that what she said was true: You can ask why a million times, but you finally have to let it go, because the person you need the answers from is not here to give them to you. If only for the sake of your own sanity, you have to stop asking, "Why?" Our family drew closer together from this tragedy, and it made me more aware of how much I value and love them. I also had the support of a good friend who was willing to spend hours talking and crying with me.

I still get very angry at my brother for changing our lives so irrevocably. That anger inevitably turns to sadness. I cannot see his smiling face, or hear his laughter, or watch him grow into adulthood. Yes, I had dreams of him too. He was an intelligent, warm, sensitive and caring young man, and I was eager to see what direction his life would take. I can't help but wonder what he would be like today. I miss him very much. I will never agree with his solution, but it was his choice to make and I have to learn to live with it. I am absolutely certain beyond a shadow of a doubt that I will be with him again. Only then will I get answers to my questions. I have no choice but to wait until that time.

**By Nicki Wright,
TCF, MO-DAN, KS**

I'M MISSING YOU

I'm missing you —
All day, every day.
On a bright summer morning, or
When the moon is full
In the golden days of fall,
As the storm clouds build and it's snowing.
When the willows begin to turn green—
You are always with me,
In my mind and in my heart.
My brother, my good friend,
I'm missing you.

**Kris Cunningham,
TCF, Moro, IL**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process. Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)
Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)
Janice Parmenter Sub. (Tyler's Mom)
Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)

THE LANGUAGE OF GRIEF

Grief should speak the language of the heart, not the head, for it is not logical in the ordinary sense of the word. It also is not consistent, for grief has a logic of its own.

When your child dies there is a conflict between your heart and your head. Your head tells you to run, avoid, go around, get away from this pain; that you are expected to be brave, stoic and strong. Your heart, on the other hand, says you loved this child better than yourself and it is all right to not only cry and talk about it to acknowledge the enormity of your loss, but that you also have the right to be broken and weak as you struggle with your new reality.

The language of the heart cries out not only your love for your children, but of the love for yourself as well. Though you are counseled in most of life's circumstances not to let your heart rule your head, for often therein lies disaster, you are advised in this instance to listen to your heart and allow the normal symptoms of grief. To do so also speaks the language of a healthy recovery.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

*Who then can so softly bind up
the wound of another as he who
felt the same wound himself?*

Thomas Jefferson
3rd President, United States

It Will Be Better

There are times
When you have been hurt so badly
That you become certain
That the pain will never pass.
But it does...
Sometimes because of your efforts, sometimes in spite
Of them, but always, always it goes away.
So hold on, and know that
Tomorrow will come
And with each tomorrow
It will be better.

Sue Mitchell
TCF, Dallas, Texas

MY OLD FRIEND GRIEF

My old friend Grief is back. He comes to visit me once in a while to remind me that I am still a broken man. Surely there has been much healing since my son died six years ago, and surely I have adjusted to a world without him. But the truth is we never completely heal, we never totally adjust. Such is the nature of loss that no matter how much time has passed and no matter how much life has been experienced, the heart of the bereaved will never be the same. It is as though a part of us also dies with the person we lose through death. We will be all right, but we will never be the same.

And so my old friend Grief drops in to say hello. Sometimes he enters through the door of my memory. I'll hear a certain song or smell a certain fragrance; I'll look at certain pictures and I'll remember how it used to be. Sometimes it brings a smile to my face, sometimes a tear.

One may say that such remembering is not healthy, that we ought not to dwell on thoughts that make us sad. Yet the opposite is true. Grief revisited is Grief acknowledged, and Grief confronted is Grief resolved.

But if Grief is resolved, why do we still feel a sense of loss on anniversaries and holidays and even when we least expect it? Why do we feel a lump in the throat even six years after the loss? It is because healing does not mean forgetting and because moving on with life does not mean that we don't take a part of our lost love with us. Of course, the intensity of the pain decreases over time if we allow Grief to visit us from time to time. But if the intensity remains or if our life is still dysfunctional years after our loss, we are stuck and in need of professional help to get unstuck. Sometimes my old friend Grief sneaks up on me. I'll feel an unexplained but profound sadness that clings to me for days. Then I'll recognize the



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(continued from page 5)

Grief and cry a little, and then I can go on. It's as though the ones we have lost are determined not to be forgotten. My old friend Grief doesn't get in the way of living. He just wants to come along and chat sometimes.

Grief has taught me a few things about living that I would not have learned on my own. He has taught me that if I try to deny the reality of a major loss in my life, I end up having to deny life altogether. He has taught me that although the pain of loss is great, I must confront it and experience it fully or risk emotional paralysis. Old Grief has taught me that I can survive even great loss, and although my world is different, it is still my world and I must live in it. He has taught me that when I let go, I can flourish again in season and bring forth the good fruit that comes, not in spite of my loss, but because of it.

My old friend Grief has taught me that the loss of a loved one does not mean the loss of love. Love is stronger than separation and longer than the permanence of death. My old friend Grief may leave me for a while, but he'll be back again to remind me to confront my new reality and to gain through loss and pain.

Adolfo Quezada
TCF, Grand Junction, CO
(Reprinted by permission of the author)

MEMORIES ARE ALL I HAVE OF YOU

I remember him, doesn't anyone else?
No one will even mention his name.
It's as if he never existed at all,
And it's driving me insane.
Surely in his four years
He brought somebody hope or cheer,
And if you'd let me show you,
I can talk of him without shedding a tear.

You say it makes you uncomfortable,
You don't know how to handle the pain.
So you just avoid the whole issue,
I wish I could do the same!
You're afraid if we talk that I just might cry,
And you'd feel guilty and want to run and hide.

Well, let me share this with you, please.
Do not fear my tears.
Let me share the joys of him,
My loneliness, my fears.
If you love me, let me love him,
For I'm his mother still,
And if you do not set me free,
Then it's my memories you'll kill.

Debby Grogan
TCF, Atlanta, GA ⁶

Spring Cleaning

As the seasons change and we become aware of the stirrings of nature, our thoughts turn to "spring cleaning." It prepares us for the new season by getting our "house" in order.

Let's dust off our memory chests, shake out and examine each item we've folded away in our heart and mind. Dig into the corners and bring light and air into the darkness. Deep in the closet we have accumulated all the things we couldn't face or needed time to think about. We must go through these. As we sort through we will discard some unnecessary, unwanted feelings, hurts, anger, and other emotions. Now we can count our treasures and carefully fold and put them back in fresh containers, smaller easier to find, more in time with now, and in good order.

A day spent doing these tasks will no doubt leave you exhausted, but the effort will bring a deep sense of contentment. For me, it brought a special plus, special memories and joys of Jim and Scott.

Betty Stieglmeyer
TCF, Pikes Peak, Co.
National Board of Directors

The Music Is Forever

One life,

Like a song strummed softly on the strings,
Makes music to the ears of those who hear it sing.
Discordant notes and harmony, together
make the sounds, but the space between the
notes is where the meaning may be found.

A life,

May be as brief as a note on a page, or as long as a symphony with all movements played. But long or short, the melody has its meaning though unfinished, and for those with ears to hear it, the meaning is not diminished. Somewhere the song continues its sweetly singing phrase, the music is forever, not just for those days.

ONE LIFE,
LIKE A SONG, STRUMMED SOFTLY ON THE
STRINGS, MAKES MUSIC TO THE EARS OF
THOSE WHO HEAR IT SING.

Karen Howard
TCF, Miami, FL





THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

Ed & Joan Motuzas,**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942
Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)366-2085
Mitchell Greenblatt,.....**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)653-0541



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.

Support Resources

TCF Online Chat Groups:

WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx

- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at www.compassionatefriends.org
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!

Other Grief Support Websites

- agast.org - for grandparents
- alivealone.org
- aliveinmemory.org
- angelmoms.com
- babysteps.com
- bereavedparentsusa.org
- beyondindigo.com
- childloss.com
- goodgriefresources.com
- parmenter.org - children's bereavement
- griefhealingblog.com
- griefwatch.com
- GriefNet.org
- healingafterloss.org
- Jeff's Place-www.jeffsplacemetrowest.org.
- opentohope.com
- pomc.com - families of murder victims
- save.org
- survivorsofsuicide.com
- Taps.org - military death
- webhealing.com
- Griefshare.org



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



A Prayer for Spring

Like Springtime, let me unfold
and grow fresh and anew,
from this cocoon of grief
that has been spun around me.

Help me face the harsh reality of
sunshine and renewed life,
as my bones still creak from
the winter of my grief.

Life has dared to go on around me.
And as I recover from the insult
of life ~ continuance,
I readjust my focus to
include recovery and growth
as a possibility in my future.

Give me the strength to break out of
the cocoon of my grief.
But may I never forget it as
the place where I grew my wings,
Becoming a new person because of my loss.

*Janis Heil,
TCF, Albany, NY*

LAUGHTER

Did I laugh today for the first time?
Did I?
I didn't know I did until it was over and then I cried.
How could I have done that?
I felt I should never laugh again.
And yet I did.
Do you know I smiled last week?
I know I did because someone told me so.
And, son, I felt guilty for that, too.
I felt I should be sad forever.
Shouldn't I?
But now I must confess to you, That even though I'll
laugh again, I'll still be grieving all the same inside of
me.
Laughter cannot erase the pain of your loss, my love.
Nor can crying bring you back.
But perhaps laughter is one small step toward recovery.

*Dave Ziv
TCF, Bucksmont Chapter
Warrington, PA*

Other Area TCF Chapters

- MA/CT Border Towns Chapter (Dudley, Webster areas)
- Chapter Co- Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu
(508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net
- Worcester Chapter
- Chapter Co-Leaders: Kathy Snay (508) 347-0981
kathysnay@gmail.com
Susan Powerspower7881@msn.com
- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)
- Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole
(781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com
- North Central Mass.Chapter (Westminster, Gardner, Fitchburg areas)
- Chapter phone line: (978) 786-5014
- Chapter Co-Leaders: Denise Whitney.....
dwhitney@acton.ma.gov
- Carolann Picnarcik...carolannpicnarcik@gmail.com

THE SEASONS OF GRIEF

Easter bunnies, brand new clothes, egg hunts, candy and baskets - the start of Spring. How exciting is this time of the year; a new beginning, everything so fresh and so invigorating! But unfortunately only painful and sorrowful memories are here for those of us who are bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Gone is the laughter, the excitement in a special child's eyes, the feeling of a whole new aspect in life.



Spring is here and the world appears ready to bloom again with new life, new hope, new wonders. How can we view life in this way when part of ourselves is now gone, forever lost to us? How can our lives continue to go on when one of us is missing, no longer able to share in this "newness" of life? It seems so unfair! And yet, out of our "darkness" comes the first signs of hope, a "bud" of survival, a moment of laughter, a memory of a happier time.

The Easter season usually represents rebirth; let this season be the "birth" of your finding your way back to life again, of finding the ability to heal, and of being able to resolve your grief so that hope and comfort is once again in your lives. Let this time of the year show you can make it through this deepest, most difficult, and sorrowful time of your lives.

*Chris Gilbert
TCF, Tampa, FL*



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NEWSLETTER MAILING LIST UPDATE (THIS PAGE WILL BE PRINTED EVERY OTHER EDITION)

We continue to update our mailing list. We want everyone who reads our newsletter to receive it; however, mailing costs make this update necessary. We want to send it where it is being read. Your donations allow us to print and mail this newsletter and to reach out to hundreds of parents and siblings.

Please fill out this form now if you wish to be added to or removed from our mailing list. This form should be filled out annually. If we don't hear from you in a year's time you will be notified through the newsletter that your name will be removed from our mailing list unless we hear from you.

If you are able to make a donation at this time, it will be gratefully received. Please mail to address below.

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

I (do___) (do not___) wish to continue receiving the TCF newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent___) (professional___)

(Donation included___) Make checks payable to "The Compassionate Friends" or TCF

If there are any errors in spelling or other information in this newsletter, please call it to my attention so that I may correct it. Please use this page to send back information, reverse side is addressed for your convenience.

Mail to: TCF Metrowest, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

PLEASE ADVISE US OF ADDRESS CHANGES TO INSURE YOUR RECEIVING THE NEWSLETTER, THEY ARE NOT FORWARDED BY THE POST OFFICE.

Fold & Tape

The Compassionate Friends
Metrowest Chapter
26 Simmons Dr.
Milford MA 01757-1265

Fold & Tape



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



HAPPY PASSOVER . .

Jews throughout the world will celebrate the holiday of Passover. Passover has been called our favorite holiday because it operates on so many levels. It is a time of triumph but it is also a time of tears.

Perhaps at no other time do we feel the absence of our loved ones more than at the time of Passover. As we gather around the Passover table, we cannot help but recall those who were so dear to us in life, and who are with us no more. We recall them in friendship and in love, for Passover is the time of family service. But even as we mourn their loss, we understand that the life of the dead is now placed in the memory of the living. Spring and Passover are a time of new hope and new life.



by Rabbi Earl Grollman

March of the Seasons

March 21, Winter is over and Spring is here. Nature continues its never ending - cycle: Death and Rebirth, Growth and Harvest. For many, there is reassurance in this never failing, familiar March of the Seasons.

But we know, we especially know, that the cycle of the seasons will never be the same for some of us. In Nature there is balance. The Death and Dormancy of Winter is always replaced by the Rebirth and Awakening of Spring. What is lost one year is replaced the next. What is harvested is replanted. But for some of us, what we have lost can never be replaced. No gain can ever compensate us for the loss of a child.

I know, I know, every other article, every other book, every other poem will cheerfully announce a New Day, a Visit from Beyond, a Rejoining in Heaven, "spiritual gifts," et cetera, et cetera, and so forth. I know of no "spiritual gift" worth my son's death.

When my son died, a friend, a very good and dear friend who had a tragedy of his own, said to me, "This will make you a more compassionate person." "I would rather be the meanest man on Earth and have my son back," I snapped. But I was not given that choice.

When I was a small child, my parents would say to me, perhaps in order to profess their love and make me feel secure, "Steve, we would gladly give our lives for you." This did not make me happy. In fact, it made me feel extremely fearful, anxious, and guilty. I could not say the same thing! What was wrong with me? What a selfish and bad little boy I must be! I could not, for the life of me, imagine myself dying for any reason, not even to save my parents lives! I never breathed a word of this to anyone. It was my dirty little secret. I buried the thought deep, "I am an unworthy son."

My son was depressed before he committed suicide. What a stupid statement. He had to be depressed, he was tall, talented, handsome and smart. He had everything to live for. But he must have thought otherwise. He must have thought we, his parents, would be better off without him. If he knew how much pain he has caused his parents and his sister, I know he would not have killed himself.

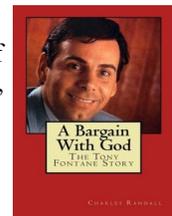
In the aftermath of David's death, I realized many things. I realized that without being fully aware, I was bargaining with God, "Take me. Take my life and restore David to life and health." I did not verbalize it, but I was contemplating my own death and actually felt I could make a "deal."

Then I had another realization. This was the other side of my parents, statement. I, the parent, was willing to die for my child. It is normal for a parent to feel this way about a child. It is not normal for a child to feel this way about his parents. A revelation that lets me off the hook. After 50 years, a "spiritual gift."

I write newsletters. I give lectures. I lead support groups. I am a more "compassionate person." I no longer see just "my pain," I see "your pain" and The Pain. More "spiritual gifts."

My daughter says she owes her (spiritual) Life to her brother David. He taught her "life is precious." She propelled herself through school, overcoming great odds, "for him." More "spiritual gifts."

I would like to say it was all worth it. But I can't. I have been in TCF for over five years and I have never met a parent who would not trade all of the "gifts" back for even one day of their child's life. I have not met anyone who would not trade his or her own life for the return of their child's life. (Many of us have tried, consciously or unconsciously, that same bargain with God). But we don't have that choice. We can't make that bargain.

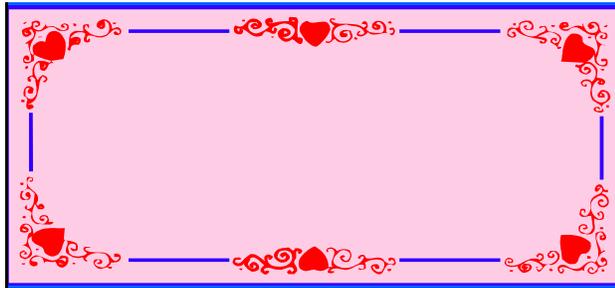


So what do we do now? We don't throw away the gifts in spite. I am thankful my daughter has found herself. I am thankful, if I am able to help another person. Choosing to throw away the gifts will not bring our children back. Choosing to help others in David's name brings some dignity and meaning to his death. Throwing away the gifts would make his death meaningless. No parent wants his child to die in vain. Maybe I can give his death meaning, posthumously, by accepting the spiritual gifts.

*Compassionately yours, Steve Leibowitz
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TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person - or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.



TO OUR OLD MEMBERS

*We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. **THINK BACK...** what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”*