



The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Published Bimonthly by The Topeka TCF Chapter

ADVISORY BOARD - Topeka Chapter
Rev. Art Donnelly, Second Presbyterian Church
Chaplain Ty Petty, MDiv., L.S.D.C.S.W.
Colleen Ellis, L.S.C.W., Family Therapist
Donna Mathena-Menke, Funeral Director/Bereaved Parent
Donna Kidd, Bereaved Parent
Byron Waldy, Chaplain/Counselor

NEWSLETTER - Volume 4, Issue No. 5
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
National Headquarters, P. O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free 877-969-0010; Fax (630) 990-0246

National TCF Website:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter Website:
www.tcftopeka.org

September ~ October 2019
Editor: Susan Chan
3448 S.W. Mission Ave.
Topeka, KS 66614-3629
(785) 272-4895

SEPTEMBER ~ Memorial Picnic

Saturday, September 28, 2019
Shelter House #3, Lake Shawnee
Topeka, KS
11:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Please Note DATE/LOCATION Change!!

26th Annual Memorial Picnic - We invite you to join us for this special event in loving memory of all our children, grandchildren and siblings who "left too soon". The event will include a potluck luncheon, a Memorial Program and the opportunity to decorate a Hope Stone in memory of your loved one. This event is held at Shelter House #3 at Lake Shawnee. This shelter house is located on the **west side** of Lake Shawnee on Memory Pointe. There was a yellow RSVP/Dove Sponsorship Form in the July/August Newsletter or you can print one from the Topeka TCF Chapter website (www.tcftopeka.org) under Special Events. A form is also located elsewhere in this newsletter. This event **takes the place** of our regular support group meeting for September. We hope to see you there!

OCTOBER MEETING

Monday, October 28, 2019
Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 S.W. 17th St., Topeka, KS
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Getting Through the Holidays While Grieving - Beginning with Halloween and running through Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's, as grievers we are faced with the onslaught of holiday activities and "cheer" which we may find difficult and hard to deal with. At this meeting we will discuss some strategies for making this time of year less stressful. We will also talk about ways to include your loved ones in whatever holiday traditions you are comfortable with. Plan to share any ideas that have been helpful for you in handling the holidays.

Meetings are always held on the fourth Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. Listen to radio & TV for cancellations due to severe weather conditions.

This newsletter is sponsored by:

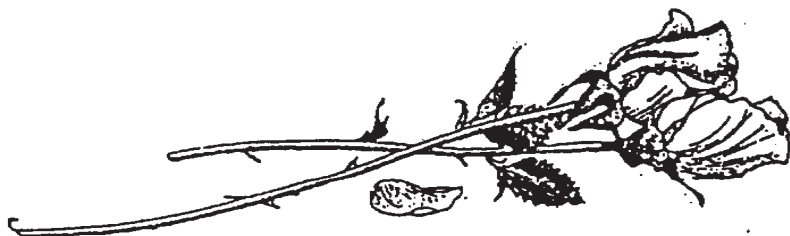
*Duane and Mary Eberhardt in loving memory of their son
Jerry Eberhardt who was born on September 1st and died
on October 25th*

*Joe and Ann Steinbock in loving memory of their
son Jeff Steinbock who died on October 11th*



The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purposes are to promote and aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experience following the death of a child of any age, from any cause; and to foster the physical and emotional health of all bereaved parents, grandparents and surviving siblings.

Copyright ©2019 The Compassionate Friends
All rights reserved



We Need Not Walk Alone

Important Message from the Topeka Chapter Steering Committee ~ PLEASE READ

Dear Compassionate Friends Family,

It is not usually our practice to bring Chapter business-related issues to your attention, but we now feel we must do so. As you should be aware, Compassionate Friends is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization. According to the National TCF policies, Chapters are not allowed to charge any dues or fees in order for members to attend the support group meetings or participate in any of our memorial events such as the Holiday Candle Lighting or Memorial Picnic. We also have the expenses of printing and mailing this newsletter as well as providing handouts at the meetings and books for our grief resource library. There are also expenses involved in maintaining our nonprofit bulk mailing permit and our website. We depend heavily on members to help sponsor issues of the newsletter (\$30) or send in Love Gifts (of any amount) to help cover such expenses.

We do not have any paid staff people – all the work for the Topeka Chapter, including putting together this newsletter, monitoring/updating the Chapter website, planning and facilitating monthly programs, sending our First Contact packets to newly bereaved families, and coordinating our special memorial events is carried out entirely by volunteers. These volunteers are bereaved parents, grandparents or adult siblings just like many of you. They do this volunteer work in honor and memory of their beloved child, grandchild or sibling.

It has been traditional that the Topeka Chapter received many Newsletter Sponsorships and Love Gifts at the time each year that members are asked to send in the RSVP form stating their wish to remain on the newsletter mailing list. However, over the past several years, the funds donated have continued to decline while our expenses have remained the same and, in some cases, increased a bit. Obviously, we cannot continue to function effectively as we see our income decline. We may be forced to make some hard choices that might include producing a newsletter less often, limit providing free handouts of grief-related topics at meetings, or scaling back on our memorial events.

We hope if you are reading this that you have benefitted from being a member of this Chapter whether you only receive the newsletter, only attend memorial events or regularly attend the monthly support group meetings. Our goal is to provide a safe and welcoming place for all those dealing with the death of a beloved child, but it would really help a lot if there were more reliable finances available to continue our efforts. We hope that you might consider making a donation in memory of your loved one. Another way you can help support the Chapter financially is by participating in the Dillions Community Rewards program (information about it is in this newsletter); or checking to see if your employer perhaps has a matching gifts program where your donation could be increased through such a match.

TCF's goal is that "Everyone who needs us will find us. And everyone who finds us will be helped." We hope you will consider helping us continue to meet this goal.

Thank you and we hope you will find peace on your grief journey.



Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

"Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but never, never taking away their love.

Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today.

Love never goes away...."

~ Darcie Sims

Are You Coming to the Memorial Picnic?

**Send in your RSVP Form
by September 21st**

**There is a form in this newsletter or
you can find one at our website under
Special Events (www.tcftopeka.org)**

**We hope to see you at this special
event honoring the lives of our
beloved children, grandchildren and
siblings. Hope to see you there!**

Love Gifts

**Your Love Gifts Help Spread
the Message of Hope & Healing ~ Won't You Help Today?**

What is a Love Gift? A Love Gift is a gift of money (or books, etc.) to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child, grandchild or sibling who has died, but it may be from individuals who wish to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanks that their children are alive, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help. The Compassionate Friends charges *no individual dues* or fees and depends on such Love Gifts to meet the Chapter's expenses, including the printing and mailing of this newsletter. **When you make a donation, make sure to check to see if your employer may have a "matching gifts" program** as this could double the amount of your donation. If you are not sure whether your company has such a program, check with your Personnel Department. This month we thank the following:

♥ *Terry Medley in loving memory of his daughter
Abigail Medley who was born on October 30th* ♥

Your gifts enable us to print this newsletter and reach out to newly bereaved families. Donations are our only source of income and are **tax deductible**. If you would like to sponsor a newsletter, the cost is \$30.00. If we have more than one sponsor, we recognize all of them. If you wish to send a Love Gift, any amount is appreciated. It is whatever you feel you can give. Donations of books that you have found helpful to the Topeka Chapter Library are also greatly appreciated, and it is a nice way to remember your child or other loved one. If you would like to send a Love Gift or a Newsletter Sponsorship, you may do so by sending it to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. For Newsletter Sponsorships, please indicate which issue you wish to sponsor (Jan/Feb, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, or November/December). Makes checks payable to "TCF".

TCF National Office e-mail:
nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Compassionate Friends web address:
www.compassionatefriends.org

Topeka TCF Chapter web and e-mail addresses:
www.tcftopeka.org tcftopeka@gmail.com

Kansas Regional Coordinator:
Marty & Renda Weaver - (785) 823-7191
mweaver@cox.net

Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

Saturday, September 28, 2019 - Topeka TCF Chapter 26th Annual Memorial Picnic at Shelter House #3 on Memory Lane/West Edge Road at Lake Shawnee. See more information on the insert in this newsletter. We hope you will join us for this special event honoring the memories of our sons, daughters, grandchildren and siblings.

October 5-6, 2019 - TCF South Texas Regional Conference in Houston, TX. Theme is "Deep in the Heart of Hope". 25 workshops, sharing sessions and panels plus Crafty Corner, Candle Lighting and Walk to Remember. \$50 for all workshops/sessions. \$25 each for Candlelight Dinner and Walk to Remember. Go to: www.tcfSouthTexasRegionalConference.org

October 18-19, 2019 - Regional Conference hosted by the Nashville, TN TCF Chapter. Theme is "Memories of Love, Melodies of Hope in Music City". Two days of workshops, speakers, sharing sessions, Crafty Corker, Butterfly Boutique, and Candle Lighting. \$95/person includes all speakers and workshops as well as Dinner and Candle Lighting on Friday and Continental Breakfast and Lunch on Saturday. Go to: www.tcfnashville.org

Sites of Future National TCF Conferences:

2020 ~ Atlanta, GA 2021 ~ Detroit, MI
2022 ~ Houston, TX

.....
Dillions Community Rewards Program Helps Fund Chapter Expenses - A REMINDER - Have you signed up for the Dillions Community Rewards Program yet? If not, we encourage you to do so as it really helps to bring income into our Chapter to help meet expenses. The more participants we have, the more income we can generate. I encourage you to go to www.dillions.com/community rewards and click on "Register" at the top of the page. When you enroll you will be asked to designate which charity you wish to support. **The Topeka Compassionate Friends Chapter NPO number is TC248.** Once you have done so and have a Dillions Shopper's Card, every time you make a purchase at Dillions a portion of your total will be donated to the Topeka TCF Chapter. Participating in this program **costs you nothing and does not affect your fuel points** for gasoline purchases. If you need assistance in setting up your account, call toll-free at 1-800-576-4377 and select Option 3.
.....

Our Thanks to: Midland Care Connection for giving us a mailbox and Most Pure Heart of Mary Church for allowing us to meet at their facility. A special Thank You to ProPrint for helping to underwrite the printing cost of this newsletter.

Pro 
Print

DIGITAL PRINT AND COPY SERVICES

**838 MASSACHUSETTS ST
LAWRENCE, KS 66044
785.842.3610**

**1033 SW GAGE BLVD, STE 200
TOPEKA, KS 66604
785.272.0070**

And We Remember.....

*Because of the potential for the hurtful crime of identity theft, TCF Chapter Newsletters will now only publish the date of a child's birth or death without listing the year of each event. This is a directive from the National TCF Office to protect all TCF members. **Due to space constraints, only those families who remain current on our newsletter mailing list will be included in the We Remember section***

Olivia Lynn Anderson, daughter of Suzannah Anderson; sister of Eli Anderson who was born on October 11th

Jordan Robert Barranco, son of Juan and Elizabeth Barranco, who was born on October 30th

Brian Lynn Blecha, son of Lynn and Alice Blecha, died October 15th

Derek G. Bodeman, son of Becky S. Bodeman, born on October 29th

Monty Brentlinger, son of Don and Carolyn Brentlinger, who died October 21st

Skylar Callahan, son of Gena Callahan, brother of Branden, Alex, Chris and Jacob, who was born on November 4th and died on October 30th

Seth Austin Carney, son of Clay and Michelle Carney, who died on October 13th

Kale Cauthon, son of Denise Cauthon; brother of Josh and Cam, who died on October 15th

Kristi Diaz, daughter of Julie Diaz, born November 7th

Gerald (Jerry) Eberhardt, son of Duane and Mary Eberhardt, who died on October 25th

Richard Brian Gilbert, son of Rick and Carla Gilbert, who was born on October 20th

Phylles McCarthy, daughter of Janet Hamilton who was born in November.

Mitchell Hermreck, son of Dennis and Ann Hermreck; brother of Shelby and Raegan, who was born on October 14th

Jeffrey Hoium, son of Mel and Helen Hoium, died on November 12th

Abigail Hosie, daughter of Matt and Jennifer Hosie, who was born on October 30th

Steve Isley, son of Web and Jeanette Isley, who died November 6th

Vernon A. Jamison, Sr., son of Eugene A. and Mayverdis Jamison who died on October 1st

Karen Kay Karnes, daughter of Wilson and Maxine Karnes, who died on November 19th

Gabriel Kidd, son of Julie Kidd, who died on October 1st

Morgan Kottman, daughter of Christine Kottman, who died on November 21st

Tabith Krystofosky, sister of Darrell "Bo" Cremer, Jr., who died on November 27th

Ben Lake, grandson of Patty Lake, who died on November 29th

Christen (Chris) Edward Locke, son of Alfonzo E. Locke Jr. and Sheila D. Locke, who was born on November 29th

Abigail Medley, daughter of Terry Medley and Jennifer Hoise, who was born on October 30th

Jessica Rae Meyer, daughter of James Robert Meyer and Jennifer Jean Meyer, and sister of Rebecca Meyer, born October 27th; died November 16th

Kyle Neighigh, son of Rosemary Robledo, who died on November 19th

Janet Pace, daughter of Barbara Hale, sister of Carla Gilbert and Sara Wallo, and mother of Shauna Andersen, born October 9th

Robin Lynn Paulson, daughter of Frank and Brenda Bissey and sister of Brad Bissey, who was born on October 8th

Kiley Ramey, daughter of Gary and Linda Ramey, who died on November 24th

Adam J. Reams, son of Gene and Sandy Reams; brother of Nick Reams, born on November 24th

Sarah N. Rice, daughter of Gary and Peggy Rice, who died on October 6th

Brian Keith Robinson, son of Vernon and Pauline Robinson, born October 3rd; died October 13th

Luke Rojas, son of Wilma W. Rojas, born October 22nd; died October 29th

Abbey Rubottom, daughter of Darcey Evans, who was born on October 23rd

Patrick Sprowl, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sprowl, who was born on October 18th

Jeffery Alan Steinbock, son of Joe and Anne Steinbock, died October 11th

Louis Walter and Teresa Caolina Stroble-Bernal, son and daughter of Raja Stroble and Beatriz Bernal, stillborn on November 1st

Caldyn David Wasinger, son of Austin and Krista Wasinger, who was born on October 28th

Jason R. VanDam, son of Will and Kay Hasty, who died November 5th

Donald (Donnie) Warren, son of Nancy McCune, who was born on November 26th

Eric Edward Gordon Wiebler, son of David and Laura Wiebler, born November 15th

Richard Wilson, son of Kathrine Susan Whittington, died November 10th

(Use the form on opposite page to submit your listing if you have not already done so. Once you have submitted your listing you **do not** have to do so every year as long as you remain active on our mailing list. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal or choose to discontinue receiving this newsletter. (This month's listing includes birth and death anniversary dates for October and November)

SEPTEMBER SONG

"I wonder how many people think about what it's like for a parent not to have to pack a Snoopy lunch box for their child ever again." September marks the reentry of kids into the world of academia...but for some parents it's the reminder that the excitement of the children that electrifies the air won't be the same in their homes this year. So many hopes and dreams and memories...are wrapped up in what occupies a major part of a child's life...school time.

Summer cushions us from having to be painfully aware that our child won't be walking to school with the other kids, or won't be trying out for the lead part in the school play, or won't fall in love with the girl he sits behind in math class.

Parents who never had the pleasure of letting them go to school for the first time know what they missed. They remember their own "first time" and would like to have relived it with their child. They would have liked to have made it really special and asked all the questions that their own parents asked them when they arrived home from school. Hopes and dreams for their child's future will never be realized. "I wonder if my neighbor remembers that if my baby had lived, this is the year he would have started kindergarten. I wanted him to have a Snoopy lunch box just like the other kids."

~ Pat Schwiebert, Portland, OR TCF



How Many Children Do You Have?

"How many children do you have?" they ask. Oh, that dreaded question. "How much time do you have?" I wonder silently to myself. "Do you really want to know? And do you really care? Am I up to going through the entire crazy, confusing tale? If you have the time, my friend, here is the answer I will give..."

I have children that dance and children that sing
Children that cuddle all kinds of live things
Children with freckles and dimples and bows
Children that run through the sprinkler and hose
Children that color (on paper and walls),
Ones that love stomping and jumping in puddles,
Children that ask, "What is that for?"
And spill glasses and glasses of milk on the floor,
Children that laugh and children that cry,
That constantly ask Mommy and Daddy, "Why?"

But I have one that is different, set apart from the rest
One I've never known the joy of nursing at my breast.
One we cannot cuddle, one we cannot hold,
Though we will in our hearts as we grow old.
She I cannot rock when stormy's the night
Or tuck snugly into bed with the day's fading light.
Though here with me now four is all that you see,
"I have five children," I'd say, with a glance at the sky,
"Four that can run, and one that can fly."

~ Val Minihan, TCF, Sioux Falls, SD

(Use the form below to submit your listing if you have not already done so. Once you have submitted your listing you **do not** have to do so every year as long as you remain active on our mailing list. Your child's name and dates will remain on the We Remember database unless you request their removal or choose to discontinue receiving this newsletter.)

.....
And We Remember - If you wish your child, grandchild or sibling included in the We Remember section of this newsletter, please fill out the form below and return to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may also email the information to chanx2@cox.net< We do not automatically list your information just because you are receiving this newsletter. We only list information for those parents requesting it. If you have previously submitted your child's information and it has appeared in the newsletter during the past year, you **do not** need to resubmit it. If you have just begun receiving this newsletter, or have never submitted this information, you will need to do so in order for it to be included. **Please type or print clearly.**

Child's Name _____ Son _____ Daughter _____ Grandchild _____ Brother _____ Sister _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Note: Please list your address and phone number. You will only be contacted if there is a question about your listing.

Is this a change of address for you? (please circle) YES NO

A Special and Important Message to Our New Compassionate Friends

If you are newly bereaved and have recently attended your first Compassionate Friends meeting, you may have left the meeting feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. With the heavy load of grief you are carrying, you cannot bear to hear about all the pain shared at meetings. Consequently, you may have decided not to return. We would like to let you know that these feelings are common to all our members, many of whom resolved not to expose themselves to such anguish again, but were drawn back by the knowledge that they were among those who "know how you feel".

Please give us at least **three** tries before you decide whether or not the meetings are for you. You will find a network of caring and support which will help you as you travel your grief journey, and most assuredly, you will find hope along the way. We truly care about you and want to make certain that no bereaved parent ever needs to walk this path alone.

---Topeka TCF Chapter Steering Committee

Additional Support Group Resources

HEALs - Healing after loss of suicide offers support to all survivors affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. Meetings are at 6:30-8:00 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. Pozez Center (north side of Stormont Vail). Contact Information: Sandy Reams 785-249-3792 or email TopekaHeals@gmail.com

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group - Meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the Pozez Education Center. The group, which has regular meetings to share information and experiences, also has a blog for members that offers communication, resources and support. If you are interested in learning more about the blog, please email lrosen@stormontvail.org. For information call (785) 354-5225.

From Victims to Survivors - Support group for families who have had a loved one murdered. The group meets the fourth or last Wednesday of each month at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4775 S.W. 21st. For more information, call Bill Lucero at 232-5958 or see <http://fromvictimstosurvivors.com>.

Are You Moving?

If you move, please let us know your new address so you can continue to receive this newsletter. It costs the Chapter 71 cents every time a newsletter is returned by the Post Office with an outdated address. Please send address changes to: Susan Chan, 3448 SW Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629. You may email address changes to chanx2@cox.net. We appreciate your cooperation as this will save the Chapter money which can be better spent on bereavement outreach. If, for any reason, you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, please drop me a note or email and I will take your name off the list.

TCF Mission Statement: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

TCF National Magazine

We Need Not Walk Alone Available Free Online

The Compassionate Friends national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*®, is available for free online. The magazine remains available in print free with any patron donation or when ordered by paid subscription through TCF's online store.

We Need Not Walk Alone provides comfort and support to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents through stories, poems, advice columns, and much more. It has been referred to as "a support group in print" and is published three times a year.

Sign-up for a free online subscription through our website, compassionatefriends.org. It can be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use.

Sign up for Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter

The Compassionate Friends National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters.

The e-newsletter includes information on such things as TCF National Conferences, the Walk to Remember, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, regional conferences, and other events of importance.

All you have to do to receive The Compassionate Friends e-newsletter is sign up for it online by visiting The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.



TCF National Page (open group)

<https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA/>

Los Amigos Compasivos/USA

<https://www.facebook.com/LACUSA/>

TCF Private Facebook Groups

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/private-facebook-groups/>

Loss of a Child

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/407123299460580/>

Sounds of the Siblings (bereaved siblings only)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/21358475781/>

Loss of a Grandchild

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421759177998317/>

~ 64 Myths About Grief That Just Need To STOP ~

By Litsa Williams & Eleanor Haley

Grief myths . . . they drive me crazy. There are just so many of them, they come out in so many ways, and they make our grief so much more difficult. Friends and family have unrealistic expectations about what our grief will look like because of these myths. Heck, sometimes WE have unrealistic expectations because of these myths. So today we are setting out to dispel the myths in one of our favorite types of post – a 64-things post! 64 myths about grief, to be exact.

In writing this post I had already come up with several dozen myths when I asked our fantastic readers on Facebook for their two cents. Within a couple of hours there were well over 100 more myths. So, needless to say, this list is not exhaustive.

Disclaimer: what makes many of the things on this list myths is that they are not universally true. This does not mean they are never true. This is a very, very important distinction, so keep it in mind as you read. Also, there are some common themes with these myths so, where applicable, I have clustered the myths by theme if it made sense to do so.

1. Grief has an endpoint.

Sorry friends, grief is forever. This isn't a bad thing, though! It just means that when we lose something we loved deeply, that loss will be with us in some way forever. Grief may feel different or become more manageable, but it will always be there and that's okay. Too bad people often make us feel like we should have reached the "end" of our grief.

2. Once you are done grieving, life will return to "normal".

3. There is a consistent and predictable timeline for grief.

4. The first year is the worst.

5. Time heals all wounds.

6. You recover from grief like you recover from a cold, it gets a little better every day until it completely goes away.

Nope, not true either. There are ups and downs, good days and bad days, good months and bad months. No matter how much we wish it was, grief isn't a straight line and the end point isn't "all better".

7. If you are still talking about your loved one after ____ years it means you're "stuck".

8. If you still display photos of your loved one after ____ years it means you're "stuck".

9. If you haven't gotten rid of your loved one's belongings after ____ years it means you're "stuck".

10. If you still cry when you think/talk about your loved one after ____ years it means you're "stuck".

11. Women grieve more than men.

12. Men don't want to talk about their grief.

13. You can only grieve a death.

14. You can't grieve something you never had.

This one can sound a little confusing: we grieve things we never had all the time. If I always thought I would have children, then learn I can't get pregnant, that is a loss I will grieve. If I always imagined my future would look a certain way and it doesn't, I grieve what I imagined it would be. You get the idea.

15. Your friends and family will always be the best support.

16. Someone who experienced the same type of loss will definitely be supportive and understand what you're going through.

This one gets people into trouble A LOT. Just because someone also lost a child, a spouse, a parent, a pet, whatever, it doesn't mean your experiences will be the same. Heck, they may not even be similar. Sometimes people with similar losses end up being your best support, sometimes it is someone with a totally different kind of loss who you connect with. You just never know.

17. Grief follows a similar path and timeline for everyone.

18. If you aren't crying, then you aren't grieving.

Some of us aren't criers. It doesn't mean there is something wrong with us.

19. If you aren't following "The 5 Stages of Grief" it is a problem.

MANY people don't follow the 5 stages. If they do, it is often not in order, they may skip steps, repeat steps, you get the idea. This is just one theory about grief among many theories – you aren't grieving wrong if your grief doesn't fit in this box.

20. The only grief theory is Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' 5 Stages because everyone knows it's accurate.

21. Grieving is a problem.

Nope, it is a natural reaction to loss. We all, sadly, go through it. Just because something is painful doesn't mean we should avoid or ignore it.

22. The goal of grief is to "move on".

23. The goal of grief is to "get over it".

24. The goal of grief is to "find closure".

Ah, the myth of closure, moving on, and getting over it. Didn't we mention from the get go that there is no endpoint? We never tie up our grief with a nice little bow and move on. That just isn't how it works. What we do is learn to carry it with us in meaningful and healthy ways. We use it to continue a connection with the person we loved, while moving forward.

25. Certain types of loss are inherently "better" or "worse" than other types of loss.

26. Young children don't grieve.

27. Children should not attend funerals.

28. Children are resilient, you don't need to worry about them.

The good news, children certainly can be very resilient. The myth? That it doesn't take effort, work, or support. I once heard someone compare resiliency in children to children's ability to learn a language. It is much easier for children to learn languages than adults, but this does not mean they will learn a language if we don't teach, coach and support them. I have always liked this analogy. Research shows us that childhood trauma can impact us through adulthood in countless ways, psychological and physical. We need to give children the appropriate time, attention and tools to cultivate that resiliency.

29. Not having a funeral will hinder your ability to grieve or "find closure".

30. You grieve less when you know in advance someone is going to die.

31. You grieve less when the person who died is older and "lived a long life".

32. Your grief is easier when someone was suffering, because you are relieved they aren't suffering anymore.

33. When someone dies by suicide it is their own fault or they were "selfish".

34. When someone has a miscarriage, it was likely brought on by not taking care of themselves, stress, taking birth control, lifting something heavy, or some other ridiculous myth.

35. People don't grieve after a miscarriage in the same way they grieve other deaths.

36. If something helped another grieving person, it will help you.

37. If something helped you while you were grieving, it will be helpful to most other people who are grieving.

38. Keeping a journal always helps.

39. Going to therapy or a support group is always helpful.

40. Art therapy always helps, music therapy always helps, etc.

41. You can get a prescription that will help your grief.
Nope, but wouldn't that be nice if there was a magic pill to cure our grief? Now, it is true that grief can exacerbate other underlying mental health conditions, like depression and anxiety. Those are things that absolutely can be treated with medication. It is important if you are struggling to see a professional.

42. Once you get through all the "firsts" (first anniversary, birthday, holiday season) they will get easier and easier.

43. Grieving and mourning are the same thing.

44. Just because someone looks okay when they are grieving it means they feel okay.

45. When you lose a spouse, if you haven't started dating after ____ years it means you're stuck.

46. After losing a spouse you need to start dating in order to "move on".

47. After the death of a child, having another child lessens your grief.

48. Being reminded that your loved one "wouldn't want you to be sad" is helpful.

49. The best thing you can do is say something comforting, positive, or optimistic to a griever.

50. Grief is the same as sadness.
Don't get me wrong, sadness is part of grief, but grief and sadness are not the same thing. Grief is so much more than sadness, for so many reasons.

51. Grief is the same as depression.

52. Grief is a single emotion.

53. Once someone dies, you can no longer have a relationship with them.

54. When someone dies you will always feel their presence if you are attuned to it.

55. If you have faith in God it will lessen your grief.

56. Grief is, ultimately, always a transformative and positive experience that will eventually make you a better person.
Okay, this one is not me being a negative Nancy. Sometimes grief really is positive and transformative and we can reflect on all the ways it has made us a better person. That is a wonderful and amazing thing when it happens. That said, not everyone finds or embraces transformation in grief.

57. You cannot grieve someone who is still alive.

58. People like faith leaders, teachers, doctors and counselors all have training in grief and understand what you're going through.
Ahhh how we wish this were true. Sadly, many professions listed above require NO formal training in grief! None. Zero. Zip. Doctors? Nope, not required. Counselors? Unless they are specializing in grief, usually not required for them either. Scary, we know!

59. If you avoid grief and keep a stiff upper lip, it will eventually go away.

60. If a widow or widower has photographs of their late husband or wife up around the house it means they aren't ready to get involved in a new relationship.

61. When kids are involved, it's important to stay strong and focus all your attention on their grief.

62. God never gives us more than we can handle

63. After a death, you will always feel a rush of strong emotions.

64. Eventually you will stop noticing and/or being affected by grief triggers.

Source: What's Your Grief (<https://whatsyourgrief.com>)

This website has lots of great articles. Check it out.

The Talking Pumpkin

Halloween always was a special time at our house. When my son was a year old, my husband got out an old intercom set he had packed away and with its help, created a special pumpkin - one that talked! Our son was intrigued by it, as was his sister later and all the neighborhood children who came and discovered our unusual pumpkin. Eventually



the word spread and parents came miles out of their way so that their children could talk to our pumpkin. We continued the tradition for many years. My husband always handled the chatting with visitors from his comfortable chair in the den. My job has always been to not only hand out goodies, but to also make

sure the little ones know he's a friendly pumpkin and not to be feared when they come upon him for the first time.

We went through all the stages over the years with our own two children: believing (like in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy), doubting (I's like to believe, but something's all wrong here and the voice sounds awfully familiar, discovery (if I look under the leaves, I can see where the wires come out of the house!), to joining in the charade and even speaking for the pumpkin sometimes.

The first Halloween after our son died, we found it was no longer a favorite night and we couldn't bring out the talking pumpkin. We had a plastic one instead of the usual carved, real pumpkin, intending to get through the night as quickly as possible. The memories were too painful, but we had failed to realize how much the children would miss him. They approached our house as usual, yelling hello to the pumpkin and were disappointed when he didn't answer. I told the kids he had laryngitis and they left candy for him to help get better soon.

The next year, we returned his voice and have had him ever since. I relive many memories on Halloween night. I see everything from the little ones with stars in their eyes as they earnestly talk with the pumpkin and believe, to the blasé older ones who have a need to let the world know they're too old for such foolishness!

I know we are creating memories and some years down the road, a young father or mother will tell their child about the talking pumpkin who only came out on Halloween night at the Cleckly's. That thought has helped make Halloween a special night again for us; one that gets us in touch once more with our children in all stages of childhood. The memories of old and simple times do bathe and soothe the painful scars or more recent ones. For you, too, I hope.

~ Mary Cleckly, BP/USA, Saint Louis, MO

TEARS

By Jennifer Stern

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than a thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."

~Washington Irving

Let your tears fall with pride for they are not a sign of weakness or self-pity, but an authentic expression of sorrow. It takes great courage to feel your feelings, to express your feelings openly and honestly. It takes great strength to tend to your sorrow. Crying is not for the weak of heart. Crying expresses what few words can or ever will. Our work in grief is to feel, to express, to accept, to integrate, to heal. Grief works takes guts, persistence, patience, self-compassion, and courage - lots and lots of courage. Tears are the sweat of grief work.

It is not the job of the griever to make others comfortable with their expression of grief. It is the job of the griever to grieve. To grieve is to actively feel and express sorrow. If your tears appear to make others uncomfortable, calmly speak your truth, teach them about your tears. I cry because I grieve. I cry because I am profoundly sad over the loss of my loved one. I cry because life will forever be bittersweet. I cry because there are no words to adequately express how I am feeling. I cry because I am brave enough to face another day, to endure, to push forward, to live with grief in my heart. I cry to express, to relieve, to release.

Witnessing the tears of friends or family reminds us of our own fragility, powerlessness, inability to fix or lessen the pain and suffering of another. The most compassionate and supportive thing we can do is create space for those tears, to breathe, to sit with the discomfort and to understand that crying is an expression, a release, a healing...not something to be analyzed, feared or stopped.

Dr. William Fry, a biochemist and "tear expert" discovered that emotional tears have special health benefits. Reflex tears are 98% water while emotional tears also contain stress hormones that get excreted from the body through crying. Emotional tears release stress.

In an article by Judith Orloff, M.S. in *Psychology Today*, she discusses the health benefits of tears. She describes a good cry as cleansing, a way to purge pent up emotions, and to release stress symptoms such as fatigue and pain. Crying stimulates the production of endorphins which are natural pain blockers.

Crying is good for your health, your mind, your body and your spirit. It is a natural cleanse stimulating the release of pain. Give yourself permission as well as the time and space to work through your grief, to feel and express your feelings as they come. So often we judge our healing by our tears. Find solace in knowing that tears are an expression of our unspoken words, our sadness, our pain leaving our bodies. There will come a day when tears are not a part of our daily expression. Until that day comes, let the tears fall and know that they are a powerful component of healing. Practice self-compassion, patience, and the active nurturing of your soul and remember that every tear shed carries with it pain and stress.

(Reprinted with permission from **Grief Digest**,
Centering Corporation, Omaha, Nebraska, 866-218-0101)

Unanswered

I don't know why.

I'll never know why.

I don't have to know why.

I don't like it.

I don't have to like it.

What I have to do is make a choice about my living.

What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.

The choice is mine.

I can go on living, valuing every moment in a way I never did before,

or I can be destroyed by it and, in turn, destroy others.

I thought I was immortal.

That my family and my children were also.

That tragedy happened only to others.

But I know now that life is tenuous and valuable.

So I am choosing to go on living,

making the most of the time I have,

valuing my family and friends

in a way never possible before.

*~from the book, My Son, My Son by Iris Bolton
whose son Mitch died by suicide.*

The Secret of Compassionate Friends

The secret of The Compassionate Friends is simple. There is no line between being a helper and being helped. In the early months of peoples' membership in TCF, it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying, letting the grief flow, and "learning the ropes" of being a bereaved parent. The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out his life helps us to sort out our life too. But it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves. But at that point when we turn around is the point when we first listen to another, speak words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling out pain.

~ Denis Klass, Ph.D., TCF Advisor, St. Louis, MO

Thank you for taking a piece of my broken heart and tenderly giving it back to me stronger. Stronger because it is bonded with a piece of your own.

~ Kathy Wilson, TCF, Greater Ozarks, MO



Overcoming Loneliness

Why are there times when a bereaved parents feels lonely, even though surrounded by loving people and people the bereaved parent loves?

Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life.

Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of a one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences.

Part of yourself had been invested in another person. When that person died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed.

At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling; that no one else's world has been shattered.

This self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, *but do not hold on to it as a way of life.*

Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then to reach out and help others.

Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by living and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge of your continuity with life as a thinking, loving, and active person.

~ Ruth Eiseman, TCF Louisville, KY

*"Sometimes I think I almost see you in the shadows.
It happens for just an instant. Then you are gone.
Is it wishful thinking or really you?
My heart hopes you..."*

~ Deb Kosmer





Memorial Picnic
Saturday, September 28th
Lake Shawnee, Shelterhouse #3
3616 SE Memory Point off West Edge Road



The Topeka Chapter of TCF will be holding its 26th Annual Memorial Program/Picnic on Saturday, September 28, 2019. We will gather at Shelterhouse #3 at Lake Shawnee. This facility has both outdoor and indoor seating, air conditioning, full kitchen facilities and restrooms. Please note this event will **take the place** of our regular September support group meeting.

We will begin gathering at 11:30 am for a social time, with the potluck dinner planned for noon. The Memorial Program will begin at 1:15 p.m. We sincerely hope you and your family will plan on joining us as we celebrate the lives of our beloved children, grandchildren and siblings. This event also offers you an opportunity to include extended family members as we honor and celebrate these special lives. You will also have the opportunity to decorate a Hope Stone in memory of your loved one.

For the picnic the Topeka TCF Chapter will provide the meat course, rolls, margarine, ice tea, lemonade, dessert and table service. We ask each family attending to bring a salad, a vegetable, or a fruit/veggie tray to share. Please remember to bring serving utensils. You are encouraged to bring lawn chairs to sit outdoors if the weather is mild. Dress is casual.

In order to plan for the event, we need to know how many of you would like to attend. Please fill out the form below and return **by September 21st** Send to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629 or email to Jennifer Meyer at jenjesbec3@gmail.com

Picnic RSVP
(Please return by September 21st)

YES, please count on me/we attending the Memorial Program/Picnic on Saturday, September 28, 2019.

There will be _____ adults and _____ children from our family.

We will plan to bring (please circle **one or more** of the following)

SALAD VEGETABLE FRUIT TRAY VEGGIE TRAY CHIPS/DIP

We would also like to send a Love Gift to help the Topeka TCF Chapter in its programs to support bereaved families. Love Gifts will be acknowledged in the Picnic Memorial Program. *(optional)*

Love Gift in Memory of _____

Total enclosed \$_____ (make checks payable to Topeka TCF Chapter)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone# _____ Email _____

We Look Forward To Seeing You On September 28th!

Send to: Susan Chan, 3448 S.W. Mission Ave., Topeka, KS 66614-3629
or email your RSVP to Jennifer Meyer at jenjesbec3@gmail.com

The Compassionate Friends

Topeka Chapter, c/o Midland Hospice Care., Inc.
200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, KS 66606-2800

**A self-help organization offering friendship and
understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.**

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
AT TOPEKA, KS
PERMIT # 547

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TCF 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.