To those who are receiving our newsletter for the first time, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that your family and you have many friends. We who have received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. You are not alone in your grief.

This year will mark 33 years since the death of our daughter. Her loss was a life-changing event for our family. While it has been many years since we have experienced the pain of deep, all consuming grief, her unseen presence continues to have an impact on us and always will. I recently ran across an article shared in our TCF newsletter many years ago. The first-born son of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his wife, Mamie, died from scarlet fever in 1920. In 1967, President Eisenhower wrote the following in his book, At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends. “I do not know how others have felt when facing the same situation, but I have never known such a blow. Within a week he was gone. I didn’t know what to do. I blamed myself because I had often taken his presence for granted, even though I was proud of him... This was the greatest disappointment and disaster in my life, the one I have never been able to forget completely. Today when I think of it, even now as I write of it, the keenness of our loss comes back to me as fresh and as terrible as it was in that long dark day...”

Forty-seven years after his son’s death that residual impact remained. I don’t share this to discourage those of you who are early in your path of grief. You would not want to forget your beloved child, and I think most bereaved parents are grateful for the mark that their child left on their lives as well as the lives of others. In time – sometimes a long time, the intense, mind numbing, heart aching pain of grief does grow softer and less ongoing, but a part of us will always long for that child – wondering what it would be like if they had lived, being grateful for the time that they were with us and wishing that could have been for so much longer.

Sincerely,
Jerry & Carol Webb
Summer is fast approaching and with summer comes vacations. Whether this is your first or thirty-first without your child, it can be a very difficult time, especially if you are getting together with family. Here are a few suggestions that may help as you work towards finding a new “normal” for your family’s summer.

- Think of your favorite vacation with your child. Talking about it may bring back wonderful memories. Looking at old vacation photos could help also.

- Try going somewhere that you have never been before. Think about how your child might have enjoyed going there.

- If you go somewhere that you went with your child, think about a way to celebrate their memory while you are there. Eat at their favorite restaurant, eat their favorite meal. Go on their favorite adventure.

- Try journaling about how you are feeling about vacationing without your child. Getting those feelings out always helps me to move forward.

I hope this summer you can sleep in, daydream and play outside for hours and have sweet memories of your child.

Kelly Farley
grievingdads.com

Mourning is one of the most profound human experiences that it is possible to have. The deep capacity to weep for the loss of a loved one and to continue to treasure the memory of that loss is one of our noblest human traits.

— Shneidman (1980)
When Real Communication is Difficult

From birth we are led to gender based behavior. Men perform tasks. They do not dwell on feelings. Under stress this can push men to drugs and alcohol rather than leaning on others. Women seek support groups, explore emotions, and seek to validate their feelings. The differences are set by society. We had no choice about losing our child, but we can decide how to go on. It is important to make the marriage top priority. We need to validate listening with touch – a hug, a pat. Talk about your deceased child. Talk about the grief process and feelings. Write things out if talking is too difficult. When you are angry, let the other know whether you are angry at them or because your child died. Buy old dishes, say why you are mad, and throw a dish! Write what you are angry about on Styrofoam cups, read each one, and stamp it flat! These communication techniques are especially good for women who are not supposed to show anger. Decide together what to do with your dead child’s possessions. Some ideas are to make a quilt of their clothes, donate their toys to charities. Never assume that because someone is not crying that they are not grieving.

A common heavy task for men in the workplace is the all too common question “How is your wife doing?” This stifles men’s need to express their own pain. “It is difficult to lean on someone who is already doubled over in pain.”

Kathy Simone

Notes from a workshop presented by Susan Van Vleck

Journey of the Survivor

There will come a day when the tears of sorrow will flow into tears of remembrance and your heart will begin to heal.

The grieving will be interrupted by moments of joy and whispers of hope.

There will come a day when you will welcome the tears of remembrance as a rainbow of the soul, a turning of the tide, a promise of peace.

There will come a day, when you will begin to live forward, finding your new normal and treasuring each tear.

BP USA Newsletter

Healing With Humor

Laughter is not a part of everybody’s life, so it is easy to accidentally offend someone with humor. Bereaved parents, especially the newly bereaved, do not feel like laughing; their joy in life has gone. Laughing seems so trivial to them they can easily be offended. Some bereaved parents feel guilty about humor and laughter. They feel they have no right to joy because their child is dead. Appearing joyous can bring condemnation from society, not to mention your spouse, for appearing to not care. People may think, surely if you are laughing you did not love your child as much as I love mine. The truth is, joy makes life better. Joyous talk and laughter do not show disrespect, they show that healing is taking place. If you laughed with your child while they lived, it is OK to someday laugh with your child again. Your dear child has never left your heart and their spirit would surely rather fill your heart with joy than sorrow.

Chuck Prestwood

Love Gifts

As parents and other family members find healing and hope within the group or from the newsletter, they often wish to make a Love Gift to help with the work of our chapter. This is a meaningful way to remember a beloved child.

Donations and Love Gifts are used to provide postage for the newsletter and mailings to newly bereaved families. Some of the love gifts are used for materials to share with first time attendees at our meetings or to purchase books for our library. Our thanks to the many families who provide love gifts so that the work of reaching out to bereaved parents and families can continue.

If you would like to send a donation or love gift, please send it or to our chapter leader, Doug Scott, c/o Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265. Checks can be made out to The Compassionate Friends. Your gifts are tax deductible.

Contact the Editors

If you read or write an article or poem which might be helpful to other bereaved parents and would like to share it.

If you move and would like to continue receiving the newsletter, send us your new address.

If you know someone you think would benefit from receiving the newsletter, send his/her/their name and address.

If you prefer to no longer receive the newsletter or if you prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

Please contact:
Jerry and Carol Webb
Box 71, Cordova, Illinois 61242,
309.654.2727.
carolynpwebb@gmail.com
The Compassionate Friends National Newsletter
One complimentary copy is sent to bereaved families who contact the national office: The Compassionate Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 (877)969-0010.
email: NationalOffice@compassionatefriends.org
Website: www.compassionatefriends.org
Visit the sibling resource page at www.compassionatefriends.org. It is also available to read online without charge.
e-Newsletter Now Available! An e-Newsletter is now available from the National Office! The monthly e-Newsletter contains notes and happenings of interest to all TCFers. To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, visit the TCF National Website home page and click on the Register for TCF e-Newsletter Link. This newsletter is available to everyone.

Mission Statement
The mission of The Compassionate Friends Quad City Area Chapter is 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.

Vision Statement
The vision statement of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.

I remember sitting at a dinner table with friends and their kids on Father’s Day — the first one after our daughter Caroline was stillborn. Every day was a tough day, but I decided I would be tough enough to make it through that Sunday.

One of the girls — she couldn’t have been more than 3 — started pointing at each of us sitting at the table. “Daddy,” “Daddy,” “Daddy.” Then she got to me: “Daddy.”

She was right. Even though my daughter wasn’t there at the table with me. I thought of myself as a “Daddy.”

Turns out, I wasn’t as tough as I thought.

I went upstairs and had a good cry. When I came back downstairs, I didn’t pretend to hide anything. This sweet girl’s innocent comment triggered a lot of hard emotions. I could have held it in, I guess, but everyone knew. And, to my surprise, I was OK with that.

If you’ve suffered a stillbirth, a miscarriage or infant loss, you hurt in a way that you can’t readily explain to anyone, and you don’t truly understand it yourself. If you’re like me, you struggle with those feelings and you often end up somewhere between “tough it out” and “break down.”

We all share a common feeling — we’re missing someone. But we all process that grief differently and that can be really hard to deal with. That’s why Share exists. They understand that a Dad’s grief is unique, and so is the way each of us handles it. The volunteers and staff at SHARE know that we need someone to listen, someone to tell us it’s OK to cry and someone who can help us find our way to hope.

My loss comes back to me when I least expect it. I might see a novelty key chain with Caroline’s name on it. There’s a Caroline Avenue I pass on my way to work each day. Oh yeah, and there’s that Neil Diamond song you’ve probably heard a million times. Gets me every time.

I know Father’s Day can be tough, but I also know that memories are beautiful. I wish you gentle thoughts today and every day.

Brian Henry – Board Member – Share – nationalshare.org

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**About TCF...**

**The Compassionate Friends** is a nonprofit, self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Founded in England in 1969, the first U.S. chapter was organized in 1972. Since then, 635 chapters have been established. The current Quad City Chapter was formed in 1987.

**TCF National Office**
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3696
Toll Free (877)969-0010
TCF National Web site — www.compassionatefriends.org
http://www.quadcitytcf.org
Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends, Quad City Chapter
Monthly Meeting, Thursday, June 22, 2017, at 6:30 pm at Bethany for Children & Families, 1830 6th Avenue, Moline
Please call Doug Scott (563.370.1041) for information and directions.
Summer meetings are held on July 27, August 24, and September 27, 2017 at 6:30 pm

Support Groups for Grieving Parents & Siblings

The Compassionate Friends of Muscatine
Meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 at the George M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home, 2907 Mulberry, Muscatine, Iowa. Chapter Leaders are Linda and Bill McCracken. You can call them at 563.260.3626 for directions or information, or contact them at linmac67@mchlink.com.

Rick’s House of Hope
This is a community resource for children and adolescents dealing with grief. There is no fee for services. Groups meet on Monday and Tuesday nights. The group for 14 year olds and older meets Sunday from 3:00 pm until 5:00 pm. All meetings are held at 5022 Northwest Boulevard, Davenport, Iowa 52806. For more information, call Emily Gordon, Program Director, at 563.324.9580, or egordon@rhoh.org or go to www.rhoh.org.

MFL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (DeWitt)
A peer group for suicide grief support meets on the third Friday of every month, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Frances Banta Wagnnor Library, 505 10th Street, DeWitt, Iowa 52742. Contact Betsy Loehr, 563.843.3655 or at there.is.hope@hotmail.com — http://www.mjlfoundation.org.

MFL Foundation Suicide Grief Support (Fulton)
Survivors of Suicide Support Group meets on the second Monday of each month in Fulton, Illinois, at the Second Reformed Church, 703 - 14th Avenue, Fulton, Illinois 61252, from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm. Contact Laura Wessels, 815.589.3425, or laura@secondreformedchurch.net.

SHARE
A support group for parents who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. SHARE meets the third Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Adler Room #1 in the lower level of Genesis Heart Institute, 1236 East Rusholme Street, Davenport, Iowa. Questions? Contact Chalyn Fornero-Green at 309.373.2568, or chalyn@shareqf.com or www.shareqf.com.

Loving Listeners
If you need someone who understands and will listen, feel free to call or email (if address is given):
- Doug Scott 563.370.1041 doug.scott@mchsi.com
- Rosemary Shoemaker 309.945.6738 shoeramb3@mchsi.com
- Judy Delvecchio 563.349.8895 delvecchiojudy@hotmail.com

Doug, Rosemary, and Judy are willing to take calls from bereaved parents, grandparents, or siblings who want to talk to someone who cares that they don’t feel alone.
Strength Found in Solitude

As another Father’s day approaches, I think back and remember the amazing parade of men that I have observed over the past 40 years in our support groups for bereaved parents. The assumption of many was that men would not want to take advantage of this type of support—that it would be way out of their comfort zone. My experience over the past 40 years of facilitating support groups for bereaved parents does not match those assumptions. Men’s reasons for attending support groups may be different from those of women. They may actually be willing to go beyond their comfort zone in order to help their partner. That’s not a bad reason.

I recall the dad who came to a group with his wife just to check it out and make sure it wasn’t too weird for his wife to attend. Another accompanied his wife assuming he was there just to support her, only to realize that he too was benefitting greatly from connecting with other bereaved fathers. One commented he couldn’t imagine sitting through two hours of a meeting only to admit at the end of the night wanting it to go longer. And a very common statement I have heard from fathers is “Wow, I thought my wife was just overreacting and now I see she’s just like all the other women who come to this group.” That validation can sometimes save a marriage.

Occasionally a father will come alone to the support group. One guy reported that his wife led him to the door about a year after their child had died and said, “You need help. Get into the support group. You are driving me crazy. I’ve been doing my grief work. Now it’s time for you to deal with Jamie’s death.”

Another father, Richard, comes once every year around the anniversary of his child’s death. It’s been 15 years, and he still he comes—to remember, yes, but also to reach out and offer hope to others. His grief story didn’t have a happy ending. His marriage didn’t survive after the death of their child. But he admits to the group that things were already bad before his son died. He had been drinking and using before his son’s death and then continued to soothe his pain with even more drinking and drugging, which prevented him from being able to heal and grow after this huge loss. He is now clean and sober and in touch with his feelings. His life is good now. His recovery was the gift he gave his son. Or was it the gift his son gave to him? He’s the best show and tell that any support group could have. Some men are quiet and don’t offer much about their journey through grief unless asked. Others are quite demonstrative, speaking eloquently of the powerless feelings and anger that controls their thoughts. I see nods in agreement from other men in the room. Many speak of the lack of support in other settings. But they also admit they rarely ask for it.

The fear of yet another loss, i.e., the marriage, that comes on the heels of a child’s death is a common concern reported by couples. Many well meaning friends will caution the parents about the discouraging statistics that point to the near inevitability of a divorce following the loss of a child. This information can be misinterpreted, however. For, as Richard acknowledged, it was not his dead child that ended the marriage. It was his own behavior.

The impact of grief on a marriage is huge and not to be minimized. And because parents, though grieving the loss of the same child, will grieve differently, this grief will be stressful on their relationship. Most couples admit they don’t have the energy to care for another’s needs. Men are conditioned to believe they are the protector, comforter and fixer in the family. That is a set up for failure. It may be doing precisely what men tend to want and need to do by their very nature. They find themselves wanting to move inward in order to cope. They go into their cave. They seek a quiet space where they can find healing for their wounds and figure out their next steps. Solitude is not necessarily isolation. Rather it is a place inside where men, including grieving fathers, tend to go to find themselves. Mothers may go there also, but not as quickly and easily as do fathers.

At some point solitude will call us to go beyond ourselves to be there for others. We bring the wisdom we have gathered from solitude out of the cave and into the light to then be a part of helping others heal themselves.

Pat Schwiebert, R.N.
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