

August 2005

Upcoming Meetings

August 24, 2005

September 28, 2005

October 26, 2005

November 16, 2005



THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS

Check us out on the web @

www.tcfsiouxcity.org

Meeting Place and Time...

The Sioux City Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the fourth Wednesday Jan.-Oct., third Wednesday Nov. & Dec. at **Mercy Medical Center** in the **Leiter room** on 1st floor off the parking ramp on 5th street at **7:00 p.m.**

This Newsletter format is not the same that is mailed/emailed out. Some items have been removed to protect the privacy of our compassionate friends...

If you would like to receive the full version, please send an email request to:

newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

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August Agenda

By Trudy Klaver

On August 24, we will discuss Alan Wolfelt's fourth Touchstone which is "**Explore Your Feelings of Loss**," chapter 4. To begin our meeting, we will try to put words to our feelings from a list compiled by authors Caplan and Lang in "Grief's Courageous Journey." We will then proceed discussing the fourth Touchstone.



We must no longer be afraid to challenge a culture that expects silence on the subject of death, a culture that closets the process and then once death happens, ask us to grieve privately and quickly.

—Barbara K. Roberts,
Death without Denial



Thank you to **First United Methodist Church**
for granting us use of their postal mail permit number!

Thank you to **Mercy Medical Center**
for graciously printing our newsletters and providing us a meeting place.

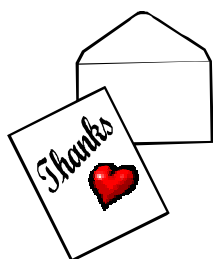
Remembering our August Children...

Birth and Remembrance dates are not listed to protect the confidentiality of our Compassionate Friends...



Love Gifts

A Love Gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends for the purpose of running the Sioux City Chapter. It is usually given in memory of a child who died, however may also be from individuals who want to honor a friend or relative. It may be in thanksgiving that their children are alive and well, or simply a gift of support for the work of TCF. Others in the community make contributions because they want to help us with the newsletter, meeting costs, or maintaining a good lending library. The simple truth is that without your support, there would be little possibility for this group to exist. All gifts are welcome and truly appreciated. **Time is also a wonderful gift, there are many jobs that must be done, and volunteers are always needed.**



*for the
love gifts in
remembrance
of your
children...*

*Love never
dies...*

Sioux City Chapter Love Gift Form

Parent(s) Name _____
Child's Name _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
Birthdate(s) _____ Heaven date(s) _____

Tax-deductible donations that pay for the newsletter costs and other chapter expenses are greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in the newsletter **unless you request that the gift not be published.** You may make your donation in memory of your loved one and include a message.

Love Gift \$ _____ (Any Donation Amount) Please make check to: The Compassionate Friends
In Memory of _____
On the occasion of _____
Message _____

To receive mailing address to send love gift, please contact:
newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

Please complete and email to Newsletter editor at newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

Name(s) _____ Email Address: _____

Address: _____ City, State & Zip _____

I would like to receive the newsletter by _____ Mail _____ Email _____

If you would like the birth and heaven dates included in the newsletter, please include your child's name and dates.

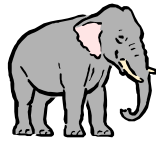
Comments: _____

National Headquarters - P.O. Box 3696 - Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 - (877) 969-0010 toll free- www.compassionatefriends.org

To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.

—Clyde Campbell

The Elephant in the Room



There's an elephant in the room.
It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get around it.
Yet we squeeze by it with "How are you?" and "I'm fine"..
And a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.
We talk about the weather.
We talk about work.
We talk about everything else...except the elephant in the room.
We all know it is there.
We are thinking about the elephant as we talk together.
It is constantly on our minds.
For you see, it is a very big elephant.
It has hurt us all.
But we do not talk about the elephant in the room.
Oh, please say the name.
Oh, please say it again.
Oh, please, let's talk about the elephant in the room.
For if we talk about "her" death,
Perhaps we can talk about "her" life.
Can I say her name to you and not have you look away?
For if I cannot, then you are leaving me
Alone...In a room....
With an elephant.

__ By Terry Kettering

June Meeting Minutes

by Trudy Klaver

In June, Alan Pederson, song writer, guitarist, and bereaved father, shared his message of hope through speaking and singing to a group of about 50 people. It was a night of inspiration interwoven with sadness, but above all...hope. His testimony through song was beautiful!

Alan shared with us the 4-H's, which he believes helped him find a measure of inner peace relating to the death of his daughter... Hope...Help...Honor...Healing. Healing, he emphasized, is an ongoing, lifelong process.

Following the program, his CD, inspired by his love and memory of his daughter, Ashley, was available for sale, as well as the inscribed bracelets, "Angels Are Forever." We all stayed and enjoyed fellowship and lunch. It was a good night.

(Alan's CD's are available at our TCF meetings.)

"The soul always knows what to do to heal itself. The challenge is to silence the mind."

__Anonymous

Holy Grief

The tunnel of grief is a holy place,
a cavern of wisdom and care;
a setting to meet God face to face
and share every shred of despair.

Priorities change from the burden of grief,
we shed our familiar facade.
Our souls, in search of pain's relief,
discover a hunger for God.

With eyes dimmed by tears, we catch a view
of life as it's meant to be.
A sorrowing soul can be renewed
and sadness can set it free.

So look for revival that only flows,
from rivers of sorrow and pain.
And reach for the Lord as one who knows,
the holiness grief can attain.

__permission granted by author, Ken Hekman
In memory of 17 year old daughter, Carla

He Only Took My Hand

Last night while I was trying to sleep,
my son's voice I did hear.
I opened my eyes and looked around,
but he did not appear.

He said "Mom you've got to listen,
you've got to understand.
God didn't take me from you, Mom
He only took my hand."

When I called out in pain that night,
the instant that I died,
He reached down and took my hand,
And pulled me to His side.

He pulled me up and saved me,
from the misery and pain.
My body was hurt so badly inside,
I could never be the same.

My search is really over now,
I've found happiness within.
All the answers to my empty dreams
and all that might have been.

I love you all and miss you so,
and I'll always be nearby.
My body's gone forever,
but my spirit will never die!

And so, you must all go on now...

Live one day at a time,
just understand--
God did not take me from you,
He only took my hand.

__Author unknown



Listen Gentle People Hear My Truest Needs

I hear you stumbling for words...relax,
there are no words.
I hear you remembering a funny story
about my loved one and looking embarrassed
because you are laughing.
Share it with me ~ Let me laugh.
It gives me something to hold onto
in the middle of the night
when I feel only pain...
Be your happy self and let me be me.
On days when I can speak of my loved one,
I need you to share my memories.
You don't have to give me answers,
for I will learn to live without them.
You don't have to pretend my loved
one never existed, thinking I will
forget if you do.
Let me speak his name and
you speak it too.
He is always there, that one I loved so
deeply, always part of who I am.
If you take that from me, I will be
less than who I am.

__Author unknown

Closure

This brings me to the dreaded "C" word.
A word hated by the bereaved, "closure".
I hate that word. I am offended by that word.
Most of the bereaved I know dislike it too.
There is no such thing as closure - you never
get over it and quit expecting us to.
People need to learn to say something else...

These things are so true-
You *close* a book,
you *close* a closet,
you may even *close* a chapter of your life.
But you **never close** the life of your child,
a loved one. There is never "closure."

Permission granted to reprint
by Patricia Unzicker, David's Mom
www.geocities.com/davidsplaceinheaven



Grief's Courageous Journey

Did you know...the universal symbol of
remembering is a candle?

Did you know...letting go of the deceased, but
honoring his/her memory with a symbol is a
ritual that brings **healing**? Sometimes words are
not there to express what we want to say, but a
symbol that brings meaning to you can help in
the grief process.

__S. Caplan and G. Lang
(excerpts taken from *Grief's Courageous Journey*)

*"It is the nature of love and of death to touch every
person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from
knowing that people have made the same journey.
And solace comes from understanding how others
have learned to sing again."*

__Helen Steiner Rice

*"...when a good or a great person's life comes
to its final sunset, the skies of this world are
illuminated until long after he is out of view.
Such a person does not die from this world,
for when he departs he leaves much of himself
behind...and being dead, he still speaks."*

__author unknown

God Will Carry Us Through...

Submitted by Anita Penning
In Memory of Derek Earl Penning 10/21/2000

The Lord will never leave us nor forsake us.
He promised He'd be with us through it all.
It often seems He's walking right beside us as
He guides us through our problems...large and small.

But there are times we just can't feel His presence,
when the road's so rough, we need Him all the more.
We wonder why we are so alone and helpless,
why His hand's not there to lead us.

But if we listen quietly, He will tell us,
"Take a moment and remember what I said:
If you fail to see Me walking right beside you,
it's because I have you in My arms instead.

For together we will cross the highest mountain,
Together we will face the stormy sea,
you're never alone, you're never helpless!
I'll carry you, let go and lean on Me!

__Author unknown



Michael Pohlen

Child's Photo

We have a permanent bulletin
board set up in our meeting
room. Please feel free to bring a
wallet size photo of your child.

In his beautiful book, "A Grief Observed, C.S. Lewis described his experience after the death of his wife. He wrote, "An odd by-product of my loss is that I'm aware of being an embarrassment to everyone I meet. Perhaps the bereaved ought to be isolated in special settlements like lepers."

As he says, society often tends to make mourners feel intense shame and embarrassment about feelings of grief. I'm not surprised that the most often-asked question I get from bereaved people is, "Am I crazy?"

Shame can be described as the feeling that something you are doing is bad, and you may feel that if you mourn, then you should be ashamed. If, on the other hand, you are perceived as "doing well" with your grief, you are considered "strong" and "under control." The message is that the well-controlled person stays rational at all times.

Combined with this message is another one. Society erroneously implies that if you, as a grieving person, openly express your feelings of grief, you are immature. If your feelings are fairly intense, you may be labeled "overly emotional." If your feelings are extremely intense, you may even be referred to as "crazy" or a "pathological mourner."

This article addresses this frequent question: Am I crazy? Feelings of disorganization and confusion that often come about when we mourn the death of someone loved may make us feel like we're going crazy, but we're not. Here's why.

Disorganization, Confusion, Searching, Yearning

Perhaps the most isolating and frightening part of your grief journey is the sense of disorganization, confusion, searching and yearning that often comes with the loss. These experiences frequently arise when you begin to be confronted with the reality of the death. As one grieving person said, "I felt as if I were a lonely traveler with no companion and worse yet, no destination. I couldn't find myself or anybody else."

This dimension of grief may cause the "going crazy" syndrome. In grief, thoughts and behaviors are different from what you normally experience. It's only natural that you may not know if your thoughts, feelings and behaviors are normal or abnormal. The experiences described below are common after a death. A major goal of this article is to simply validate these experiences so you will know you are not crazy!

After the death of someone loved, you may feel a sense of restlessness, agitation, impatience and ongoing confusion. It's like being in the middle of a wild, rushing river where you can't get a grasp on anything. Disconnected thoughts race through your mind, and strong emotions may be overwhelming. You may express disorganization and confusion in your inability to complete any tasks. You may start a project but be unable to finish it.

You may be forgetful and ineffective at work. Early morning and late at night are times when you may feel most disoriented and confused. These feelings are often accompanied by fatigue and lack of initiative. Everyday pleasures may not seem to matter anymore.

You may also experience a restless searching for the person who has died. Yearning and preoccupation with memories can leave you feeling drained. Yes, the work of mourning is draining. It often leaves you feeling wiped out.

You might even experience a shift in perception; other people may begin to resemble the person who died. You might be at a shopping mall, look down a hallway and think you catch a glimpse of the person you loved so much. Or you might see a car go past similar to the car driven by the person who died, and you might find yourself following the car! Sometimes you might hear the garage door or front door open and the footsteps of the person who died entering the house as he or she had done so many times in the past. If these experiences are happening to you, remember you are not crazy!

Other common experiences during this time include difficulties with eating and sleeping. You may experience a loss of appetite, or find yourself overeating. Even when you do eat, you may be unable to taste the food. Difficulty in going to sleep and early morning awakening also are common experiences associated with this dimension of grief.

You might find it helpful to remember that disorganization following loss always comes before any kind of re-orientation. Some people will try to have you bypass any kind of disorganization or confusion. Remember, it simply cannot be done. While it may seem strange, keep in mind that your disorganization and confusion are actually stepping stones on your path toward healing.

Self-care Guidelines: If disorganization, confusion, searching and yearning are, or have been, a part of your grief journey, don't worry about the normalcy of your experience. It is critically important to never forget those reassuring words: You are not crazy!

Whenever you feel disoriented, talk to someone who will understand. To heal, grief must be shared outside of yourself. I hope you have at least one person whom you feel understands and will not judge you. That person must be patient and attentive, for you may feel the need to tell your story over and over again as you work to embrace your grief. He or she must be genuinely interested in understanding you. If you are trying to talk about your disorganization and confusion, and the person doesn't want to listen, find someone who will.

The thoughts, feelings and behaviors of this dimension of grief do not come all at once. They are often experienced in a wave-like fashion. I hope you have someone to support you through each wave. You may need to talk and cry for long periods of time. At other times, you may just need to be alone.

Don't try to interpret what you think and feel. Just experience it. Sometimes when you talk you may not think you make much sense. And you may not. But talking it out can still be self-clarifying at a level you may not even be aware of.

During this time, discourage yourself from making any critical decisions, such as selling your house or moving to another community. With the judgment-making difficulties that naturally come with this part of the grief experience, ill-timed decisions might result in more feelings of loss. Go slow and be patient with yourself. And remember-you are not going crazy!

Capsized

Put a family onboard a boat and, when a loved one dies, the boat capsizes. Each family member is stunned, but they begin to swim for shore the best way they know how. Some swim with long strokes, others float or dog paddle while hoping the others are coming along okay. It seems to take all of one's energy, leaving no reserve.

They want to stay together but need to have room apart to navigate through the waves. Some comfort is found in that they are not alone, and yet, are on their own to find the method to shore that works for them.

Successfully reaching shore has more rewards than realized. In looking back subtle signs of encouragement were almost overlooked, and that love and support still lingers on in the heart-healing-along with a newly found confidence in inner strength.

A new relationship is born enabling each family member to carry forth a treasure of personal memories, honoring the loved one who has gone ahead to a shoreline we have yet to see.

The journey through grief is designed to build strength, to honor our differences, and to encourage others for a lifetime.

__by Jayne Belancio

(Reprinted with permission from Bereavement Publishing, Inc.)



Daily message from ***Healing After Loss***

I know well there is no comfort for this pain of parting; the wound always remains, but one learns to bear the pain, and learns to thank God for what He gave, for the beautiful memories of the past, and the yet more beautiful hope for the future. __Max Muller

A woman whose life had had many hard times said, "The hardest grief I have had to bear is this temporary separation from my daughter." That she was able, in faith, to view her adolescent daughter's death as a temporary separation surely helped her immeasurably. But, of course, she longed for her daughter's presence now.

It is foolish to expect to "get over" a serious grief. The pain is always there, the fantasy of what might have been. Over time, I'm sure that for this woman the pain was mixed in with happy memories of the daughter's childhood and adolescence, and also with her anticipation of their ultimate reunion.

So the mosaics of adjustment are laid down. On some days the grief is most noticeable; on others, the happy memories; on others, the hope of reunion burns bright.

As I think about my loss, the strands of grief and memory and hope are mysteriously braided together.

__by Martha Whitmore Hickman

Email Friends

Melissa Munsen newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org

Twins- 32 day old daughter, premature

5 ½ year old son, multiple medical conditions

Trudy Klaver leader@tcfsiouxcity.org

23 year old son died from leukemia

***Friends who are willing,
comfortable, and able to
listen to such pain are
few and far between...
but when found are
precious gifts.***

__Rev. Kevin Hoogland,
Wisconsin

In Memory of Derek Earl Penning 10/21/2000

Submitted by Anita Penning

Gentle Savior, please look down...

there's someone at Your side.

A small bewildered little boy,
who needs You as his guide.

You'll know his name is Derek.

His smile could melt a heart of stone.

He's without a Mom and Dad-
so please lead him safely home.

Keep him in Your tender care and
Your strong warm embrace.

Please guide him to his Heavenly home,
with a smile upon his face.

You put a dimple on his cheek and
gave him hair so heavenly dark.

Dear Lord, look after our little guy;
guide him safely through each night.

Thank you God for the time we had,
and all the memories we made.

We will keep Derek forever in our hearts and
remember always the love he gave!

__Author unknown



Give It Time

Give it time,
Give it time,
Give your lonely heart some time.

In your deepest depths of sorrow
When your soul cries out for mercy;
In the grip of fear unyielding
When the sun shines always black,
Give it time.

In the ravages of chaos
When you think that you will die,
Let your pain come screaming out
Let the world know you hurt,
And give it time.

Give it time,
Give it time,
Give your lonely heart some time

As joy peeks from the darkness
And your tears turn to a trickle;
When you feel a touch of comfort;
And your heart begins to heal,
You gave it time.

When your memories form a smile
And your child's life is what you see;
When joy comes into focus
And laughter's in your soul,
You gave it time.

So, if you think your heart is forever broken
And hope is a long lost friend,
Give it time,
Give it time,
Give your lonely heart some time.



__Rob Anderson

(reprinted with permission from
Bereavement Publishing, Inc.)

“Cherish the Children” – A walk to remember and honor children who have died!”

Christy-Smith Funeral Homes is sponsoring their fifth annual
“**Remembrance Walk**” for parents, siblings, relatives and
friends who have experienced the death of a child of any age.
Please join us on Sunday, September 11th, 2005 at the Christy
Smith Family Resource Center, 1819 Morningside Ave., Sioux
City, Iowa at **1:00 P.M.** rain or shine. **Pre-registration is
required.** Balloons and name tags will begin to be handed out
at 12:30 P.M. Please come early to avoid the rush!!! The walk
will begin at the resource center and will end at Latham Park
with a short service in honor of the children. Refreshments
will be served back at the community room of Christy-Smith
Resource Center.

**To pre-register or if you have questions, please contact
Brenda Zahnley, Director of Bereavement Services, at
(712) 276-7319.**

However Long It Takes

* “I realize the non-bereaved point of view is coming from a place of unawareness. Sometimes I envy that position I once held. They really do want us to be well and they envision a future of peace and happiness for us. Their exasperation and impatience is a reaction to an underlying fear that we may never be happy again. Bottom line, the loss of a child is as inconceivable to them as it once was for us. No longer naïve, the bereaved parent's point of view is a reality that our deepest fear has come true, and with it the belief of a loss of all control. If the non-bereaved could observe it from our perspective, they would be shocked and dismayed to see the road to our future littered with fragments from the past and emotional debris from unforeseen storms of grief.

* No one knows better than we do, that we cannot change the fact that our child died. Ignorance may not be bliss, but it is certainly less painful than waking up to this daily reminder. We know this truth at such a deep level, and our body makes it impossible to ignore. Knowing that we cannot change the fact that our child died and accepting that truth are essential to healing. It is critical, therefore, to acknowledge this connection between the mind and the body. The mind can analyze, rationalize, justify, deny and even forget what the body has experienced, but the body always remembers. The trauma of our child's death is recorded in every cell of our body, lying dormant until memories incite a rebellion to attack the heart. The more fearful we are, the more we fuel those grief cells with fear and trigger the negative aspects of the memories that grab hold and keep us down. Is it surprising then that we appear as if we are not moving ahead? This is what keeps bereaved parents grieving so long!

* We will receive greater support from the non-bereaved when we respect and honor our needs and model that without apology.”

__Carla Blowey (excerpts reprinted with
permission from Bereavement Publishing, Inc.)

Local Writers

Many of the stories you read in the TCF newsletters were submitted by readers like you. We publish TCF newsletters monthly and would like to encourage **YOU** to submit any articles/poems you have written in memory of your child. Also, if any of your other children, family members, or friends has written anything that you would like to share, please let the editor know. Please consider this request and submit your writings by the 10th of each month for inclusion in the next newsletter. **We look forward to hearing from our local talent.**

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national non-profit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. There is no religious affiliation. No individual membership fees or dues are charged, and all bereaved family members are welcome.