

*January 2006*

Upcoming Meetings

January 25, 2006

February 22, 2006

March 22, 2006

April 26, 2006



THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS

Check us out on the web @  
[www.tcfsiouxcity.org](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> floor off the parking ramp on 5<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org)

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

**Sioux City Chapter**

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**Secretary** - Mary Lander

**Treasurer** - Stan Yates

**Regional Coordinator**

Position open



**Resolutions**

by Pat Akery, TCF, Medford, OR

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this New Year shouldn't be better.

This brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself, both your body and your mind. Remember... all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it, and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in your chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in your chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

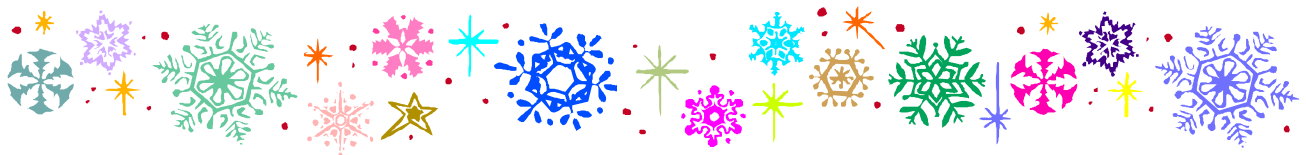
## Remembering our January Children...

*Birth and Remembrance dates are not listed to protect the privacy of our Compassionate Friends*

### **Remember**

*When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.*

—Frederick Buechner, *Whistling in the Dark*



### **January Agenda** by Peggy Pohlen, Co-Leader

**On Jan. 25** we will discuss Alan Wolfelt's fifth touchstone "Recognize You Are Not Crazy" **Your journey through grief will bring you through all kinds of unfamiliar emotions. This terrain is so foreign and disorienting, and our behaviors in the terrain appear out of whack, that we feel like we are going crazy. We will be discussing various emotions that we go through during our grief. If you would like to share a memory, please bring a family picture or another photo that is special to you.**

### **Birthday Table**

Thanks to Christy Glissman, we have a *Birthday Table* at our local TCF meetings. This table is for you. If you would like to share your child's favorite cake, or anything that will help you "remember" their birthday with others who are open to "celebrating" with you, please take this opportunity to share with us. You may take decorations that meant something to your child, or helps you remember that special day. You may take a picture(s) of your child's past birthdays, etc. If your child has a birthday before or after our monthly meeting, just know that you are welcome to do whatever you would like to do. If you bring a special snack or drink, plan on at least 25 people, give or take a few either way. **Please call Christy at 402/385-3433 and let her know what you plan to bring, so that she will be sure to have a balloon for your child.**

*In our December meeting, Brian Lee and Cheryl Renae Punt, children of Judy Yates were remembered with birthday cakes. Michael Pohlen son of Dan & Peggy Pohlen was remembered with his favorite vanilla ice cream. Thank you for sharing precious memories.*

# 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.

**Encourage family and friends to give a love gift to The Compassionate Friends.**

**A gift given in memory of your child would mean so much... All proceeds given to the chapters are used within the community for outreach and to provide a place for newly bereaved families to seek support.**



## Sioux City Chapter *Love Gift* Form

Parent(s) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Remembrance 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Please email newsletter editor at [newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org](mailto:newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org) to receive the address to mail a love gift.

**Please keep our email database updated!** Please contact us if you have an address/email change. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email, please complete this form and email to [newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org](mailto:newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org).

**Thank you for keeping our addresses current!**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the newsletter by \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Email Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like the birth and remembrance date(s) 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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

This was in one of the previous newsletters, and has been a help to me as I begin my day. -- *“Never a day goes by I don't think of you; Never a night goes by I don't hold you; Never a season changes I don't love you; As long as I live I will remember you.”* Phyllis Ambroz, in loving memory of Chad

**“MY TRIBUTE”** will be **your** chance to tell us about your child who has died. It can be a short story, an amusing anecdote, or a list of treasured memories.

We will dedicate a page each newsletter and will include as many stories as room allows. They will be printed in the order they are received. The success of this feature will depend entirely upon **YOU**. *We need your stories and your memories to make it a success.* If you would like a photo to go with the article, please include.

Send email to [newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org](mailto:newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org), please note subject as “TCF TRIBUTE.” I need to receive by **February 1st** to be considered for the February newsletter. We look forward to reading and sharing about all of our children. Thank You!

## Forever Sad

by Ken Hekman in memory of his daughter, Carla

I will be forever sad  
And mourn the loss of love I had,  
For though I try, I cannot hide  
The anguish that I feel inside.

This look of pain will never fade.  
My furrowed brow must ever shade  
The piercing view of haunted eyes  
That saw too much to be disguised.

The corner of my mouth turns down  
As though a monumental frown  
Has now displaced a thousand smiles  
And left distortion to beguile.

So, as you gaze on sorrow's face,  
Take time to leave a warm embrace,  
Or ponder as you pass me by,  
“There, but for God's grace” (go I??)



## Email Friends

**Melissa Munsen** [newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org](mailto:newsletter@tcfsiouxcity.org)  
Twins- 32 day old daughter, premature  
5 ½ year old son, multiple medical conditions

**Trudy Klaver** [leader@tcfsiouxcity.org](mailto:leader@tcfsiouxcity.org)  
23 year old son died from leukemia



## Remembering Brandon

*My dear son,*

*December 17 you will be gone 7 years.  
How do I feel about that? Guilty because I have  
survived these past years without you, but proud  
of where I finally am today.*

*It's taken a long time to crawl up out of the  
misery of losing you and be able to remember and  
enjoy the time I had you as my son.*

*You were a joy to raise, (sometimes). I  
couldn't take you shopping because you always  
got away from me. If there was a mud puddle you  
were in it, and I can't count the number of stitches  
you had to get. You grew into a strong hard  
working man with dimples and a smile that melted  
my heart.*

*A boy was flying his kite,  
He kept adding more spools  
Of string to make it go higher.  
A woman walked by and said,  
“You have that kite flying high.”  
The boy agreed. Then the woman left  
And went about her business.  
On her way back, she looked up  
toward the kite and said,  
“I do not see your kite.”  
The boy agreed.  
“Then why don't you let go of it?”  
The boy answered  
“I can't, I can still feel it tugging.”*

*We love you Brandon  
We miss you  
And we will remember you always,  
Your family*



**In Memory of  
Brandon Clifford Steinhoff**



## "Wishes For Bereaved Parents For The Coming Year"

by Joe Rosseau, Former National TCF President

- \* ***To the Newly Bereaved***, we wish you patience - patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.
- \* ***To the Bereaved Siblings***, we wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.
- \* ***To Those Of You Who Are Single Parents***, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.
- \* ***To Those Of You Who Are Plagued With Guilt***, we wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances and that your child knew that.
- \* ***To Those Of You Who Have Suffered Multiple Losses***, those who have experienced the death of more than one child, we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life again.
- \* ***To Those Of You Who Are Deeply Depressed***, we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."
- \* ***To Those Experiencing Marital Difficulties*** after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.
- \* ***To All the Fathers***, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.
- \* ***To Those With Few or No Memories Of Your Child***, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and THAT YOUR GRIEF IS REAL.
- \* ***To Those Of You Who Have Experienced The Death of An Only Child or All Your Children***, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.
- \* ***To Those Of You Unable To Cry***, we wish you healing tears.
- \* ***To Those Of You Who Are Tired***, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.
- \* ***To All Others with Special Needs*** that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.



## The Cord

Author Unknown

We are connected, my child and I,  
by an invisible cord not seen by the eye.  
It's not like the cord that connects us at birth.  
This cord can't be seen by any on earth.  
This cord does its work right from the start,  
it binds us together attached to my heart  
I know that it's there, though no one can see  
the invisible cord from my child to me.  
The strength of this cord, it's hard to describe.  
It can't be destroyed, it can't be denied.  
It's stronger than any cord man could create.  
It withstands the test, and can hold any weight.  
Though you are gone and not here with me,  
the cord is still there, but no one can see.  
It pulls at my heart, I am bruised...I am sore,  
but this cord is my lifeline as never before.  
I am thankful that God connects us this way...  
a mother and child - death can't take away!

***Submitted by Mare Martin in memory of  
Christopher***

### Daily Message from Healing After Loss

by Martha Whitmore Hickman

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:4-6

This Psalm from the Hebrew Scriptures has comforted men and women for centuries. Perhaps it is most often used to comfort people who themselves are facing death. But we who have survived the death of loved once know that they do not walk through that valley alone. Often it is we who have walked with them - sat by their bedsides, held their hands, shared their sometimes spoken, sometimes unspoken, anxiety and fear. We have often been privileged to hear as well their expressions of faith and trust.

And then they are gone, and we are left. Now it is we who need comfort and reassurance. Perhaps these verses from the Twenty-third Psalm can serve a similar function as we repeat them over and over, until the light begins to shine through and the heart is calmed.

***I am grateful for words that heal.***

## December Meeting Minutes

by Mary Lander, Secretary

*The December meeting was a gathering of friends for a Holiday Remembrance Service for our beloved children. Music warmed our hearts with selections from Alan Pedersen, Paul Alexander, and Steven Curtis Chapman. Placing angels on a memory tree of our loved ones and lighting 5 candles for grief, courage, memory, love and hope were special gifts of the evening. We were blessed with a poem from Peggy Pohlen, "A Mother's Christmas Prayer to her Heavenly Child". A message of love was written & placed in beautiful Christmas ornaments & added to the tree. In closing, we sang Silent Night, revealed the silent auction, and enjoyed refreshments.*

*God Bless and a Gentle New Year to all.*

## By Martha W. Hickman in Healing After Loss

"I sit on the rich, moist earth, green earth, and draw my knees to my chest. All is not lost. The birds have simply moved on. They give me the courage to do the same." Terry Tempest Williams

At this time of year in some parts of our country, we begin to see the birds fly south for along season. How do they know? How will they know to come back?

The answers are out of our hands. The processes of life go on, irrespective of our knowledge or ignorance. How reassuring that we don't need to know, that the Creator who set the gloves of the solar system spinning does know. And the birds do come back.

Can we extend the same trust to our experiences of loss and renewal?  
Can we watch birds go, secure in the expectation of their return?

Can we say goodbye to our loved ones' not in the expectation that they will come flying back in the spring, but that, in ways we cannot know, they will continue to be present to us, continue to love us, as we continue to love them?



## WRITING SOMETIMES HELPS

by Charles Walton (Some Things I've Learned)

Writing sometimes helps. I have been amazed throughout the years that people who, way back in elementary school, were traumatized by some English teacher with a merciless red grading pencil. They were traumatized into thinking that they could never write anything, however will suddenly produce beautiful poems and other written sentiments in the process of remembering their children.

There is something therapeutic about putting things on paper, reading them over, changing a word here, adjusting on emphasis there, which really helps to focus the mind and get some of those inner feelings out where we can deal with them more effectively.

It works by the same principle as making a list when you've got more to do than you can hold in your mind. You know, when you think you have a hundred things to do and then you put that list down on paper, and suddenly realized that you really only had seven things to do. It's just that they swirling around in your head so fast that seven things looked like a hundred things.

So, consider writing down your feelings, if you haven't already. Don't worry about phrasing things for others to read. You don't need to start out shooting for publication. Just put some words on paper that work for you, words that feel good when you read them over to yourself. Later, if your words help others when they are shared, that's good too. But, for starters, just dump some of what's in your mind onto paper. Read it over, work it over, and bathe it in tears until it feels good.

Writing doesn't necessarily work for everybody, but maybe pulling things out of your weary mind and onto a defenseless piece of paper can work for you.

## Library Minutes

By Kathy Sieger, Librarian

The circulation of our Compassionate Friends Library has shown a lot of use. We presently have 75 books and brochures. The list may be found on the web - [www.tcfsiouxcity.org](http://www.tcfsiouxcity.org). We also have many new books that have been donated to our group and given to honor the memory of the one they have lost. These donations are very much appreciated because they are made available to help others deal with their sorrow. I have just finished a book that I would like to recommend.

"Holiday Hope----Remembering Loved Ones During Special Times of the Year" -  
Compiled by the Editors of Fairview Press

Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, religious holidays, anniversaries, birthday - such days can be difficult times for those who have lost loved ones. This book contains advice, activities, essays, stories and poems for helping us cope during these special times of the year. "Holiday Hope" offers comforting tips from therapists, counselors, chaplains and death educators - as well as moving real - life accounts of survival and hope from ordinary people on coping with grief during holidays and special days.

This book really helped me during the last couple of weeks because our son, Chad, had a birthday on December 12th. It was a challenging time but we made it. I hope you can find some books that will help you.



## Dispelling the Misconceptions

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., Fort Collins, Colorado



*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I... took the one less traveled, and that has made all the difference."*

—Robert Frost

As you journey through the wilderness of your grief, if you mourn openly and authentically, you will come to find a path that feels right for you, that is your path to healing. But beware—others will try to pull you off this path. They will try to make you believe that the path you have chosen is wrong—even mad—and that their way is better.

The reason that people try to pull you off the path to healing is that they have internalized some common misconceptions about grief and mourning. And the misconceptions, in essence, deny you your right to hurt and authentically express your grief. They often cause unrealistic expectations about the grief experience.

As you read about this important touchstone, you may discover that you yourself have believed in some of the misconceptions and that some may be embraced by people around you. Don't condemn yourself or others for believing in these misconceptions. Simply make use of any new insights you might gain to help you open your heart to your work of mourning in ways that restore the soul.

### *Misconception 1: Grief and mourning are the same thing*

Perhaps you have noticed that people tend to use the words "grieving" and "mourning" interchangeably. There is an important distinction, however. We as humans move toward integrating loss into our lives not just by grieving, but by mourning. You will move toward "reconciliation" not just by grieving, but through active and deliberate mourning.

Grief is the constellation of internal thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies. Think of grief as the container. It holds all of your thoughts, feelings and images of your experience when you are bereaved. In other words, grief is the internal meaning given to the experience of loss.

Mourning is when you take the grief you have on the inside and express it outside of yourself. Another way of defining mourning is "grief gone public" or "the outward expression of grief." Talking about the person who died, crying, expressing your thoughts and feelings through art or music and celebrating special anniversary dates that held meaning for the person who died are just a few examples of mourning.

After someone you love dies, your friends may encourage you to "keep your grief to yourself." If you were to take this message to heart, the disastrous result would be that all of your thoughts and feelings would stay neatly bottled up inside you. A catalyst for healing, however, can only be created when you develop the courage to mourn publicly, in the presence of understanding, compassionate people who will not judge you. At times, of course, you will grieve alone, but expressing your grief outside of yourself is necessary if you are to slowly and gently move forward in your grief journey.

I think it's so interesting that many native cultures actually created vessels—usually baskets, pots, or bowls—that symbolically contained their grief. They would put these vessels away for periods of time, only to bring them out on a regular basis to help them mourn.

Another way to think about what these cultures were instinctively doing was dosing themselves with their grief. I often teach that grief must be embraced little by little, in small bits with breaks in between. This dosing helps you survive what would, if absorbed in its totality all at once, probably kill you.

When you don't honor a death loss by acknowledging it, first to yourself and then to those around you, the grief will accumulate. Then, the denied losses come flowing out in all sorts of potential ways (e.g., deep depression, physical complaints, difficulty in relationships, addictive behaviors), compounding the pain of your loss.

### *Misconception 2: Grief and mourning progress in predictable, orderly stages.*

Probably you have already heard about the "stages of grief." This type of thinking about dying, grief and mourning is appealing, but inaccurate. The notion of stages helps people make sense of death, an experience that is usually not orderly or predictable. If we believe that everyone grieves by going through the same stages, then death and grief become much less mysterious and fearsome. If only it were so simple!

The concept of "stages" was popularized in 1969 with the publication of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's landmark text, *On Death and Dying*. In this important book, Dr. Kubler-Ross lists the five stages of grief that she saw terminally ill patients experience in the face of their own impending deaths: denial; anger; bargaining; depression; and acceptance. However, Kubler-Ross never intended for her stages to be interpreted as a rigid, linear sequence to be followed by all mourners. Readers, however, have done just that, and the consequences have often been disastrous.

As a grieving person, you will probably encounter others who have adopted a rigid system of beliefs about what you should experience in your grief journey. And if you have internalized this myth, you may also find yourself trying to prescribe your grief experience as well. Instead of allowing yourself to be where you are, you may try to force yourself to be in another "stage."

For example, the responses of disorganization, fear, guilt and explosive emotions may or not occur during your unique grief journey. Or regression may occur anywhere along the way and invariably overlap another part of your response. Sometimes your emotions may follow each other within a short period of time; or, at other times, two or more emotions may be present simultaneously. Remember, do not try to determine where you "should" be. Just allow yourself to be naturally where you are in the process.

Everyone mourns in different ways. Personal experience is your best teacher about where you are in your grief journey. Don't think your goal is to move through prescribed stages of grief. As you read further, you will find that a major theme is understanding that your grief is unique. That word means "only one." No one ever existed exactly like you before, and no one will ever be exactly like you again. As part of the healing process, the thoughts and feelings you will experience will be totally unique to you.

### ***Misconception 3: You should move away from grief not toward it***

Our society often encourages prematurely moving away from grief instead of toward it. The result is that too many mourners either grieve in isolation or attempt to run away from their grief through various means. During ancient times, stoic philosophers encouraged their followers not to mourn, believing that self-control was the appropriate response to sorrow. Today, well-intentioned but uninformed relatives and friends still carry on this long-held tradition. While the outward expression of grief is a requirement for healing, overcoming society's powerful message (repress!) can be difficult.

As a counselor, I am often asked, "How long should grief last?" This question directly relates to our culture's impatience with grief and the desire to move people away from the experience of mourning. Shortly after the death, for example, mourners are expected to be "back to normal." Mourners who continue to express grief outwardly are often viewed as "weak," "crazy" or "self-pitying." The subtle message is, "Shape up and get on with your life." The reality is disturbing: Far too many people view grief as something to be overcome rather than experienced.

These messages, unfortunately, encourage you to repress your thoughts and feelings about the death. By doing so, you may refuse to cry. And refusing to allow tears, suffering in silence, and "being strong" are often considered admirable behaviors. Many people have internalized society's message that mourning should be done quietly, quickly and efficiently. Don't let this happen to you.

After the death of someone loved, you also may respond to the question, "How are you?" with the benign response, "I'm fine." In essence, you are saying to the world, "I'm not mourning." Friends, family and coworkers may encourage this stance. Why? Because they don't want to talk about death. So if you demonstrate an absence of mourning behavior, it tends to be more socially acceptable.

This collaborative pretense about mourning, however, does not meet your needs in grief. When your grief is ignored or minimized, you will feel further isolated in your journey. Ultimately, you will experience the onset of the, "Am I going crazy?" syndrome. Masking or moving away from your grief creates anxiety, confusion and depression. If you receive little or no social recognition related to your pain, you will probably begin to fear that your thoughts and feelings are abnormal.

### ***Misconception 4: Tears of grief are only a sign of weakness***

One morning I read a lovely, personalized obituary in my local newspaper. The obituary described a man who had done many things in his life, had made many friends, and had touched the lives of countless people. He died in his sixties of cancer. At the end of the obituary, readers were invited to attend his funeral service and were instructed to bring memories and stories but "no tears." I nearly choked on my Cheerios.

Tears of grief are often associated with personal inadequacy and weakness. The worst thing you can do, however, is to allow this judgment to prevent you from crying. While your tears may result in a feeling of helplessness for your friends, family and caregivers, you must not let others stifle your need to mourn openly.

Sometimes, as you can see from the obituary I described, the people who care about you may, directly or indirectly, try to prevent your tears out of a desire to protect you (and them) from pain. You may hear comments like, "Tears won't bring him back," or "He wouldn't want you to cry." Yet crying is nature's way of releasing internal tension in your body, and it allows you to communicate a need to be comforted.

While data is still limited, researchers suggest that suppressing tears may actually increase your susceptibility to stress-related disorders. It makes sense. Crying is one of the excretory processes. Perhaps like sweating and exhaling, crying helps remove waste products from the body. The capacity to express tears appears to allow for genuine healing. In my experience in counseling mourners, I have even observed changes in physical expression after crying. Not only do people feel better after crying, they also seem to look better. Tension and agitation seem to flow out of their bodies.

You must be vigilant about guarding yourself against this misconception. ***Tears are not a sign of weakness. In fact, your capacity to share tears is an indication of your willingness to do the work of mourning.***

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*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.*



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