

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families

## NOVEMBER 2013

### Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the first Thursday of every month at 7:45PM (ending at 9:30PM). We meet at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, Valley Forge and Henderson RDs, King of Prussia, PA. Phone on meeting evenings only is 610-265-0733. All other times please call Rhonda at 484-919-0820.



### Valley Forge Chapter

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#### Regional Coordinators

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### Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of interest

- Nov 7 General Sharing & Death by Suicide
- Dec 5 General Sharing
- Dec 8 World Wide Candle Lighting (see page 3)  
Collection of gifts for First Step (see page 2)
- Fall 2015 Eastern PA Regional Conference

#### We encourage newsletter writings from our members.

You may also submit articles written by others, please include the author of all articles submitted. **The cut-off date for newsletter entries is the 15th of the preceding month.**

**ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT TO THE NEWSLETTER EDITORS.**

There are no dues or fees to belong to The Compassionate Friends, or to receive our newsletter. Your tax deductible donations (which we call love gifts) given in memory of your loved one enables us to defray the cost of chapter expenses, particularly the newsletter, meetings, and our outreach to the newly bereaved.

**Please include any special tribute you wish printed in the newsletter along with your gift.**

If you donate to **United Way** at your place of work, and wish your contribution to go to the Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, you may do so by entering: **The Compassionate Friends - Valley Forge Chapter United Way ID# 04-104.** on your pledge form.

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER  
SEND TO: CHAPTER LEADER  
RHONDA GOMEZ**

#### 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.

**NEW MEMBERS**

**Florence Bruno** grandson, ***Anthony Mallozzi*** (41)

**Marlene Hoffman** son, ***Jesse*** (21)

**Sharon Mallozzi** son, ***Anthony*** (41)

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**REFRESHMENTS**

Refreshments may be donated in memory of loved ones, please call **Rhonda (484) 919-0820**, or you may sign the refreshment chart located on the refreshment table.

**Caole Bailey** son, ***Matthew*** on his birthday, October 6th.

**Nina Berstein** son, ***Andrew*** on his birthday, October 12th.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Diana Clark** in loving memory of my grandson, ***Alexander*** on his birthday Oct. 16th.

**Domino Salvage, Inc.** in loving memory of ***Dennis Kearns, Jr.***

**Marcia & Harold Epstein** in loving memory of our grandson,

***Andrew Voluck*** on his birthday, October 12th.

**Joyce, Vern and Michael Kaiser** in loving memory of our son & brother, ***Brian*** for his 40th birthday.

**Joanne & Thomas Lennen, Jr.** in loving memory of our son, ***Scott*** on his 50th birthday.

Always in our thoughts, forever in our hearts. Miss and love you always, Mom & Dad.

**Dawn MacMichael** (United Way of Delaware)

**Sabia Family**, in loving memory of ***Dennis Kearns, Jr.***

**JoAnne Sands** in loving memory of my son, ***Tyler*** on his birthday & anniversary Oct. 16th.

**Tony, Laurene & Carol Quercetti** in loving memory of our daughter and sister,

***Christine*** on her anniversary Nov. 7th. You are in our hearts and dearly missed.

**Tony & Laurene Quercetti** in loving memory of Tony's brother ***Vincent Quercetti***

on his anniversary, Nov 6th. We know you are together with Tina.

**Dolores & Frank Yanni** in loving memory of our son, ***David Yanni*** on his 50th birthday.

**GIFTS FOR UNDER PRIVILEGED CHILDREN**

**FIRST STEP** is a program of Chester County for under privileged/handicapped children. For many years our Chapter has collected gifts for them. We will do so again this year, at our December 5th meeting & December 8th World Wide Candle Lighting Service (Children's Memorial Day) Program. The children are between the ages of 2 and 6. Both clothing and toys are welcome gifts. It is very rewarding to remember your child, by showing love to these children. Please wrap your gift with a tag that states suggested age and sex. You may sign it, "from your friend", or your child or sibling's name. This may be the only gift the child will receive. We appreciate your participation in this worthy cause.



**COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING**

**SPEAKER: Dr. Yvonne Kaye**

Dr. Yvonne Kaye is an international speaker with a wide range of subjects, including post traumatic stress disorder and bereavement, specializing in the death of children. She is a certified Thanatologist, veteran radio talk show host, author, and Interfaith Minister, believing in the power of the human spirit. She is a strong advocate of humor and spirituality, a Spiritual Coach and her philosophy is "Laughter is the

miracle healer". Dr. Kaye received the prestigious Matty Muir Award 2005 for work with victims of crime. She has given much support for many years to TCF. Dr. Kaye has often been a Keynote speaker at Regional, National and International TCF Conferences. She has been a long time friend of the Valley Forge Chapter.

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 17th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

The Compassionate Friends and allied organizations are joined by local bereavement groups, churches, funeral homes, hospitals, hospices, children's gardens, schools, cemeteries, and community centers. Services have ranged in size from just a few people to nearly a thousand. Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)).

**The Valley Forge Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold a candle lighting remembrance service on December 8th at 2 PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in the Fellowship Hall. (same place as our monthly sharing secessions are held). We chose 2 PM for our local service so that it would be available to everyone, including those who do not drive at night. We also urge you to light a candle in your home at 7PM. We hope you will take this opportunity to join us in remembering our children & siblings who have died, but will never be forgotten. Let us ensure that their light may always shine.**

**OUR CHILDREN & SIBLINGS LOVED, SADLY MISSED AND REMEMBERED**

Each month some of us must face those special, but difficult days of birthdays and anniversaries. This month we ask your thoughts and prayers for the parents/siblings/relatives of the following children:

**We will no longer list the birth and death years of deceased persons in our newsletter.  
We have concerns this information could be misused, and result in an adversity for the families.**

**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

Jackie & Steve Brown, son *Doug Brown* 11/28  
Catherine Chan, son *Chanlan Lee* 11/27  
Lisa Connolly, daughter *Elyce Pindjak* 11/14  
Tom & Irene Cornely, daughter *Colleen* 11/1  
Franklin & Patricia Cox, daughter *Christen Fox*, 11/2  
Antoinette & John DiDonato, son *John Jr.* 11/24  
JoAnne Forman, son *H. Scott Hartman, Jr.* 11/21  
Sharon & Francis Gailey, daughter *Danielle Marie Gailey* 11/7  
Angela Giannantonio, son *Anthony* 11/11  
Tina & Neil Goodale, son *Brien Goodale* 11/30  
Anthony & Carol Iacobucci, son *Anthony Iacobucci* 11/28  
Enid M. Irizarry, daughter *Lisette M. Molina* 11/16  
Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Brian* 11/9  
Luann Kalamon, son *Adam Michael* 11/12  
Sandi Kensicki, sister *Rose* 11/7  
John & Eileen Kostic, son *John E.* 11/29  
Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner, daughter *Anna Kreiner* 11/19  
Joanne & Thomas Lennen, son *Scott C. Lennen* 11/14  
Dan Logan, daughter *Joanie* 11/15  
Leonard & Thelma Miller, sister *Geraldine Weiner* 11/04  
Joanne Morasco, son *Robert* 11/4  
Joan Morefield, son *Robert* 11/25  
Anthony & Mary Morrell, son *Andrew Michael Morrell* 11/28  
David & Donna Morrell, son *Matthew Morrell* 11/9  
Gloria Bello, son *Joseph* 11/24  
Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy, daughter *Marian Mountjoy* 11/11  
Betsy Oakes, son *Bruce Schaeffer* 11/19  
Carol & Dennis O'Connor, son *Michael O'Connor* 11/21  
Patricia Peraino, brother *Anthony* 11/11  
Robert & Barbara Pontician, son *Rob Pontician* 11/28  
Roy Redman, daughter *Carol* 11  
Daune Ring, daughter *Chloe* 11/14  
Lois Robinson, son *Randy* 11/5  
Ilene & Sy Rockower, daughter *Amy Rockower* 11/22  
Andrea Rohloff, son *Jim* 11/14

**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS continued**

Melissa Schnitzler, brother *Richard "Jon" Masso* 11/7  
Priscilla Shober, son *Gregory Shober* 11/7  
Edie Smith, son *John Seddon "Sed" Wilson* 11/15  
Elaine & Tim Thomas, son *Seth Peterson* 11/21  
Judy Tomarelli, husband *Bert* 11/2  
Marilyn Toole, son *Ted Toole* 11/3  
Weldon & Marie Tyson, son *Ronald C. Stewart* 11/12  
Harry & Lynne Urian, son *Mike* 11/14  
Linda Weaver, son *Damon Weaver* 11/21  
Paul & Marcia Woodruff, son *Danny Woodruff* 11/23

**NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

Nancy Althouse, daughter *Donna Lee Althouse* - 11/4  
Victoria Bayle, husband *Robert D Bayle II* - 11/9  
Julie Beasley, son *Aaron* - 11/5  
Stephen & Barbara Billings, daughter *Laura Elizabeth Billings* - 11/26  
Scott & Gail Campbell, daughter *Chelsea* - 11/4  
Joyce Caperilla, daughter *Jennifer* - 11/22  
Libby Cavallaro, sister *Theresa* - 11/19  
Loretta & Ken Cericola, son *Anthony Cericola* - 11/10  
Thomas & Janet Cleary, son *Ryan* - 11/14  
Anita Conway, son *Daniel* - 11/29  
Tom & Irene Cornely, daughter *Colleen* 11/1  
Lisa & David Dibello, son *Joey* - 11/13  
Julie & Joe Fabrizio, brother *John Russel Bryant* - 11/9  
Rochena & Pat Fatale, son *Mark Longan* - 11/15  
Abigail Figueroa, son *Jose C Figueroa* - 11/11  
JoAnne Forman, son *H. Scott Hartman, Jr.* - 11/12  
Sharon & Francis Gailey, son *Francis E. Gailey*, - 11/24  
Linda & Steven Gilbert, daughter *Pamela Gilbert* - 11/6  
Laura Giordano, son *Peter* - 11/7  
Elizabeth Haney, son *Christian* - 11/28  
Othell & William Heaney, son *Roger Heaney* - 11/22  
Nora & Peter Heiss, daughter *Kathleen Heiss McCaughan* - 11/23  
daughter *Noreen Schmucker* - 11/27  
Carl & Catherine Helwig, son *Michael Helwig* - 11/24  
Danielle Hemmench Ricci, boyfriend *Ryan* - 11  
Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein, son *Benjamin Himmelstein* - 11/19  
Cynthia Hornyak, daughter *Meredith* - 11/27

Vern & Joyce Kaiser, son *Brian* - 11/2  
John & Eileen Kostic, son *John E.* - 11/18  
Karen Lapera, son *Michael* - 11/26  
Julie Lauderback, son *Donovan Lauderback* - 11/20  
Ed & Linda Lincul, son *Matthew* - 11/27  
Jennifer & Michael Magee, sister *Jacqueline Ann Rogers* - 11/7  
Alexandra Milas, daughter *Nicole Penelope Wiseley* - 11/5  
Pat Miller, son *Nathan* - 11/8  
Leonard & Thelma Miller, sister *Geraldine Weiner* - 11/13  
Audrey Morasco, husband *John J. Morasco* - 11/19  
Rose & Mike Orlando, son *Michael* - 11/21  
Sheldon & Joan Plam, son *Michael Tobiah Plam* - 11/7  
Tony & Laurene Quercetti, daughter *Christine L. Quercetti* - 11/7  
Ruth Richardson, grandson *Nicholas Richardson* - 11/14  
Gina & Brian Richardson, son *Nicholas Richardson* - 11/14  
Jacqueline Rider, son *Josua Rider* - 11/25  
Skipp & Kathy Robinson, daughter *Carrie Robinson* - 11/16/  
Mike & Diane Rogers, daughter *Jacqueline Ann Rogers* - 11/7  
Donald & Mary Rose, daughter *Marjorie Rose-Cotteta* - 11/24  
Priscilla Shober, son *Gregory Shober* - 11/3  
Cathy Siciliano, son *Anthony* - 11/24  
Barry & Sigrid Snow, son *Kevin Snow* - 11/26  
Jen & Alex Soutos, daughter *Alexi* - 11/22  
Harry & Merrily Spiess, son *F. Ryan Spiess* - 11/29  
Judy Tomarelli, husband *Bert* - 11/18  
Esperanza & Libardo Toro, daughter *Maria Eugenia Toro* - 11/3  
Steven Tucker, son *Steven II* - 11/1  
Mary Walker, daughter *Susan* - 11/19  
Dorothy Washington, daughter *Michelle Washington* - 11/26  
Linda Weaver, daughter *Krista "Binky" Weaver* - 11/4  
Bill & Patti Whitehead, daughter *Maria* - 11/1  
Pat Zimmerman, son *Bernard Zimmerman* - 11/13

We wish all of you a very meaningful Thanksgiving.  
May the love and fond memories of your loved ones  
help you on your journey of grief.

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON CELEBRATING THANKSGIVING WHILE GRIEVING**

For many of us, fall means the time of year to be in awe of all the beautiful colors of nature, and to give thanks for our many blessings. When our child or sibling dies, our eyes still see nature's beauty, but our hearts are in too much pain to feel, appreciate, or enjoy anything. The Thanksgiving holiday seems almost unacceptable to many newly bereaved. It is very difficult to give thanks, when one of our greatest blessings has been taken from us, and the gut-wrenching pain permeates our very being.

We now know how precious the gift of life is. We are more appreciative of our surviving family, and find the dreaded anticipation of not having our **whole** family together for our traditional Thanksgiving adds to our grief. This is not a time to shelter others from our pain. Being hypocritical gives false messages, and confuses others who want to help us. Friends and extended family members sometimes think they always know what is best for us. Their advice may only be best for them, by easing their pain and pretending you are capable of handling more than you can.

It is important to include immediate family members in your holiday planning. Don't try to read their minds. You are showing respect and acknowledging their pain by getting their input. They, too, have apprehensions of up coming holidays, and need to have open verbal communication.

If you plan to be with friends or extended family, it may be wise to give advance notice that you may not be able to "keep it together". Ask friends to accept your decision. If you plan to have people in, try to let others help you prepare the dinner. You may want to deviate from traditions. Only you can decide what is best for you. We kept all our traditions, but that may not be best for you. We still had our surviving children at home, and it seemed important to hold to seasonal memories.

Even though it is difficult to count blessings, we need to communicate with our feelings. Family, friends, and relationships are always at the top of our list of things to be thankful for. Next came material things, which now seem so trivial, and not even worth enumerating. "Things" don't belong on the same page anymore. Most of us have learned a new meaning about life. What a waste it would be if we endured all this pain and agony, and did not become a more caring person. We also have a new understanding of the word "Compassion", and have learned to reach out to those who need us.

We should not minimize our pain. It often prevents us from counting our blessings, and that is very normal during our early grief. The intense pain blocks out everything. We should feel no guilt for having normal human reactions. Allow yourself to grieve and cry, it is very healing.

There are no shortcuts to get past our pain. But, it will get softer, and tolerable, and we learn how to handle the holidays. I could not believe this in my fresh grief. I have healed more than I ever thought possible. All memories were so painful. One of the things I am most thankful for, is that I can now remember beautiful times with Doug, without having intense pain. I feel you will also have this blessing one day.

## THANKSGIVING

**I give thanks, Lord, for Time --**

The time I had with Tim, time to grow and learn even when I'm no longer young, and time which will one day reunite me with my child.

**Friends --**

Those that I've known that time had taken from me, those I cherish now, and those I've yet to meet.

**Answered Prayers --**

I asked for comfort and strength to face what I must face and you answered me -- maybe not the way I wanted, but you always answered me.

**For Family --**

And I find my family expanding with each day. I find relatives need not always be family and family need not always be relatives. Love makes families -- not bloodlines.

**For the Children --**

Those remaining -- mine and everyone else's. And for the ones that remain only in memory.

**For Love --**

Love that's been given me so freely from hearts that were broken like mine but still could offer me strength and hope.

**For all of you,**

**I thank God.**

*Judy Dickey*

TCF, Greenwood, IN

## SOMEDAY

To say I understand you,  
To even say I know  
Of the many aches you carry  
And all the tears that flow.  
Is to say I, too, have spent awhile  
In the land that's known as grief,  
And I can still remember  
Suffering beyond belief.  
It was a strange and foreign place,  
That desperate land of pain,  
Where no man-made compass  
Could lead me out again.  
I seemed to ever roam around  
Those valleys all alone,  
My days became all midnight's  
Where the sunshine never shone.  
All joy ran together  
And hid in some dark hole,  
My life's landscape was barren,  
Empty, dead and cold.  
My future? It was somber.  
My past? A dismal shroud.  
My present? Sorrow's cottage,  
No happiness allowed.

That ever frightening wasteland  
Destroyed hope within.  
I lost the will to live  
Or even to begin.  
And then a voice I barely knew  
Said, "Child, come take my hand.  
Stay close and I will guide you  
Thru this quagmire hellish land."  
"To a land that sings of color,  
More than midnight blue and black,  
To a people who need help  
In walking the long way back  
"Because your heart's been broken,  
Compassion floods within,  
So you can be my agent  
To balm and love and mend."  
So to say I understand,  
Have even felt and touched such pain,  
Doesn't lessen heartache  
Or make it right again.  
But someday, and I'll bet my life,  
You'll see that girl or boy  
In wholeness and completion,  
God's promised gift of joy.

*Carolyn Huffman*

**EVERYTHING IS A FIRST**

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me -- NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere -- love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say -- nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer; "I am mad, Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong"

*Lisa Ann Jones,*  
Avoca, PA

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*Tears don't erase all the hurt,  
Tears don't bring the dead to life,  
But tears do help to ease the pain.*

*Phillip W. Williams*

**WHERE DOES THE SISTER COME IN?**

My brother was killed.  
He was murdered for no reason at all.  
My pain is so sharp, so close.  
But THEY think I shouldn't  
be suffering as much...  
As much as his wife,  
who grieves for her love and her future.  
As much as his son,  
who will never know his daddy.  
As much as his parents,  
who have lost their only son,  
their first born, their child.  
I have lost -- my closest friend; the man I  
admired most in my world; the person I  
spent most of my free time with -- only for  
the company; the person I played Yahtzee  
with until 2:00 a.m., knowing I'd beat him  
soon; the boy I grew up with and followed  
around constantly; the love that only a  
brother and sister can know; the respect he  
had for me; the talks and the personal jokes.  
I have lost my brother.  
It hurts just as much.

*Bridgette Huard*

**TO MY BROTHER**

Wherever we look,  
You are there.  
You are the light  
On the water.  
You are the blossom  
On the tree.  
You are a thought,  
And you are a feeling.  
Wherever we are,  
You are.

*Martha Dubinsky,*  
Chappaqua, NY

**MAY LOVE BE WHAT YOU REMEMBER THE MOST**

I knew this day would come. I've always known it. I've dreamed about it forever and yet now, as it approaches, I can hardly bear it. There are so many things I haven't told you yet; some recipes I haven't written down; so many dreams I haven't dreamed yet.

Oh! Can we hold back the day just one more hour? Can we catch the sun and hold it still, just until I'm through memorizing you -- one more time tracing the delicate outline of your nose, your lips; counting, one more time, your fingers and toes? Can I hold back the hour for just a little while longer?

There you are, so beautiful, so sturdy, so strong, so grown. Gone now is the rounded tummy and the pudgy fingers, replaced by the grace of a grown woman. When did THAT happen? I only blinked and you were grown. There you are, standing, waiting for this last walk with your father, waiting to begin writing your own history. Waiting for the music to begin...

How can I tell you, in these last few moments between mother and child, all the things I need to say? How can I warn you of the stones ahead, strewn so randomly across your path? How do I prepare you for the joy and the sadness; for the nightmares and the dreams? What mighty last words of wisdom can I give to you, my child, on your wedding day? Do I tell you to be careful? To look both ways before crossing the street? Don't run. Don't get lost and LOOK OUT! Eat your vegetables, study hard. Sit up straight and say your prayers. Pick up your clothes. Do your homework. Don't bite anyone.

Do I tell you to walk slowly, memorizing each moment of this walk of good-bye and hello? Do I tell you to cherish the moments, because that's all we really have? Do I remind you to stop and breathe in, even in the midst of chaos?

Take time to memorize these moment, they must last you forever. You are weaving the threads of memory now, creating a tapestry that will shelter you from the harshness of life's barren realities. Don't miss anything! Claim it all... the pain, the promise, the grief, the joy, the darkness, the light.

Do you know that Toyland is closed and that you will have to hide the Easter eggs from now on? Did I give you the recipe for those stained glass cookies or teach you how to mend a torn pocket? Can we quickly review the instructions for the washing machine?

Should I caution you to take your time in traveling this new path, to savor each moment, to soak up each hour's magic, to tuck away the happy moments for those times when it blows cold and empty?

Do I speak of the joy of hoping for you, waiting for you? Of the wonder of seeing you for the first time? How can I tell you of our innocence, of our hopes, our dreams that seemed so endless? We were as you are now, invincible, courageous, unknowing, blind with love and passion, basking in the strength of youth. How do I tell you how to bear the weight of empty arms? How to mend a shattered dream? How do I tell you how to bury a child, a mother, a father, a lifetime?

Yet, I do not have to tell you of that. For, my little one, you learned alongside us. You, too, felt the silence and heard the emptiness. You, too, so little, so young, learned to ebb and flow with grief's waves. You know of the dark side and yet, miraculously, you still believe in rainbows! You stand there, waiting, with all of life's promises before you. Yet, aged with a knowledge only grief can give. Your eyes have seen so much, yet still you see with hope, with beauty. You still see with love.

And so my child, the keeper of our dreams, go now down this aisle, walking toward the stars we can only imagine. You will know both joy and heartache, loneliness and the warmth of unconditional love. You will write your own story "From This Day Forward"...

What can I tell you in these last few seconds before we part? Oh -- there is SO much yet to say! "Thank you," comes to my lips, for living through our nightmare. Thank you for waking up the next morning and asking for cereal and a hug. For pulling us forward -- into today. For never letting us stay too long in the Valley of the Shadow.

Thank you for becoming your own self, for claiming the pain in hopes of the promise. For loving us even when you didn't understand us. For letting us be by your side now, as you glide forward on your way to happily ever after.

I pray it will always be that way, yet I know that it is not possible. And so, in the last moment, I can only say:

"We are with you always...in thought, in prayer, in spirit. Know you are never alone. Our love is forever and always a part of you."

We love you. MAY LOVE BE WHAT YOU REMEMBER THE MOST.

*By Darcie Sims, Ph.D*

*Darcie is a bereaved parent, psychotherapist, and Grief Management Specialist. She teaches and conducts workshops on death and dying. She has given much of her time and talents to The Compassionate Friends. She is author of: "Why are the Casseroles Always Tuna?", "Footsteps Through the Valley" and "If I Could Just See Hope". All three of her works are also available on audio tapes.*

**DEALING WITH HEALING**

**Guilt:** A feeling of culpability for offenses. (Webster) **Grief:** A process that naturally sets us up for guilt, it's common. **Self-blame:** Perceived discrepancy between what was done and what should have been done.

**Some of the things that can lead a parent to feel guilt after the death of a child:**

1. Not getting the child to the doctor in time.
2. "If I hadn't let him/her have the car that day.
3. Grandiose sense of power. (Parents feel that they can control all things that happen to their children. **They can't.**)
4. Acts of omission or commission.
5. Unfinished business.
6. Feeling of unintentional negligence.
7. Defective genes.
8. Being angry with God.
9. Being angry with child.
10. Not wanting unborn child, negative feelings about pregnancy.
11. Lack of companionship, regrets regarding this. Parent/child relationships, communication - "If onlys". Regrets during life - lack of display of affection.
12. Misleading guidance.
13. Causative guilt (magical thinking) - something that you somehow did that led to the death - **you** feel.
14. Guilt over punishment or discipline.
15. Being unable to help child face death.
16. Joy in your own recovery.

**Things that might help you deal with guilt:**

1. Face the event honestly.
2. Eat well, exercise, stay busy.
3. It is normal to feel guilty, it's O.K. **Believe this!**
4. Concentrate on the positive aspects of your life with your child.
5. Participate in self-help groups. TCF works, I've seen it!
6. Ignore insensitive remarks. **If you just can't, then tell the person how you feel about what they have said.** (Be as nice as you can be, **you are educating them.**)
7. Seek counseling if you feel you need it. It's no sin or disgrace to need professional help, you have experienced the most devastating blow a parent can experience.
8. Find someone who will 'be there'! We need a friend now more than ever in our lives.
9. Believe in yourself. You are a good person, you did the very best you could under the circumstances.
10. Believe God loves you, that He understands. He knows how you feel. He is a bereaved parent, too He can take your anger, He will forgive you. We probably judge ourselves more harshly than He judges us.
11. Be kind to yourself, you've been punished enough already.
12. Be patient with yourself. In time you **will** heal.
13. Talk, talk, talk, about your child and his/her death. Talk until you have talked it out.
14. Look for hope and signs of it. It's there, in people, flowers, everywhere.

**Author unknown**

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