



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

## SEPTEMBER 2017

### 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 Founders Hall, Valley Forge and Henderson RDs, King of Prussia, PA. For information please call Rhonda at 484-919-0820.

#### Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of interest

- Sept 7 General Sharing
- Sept 16 Butterfly Release (see page 3)
- Oct 5 General Sharing

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**

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#### 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.

**INSIDE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER**

**NEW PEOPLE**

**Karen Donaldson & Joe Lyon**, Karen's daughter, *Willow Ann* (17 months)

**Mary Pat King** son, *Griffin* (21)

**Joy Tower** son, *Ken* (51)

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, sorry for the cause that brings you. We have all been in the depths of despair, and offer unconditional love and understanding to all of you. It sometimes takes several meetings to feel the full benefit of group sharing.

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**REFRESHMENTS**

**Mary Lou Harrison** in memory of her son, ♥ *Scott* ♥ on his birthday 8/4.

**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.

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**LOVE GIFTS**

**Frank & Rhonda Gomez** in loving memory of our son, *Frankie Gomez* on his birthday 9/30.

**Gwen Kearns** in loving memory of my son *Dennis Kearns, Jr.*

and my husband, *Dennis Kearns, Sr.*

**Jerome & Gloria Koval** in loving memory of our son, *Steve Koval* on his anniversary 9/3.

**Donald & Mary Rose** in loving memory of our daughter, *Marjorie Rose-Cotteta* on her birthday 9/30.

**Fietta Sherlock** in loving memory of my son, *Jeremy* on his anniversary 9/17.

**Fred & Irene Sutton** in loving memory of our son, *Jim* on his birthday 8/7.

This publication of the **TCF Valley Forge Chapter Newsletter** is funded by the **Steven Schneibolk Memorial Fund**.

**NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL**

**We are asking if possible , would you please receive your newsletter by email.**

We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefiting from receiving it. We hope it is a help to you while going through your grief, giving you better understanding of your feelings, and letting you know "**We need not walk alone**".

A newsletter helps to keep our TCF family informed of local and national events. We consider this an important function of our program.

We are asking if you have email, would you consider receiving your newsletter in email format. You will receive your copy earlier if you opt to receive it by email. If you chose to use the email method of receiving your newsletter, you will have the option to switch back to the old method. If you wish to receive the newsletter by email please contact: **Frank Gomez fgomez@hybridpoplars.com**



**BUTTERFLY RELEASE AND PROGRAM  
Saturday, September 16, 2017 at 3PM**

**Upper Merion Township Park (back of Police Station)  
175 West Valley Forge Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406**

Diagonally across from our monthly meeting place at Good Shepherd Church. This event will be held in back of the township building, **at the Gazebo rain or shine.**

**Cost \$5.00 per butterfly - registration now being accepted.**

**August 15th last day to place order.**

**There is no admission or parking fee.**

**Water will be provided by the chapter. Please bring folding chairs or a blanket to sit on.**

A family may order one butterfly to share, or order one butterfly for each family member. You may order as many butterflies as you wish. All butterflies must be preordered. If you are unable to attend on this date, we can release the butterfly that you have purchased in your loved one's name. The names of all loved ones will be read during the program. **Everyone welcome, (even if you do not order a butterfly) bring a friend.**

**For questions, please call TCF Valley Forge 484-919-0820**

**Any further details will be posted at the VF website. [www.tcfvalleyforge.org](http://www.tcfvalleyforge.org)**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of loved one**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Your Relationship to them**

**Total number of butterflies ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ \$5.00 each**

**Total money (no credit cards) enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please forward registration and check to: Rhonda Gomez,  
12 Brook Circle, Glenmoore, PA 19343**

**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:

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

**Jim & Michelle Angelini**, son *Danny* 9/12  
**David Bonga**, daughter *Amanda* 9/15  
**Robyn Buseman**, daughter *Maya Buseman-Williams* 9/30  
**Scott & Gail Campbell**, daughter *Chelsea* 9/1  
**Chris Carlton**, brother *Eric* 9/5  
**Barbara Cohen**, son *Mark* 9/18  
**Judy & William Cosgrove**, son *Michael Cosgrove* 9/4  
**Reno & Bonnie Crescimone**, son *Jonathan* 9/5  
**Alex Crisanti, Jr.**, son *John Crisanti* 9/6  
**Dorothy & G. Robert Daily, Sr.**, son *G. Robert Daily, Jr.* 9/19  
**Catherine Dardozzi**, grandson *Evan Schmidt* 9/29  
**Michelle G. Doll**, son *Justin* 9/1  
**Bob & Connie Ercole**, son *David* 9/26  
**Julie & Joe Fabrizio**, brother *John Russel Bryant* 9/24  
**Sharon & Francis Gailey**, son *Francis E. Gailey, III* 9/28  
**Molly Gehring**, son *Daniel* 9/12  
**Rhonda and Frank Gomez**, son *Frank Jr.* 9/30  
**Jeanne R Helmers**, sister *Mary Ann Helmers Kemme* 9/16  
**Gail & Calvert G. Hess, Jr.**, son *Calvert G. Hess, III* 9/4  
**Walt & Adele Higgins**, son/stepson *Brian* 9/22  
**Michelle Hillstrom**, daughter *Jen* 9/26  
**Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein**, son *Benjamin Himmelstein* 9/25  
**Lesley Jones**, son *Christopher* 9/14  
**Gwen Kearns**, son *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.* 9/18  
**Jacquie Kilroy**, son *Shilen Kenneth* 9/4  
**Suellen & Stephen King**, daughter *Danelle Rossi* 9/18  
**Frank & Bernadette McAllister**, son *Christopher J. McAllister* 9/4  
**Linda & Jim McGrath**, son *Paul Drew McGrath* 9/26  
**Joan Michini**, son *Adam Jonah Michini* 9/28  
**Jeffrey & Christine Miller**, daughter *Teresa Leanne Miller* 9/12  
**Betty (Elizabeth) Miller**, son *Raymond "Jim"* 9/1  
**Barbara & Jeff Norris**, son *Greg* 9/21  
**Mary O'Halloran**, brother *Thomas M. O'Halloran* 9/1  
**Winnie & James O'Halloran**, son *Thomas M. O'Halloran* 9/1  
**Elizabeth Orbann**, daughter *Linda Elizabeth Johnson* 9/15  
**Linda & Andrew Peoples, Jr.**, son *Brian A. Peoples* 9/7  
**Robert & Nancy Ricciardi**, daughter *Jessica Lee Ricciardi* 9/23

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS continued**

**Ruth Richardson**, grandson *Nicholas Richardson* 9/1  
**Gina & Brian Richardson**, son *Nicholas Richardson* 9/1  
**Donald & Mary Rose**, daughter *Marjorie Rose-Cotteta* 9/30  
**Cathy Seehuetter**, daughter *Nina Seehuetter* 9/24  
**Cathy Siciliano**, son *Anthony* 9/15  
**Helen Smith**, son *Patrick Kenneth "Kenny" Smith* 9/5  
**Walter & Irene Stolarczyk**, daughter *Barbara Stolarczyk* 9/11  
**Sharon Venezia**, son *Justin Negron* 9/9  
**Shelly Wagner**, son *Andrew Wagner* 9/29  
**Kelly & Gary Walens**, son *Kevin McGinley* 9/22  
**Terry & Susan Weikel**, daughter *Jennifer* 9/26  
**Kathryn & Pat White**, son *Steven White* 9/16

**SEPTEBER ANNIVERSARIES**

**Laura Bedrossian**, son *Teddy* - 9/24  
**Jeff & Donna Brown**, son *Kenneth Bernstiel* - 9/12  
**Ann Bruner**, sister *Katy Wade* - 9/27  
**Suzanne Carcarey**, son *Eddie* - 9/21  
**Phyllis & James Casey**, son *Jim "Jimmer" Casey* - 9/17  
**Theresa L Cole**, son *Christopher Michel* - 9/10  
**Laureen Cole**, brother *Chris* - 9/10  
**Catherine Dardozzi**, son *James Dardozzi* - 9/7  
**Michelle G. Doll**, son *Justin* - 9/4  
**Sarah Fishel**, daughter *Allyson* - 9/15  
**Suze Goldberg**, uncle *Neal* - 9/3  
**Judi Griffith**, son *Steve* - 9/4  
**Brooke Hackman**, son *Brian* - 9/1  
**Brittany Hackman**, brother *Brian* - 9/1  
**Virginia Hagen**, son *Matthew D. Hagen* - 9/28  
**Jeanne R Helmers**, daughter *Betsy Helmers* - 9/7  
**Nancy Lee & Jerry Hess**, son *Jerry R.L. Hess* - 9/28  
**John Horulko**, son *Daniel* - 9/30  
**Monica Horulko**, son *Daniel* - 9/30  
**Margaret C. Jones**, son *Christopher* - 9/15  
**Gwen Kearns**, son *Dennis J. Kearns, Jr.* - 9/28  
**Deborah Keevill**, son *Brandon* - 9/1  
**Donna Kendall**, daughter *Jennifer* - 9/24  
**Shirley & Philip C. Kennedy**, son *Philip V. Kennedy* - 9/23  
**Gloria and Jerry Koval**, son *Steven* - 9/3  
**Karen & Francis Legieko**, son *John Francis Legieko* - 9/25  
**Joanne & Thomas Lennen**, son *Scott C. Lennen* - 9/2

**SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES CONTINUED**

- Maureen Lok, daughter *Jessica* - 9/25  
 Eileen & Chris McKeown, son *Eric* - 9/18  
 Joan Michini, son *Adam Jonah Michini* \*- 9/7  
 Betsy Oakes, son *Bruce Schaeffer* - 9/2  
 Marie O'Connon, son *Curran J.* - 9/8  
 Elsie Oreski, son *Gregory T. Oreski* - 9/3  
 Teresa and Ron Perkins, daughter *Allison* - 9/22  
 Kathy & Jim Petrokubi, son *Andrew* - 9/26  
 Mary Jane Pollart, son *Mark Andrew Steffler* - 9/7  
 Rusty & Anthony Puglisi, son *Michael Puglisi* - 9/10  
 Steve & Joann Reynolds, son *Chris* - 9/15  
 Donald & Freda Rhinier, son *Glenn D. Rhinier* - 9/16  
 Bonnie Rosen, son *Troy* - 9/29  
 Marie Schmeltzer, son *Sam "Sonny" Schmeltzer* - 9/11/  
 Abigail Schwartz, brother *Jake* - 9/13  
 Charles & Tish Shaw, son *Charles "Corky" Shaw* - 9/29  
 Fietta Sherlock, son *Jeremy* - 9/17  
 Helen Smith, son *Patrick Kenneth "Kenny" Smith* - 9/17  
 Ann & Charles Swann, daughter *Katherine Anne Swann* - 9/7  
 Jean Sykora, son *Mark* - 9/27  
 Renee Teufel, son *Gregory* - 9/24  
 Barbara Tuller, son *Charles* - 9/24  
 Weldon & Marie Tyson, son *Ronald C. Stewart* - 9/21  
 Sharon Venezia, son *Justin Negron* - 9/17  
 Laretta Wagner, daughter *Traci Wagner* - 9/10  
 Kelly & Gary Walens, son *Kevin McGinley* - 9/28  
 Lucia Watters, daughter *Luanne Zambino* - 9/15  
 Mary Willinger, sister *Annette* - 9/27  
 Muriel Wilson, son *John F. Shaffer* - 9/25  
 Gisela Witte, son *Bruce G. Edlund* - 9/22

**TO MY SON**

A growling Harley in the night  
 Jolts me from my sleep  
 Racing down the blacktop  
 The sound cuts through me like a knife  
 As I am once again reminded  
 You are gone

**Marilyn Toole**, mother of *Ted Toole* (36)  
 TCF Valley Forge Chapter

**YOU ARE ALWAYS WITH ME**

You're here with me inside my heart,  
 You're here inside my mind.  
 You're here with me throughout each day,  
 Forever you'll be mine.  
 Although we aren't together, I close my eyes,  
 And always & forever, feel you in my heart.

Author Unknown

Submitted by **Mary Lou Harrison**  
 mother of *Scott* <sup>♥</sup> *Harrison*

**SHARED THOUGHTS ON GRIEF IS INVISIBLE,  
HELP OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND IT**

Often the same holidays that once brought us much joy can now compound our depression, and be an abrasive time for the newly bereaved. We find it difficult to count our blessings, when such an integral person is gone from our lives, and with them went the sunshine of our tomorrows. Even those of us who are blessed with having surviving children, find it difficult to express our thankfulness. We are so all consumed with such enormous feelings of love and loss, that we cannot think past our pain. It is important to forgive ourselves for our feelings, for they are human and normal. I believe they are acceptable with our Supreme Being, for he is probably the only one who genuinely knows the depth of our despair, how long and hard the journey of grief is, and how the pain penetrates our very soul.

Our support system ends about the same time the insulation of shock wears off. If we were an amputee, those around us could see not only do we have to adjust to making a new and different life for ourselves, but also live with the fact we are no longer whole. Our loss is not visible, so it is not fair to expect or blame our friends and family for not knowing what to do or say. They try to shield themselves from our pain, and the uncomfortableness. This leads to wanting to rush us through our grief so they can feel better faster. Many of us may have responded in the same manner prior to learning about grief first hand. We hurt ourselves when we cut off family and significant friends. It is much more helpful to express our needs in a loving manner, and educate the world on grief of bereaved parents and siblings. Most will appreciate your telling them how to help you. But, if we express our needs in an abrasive manner, we cannot expect a positive response. One of the major difficulties is we don't know how to help ourselves, and are not honest about how we feel on a daily basis.

Many times we try to run away from our feelings, for they frighten us. We should not lay an issue aside, until we have dealt with it. We need to intentionally plan time to talk about our child or sibling, our frustrated love, the shattering of our future dreams, and how this has reduced us to feeling non-productive and a sub-standard human being. It can take a lot of sharing of feelings to learn to love ourselves again. Once we love ourselves, it is much easier to love others.

It took a lot of healing before I could be glad there was a tomorrow. It took a lot of guilt before I could realize a moments rest, or a laugh, was not forgetting my child. We can learn to make the death less significant, the love for our child and the life they had be the purpose for remembering. Once we reach this plateau, memories are comforting, the gut-wrenching pain subsides, and we make life meaningful once again. We wish you the strength to bear your grief, and find a meaningful tomorrow. God Bless, **Marie Hofmockel**, TCF Valley Forge

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"In remembering our children,  
In sharing with each other,  
In supporting each other,  
We ease our pain,  
We share each step,  
We help smooth the road,

And we serve as witnesses  
to the fact that we can  
make it beyond grief,  
As we support each other."  
**Roy Peterson, TCF**

**GLORIOUS DAY!**

My dearest son *Denny* how much I miss you so  
 And wish you were here.  
 Then I think of you up in heaven,  
 And know you are happy there.  
 You are with your father now,  
 And your grandmom's & granddad's.  
 Then I remember all those special times we had.  
 There were birthday parties, graduations, weddings,  
 And Christmas too.  
 All those great occasions that we spent with you.  
 So then God called you and you went home to stay.  
 I know we'll all meet in heaven and,  
 Oh for that glorious day!

**Gwen Kearns**  
 TCF, Valley Forge, PA

**A GRIEVING MOTHER**

by *Lisa McCann*

The day my child died  
 I became somebody new  
 A totally different person  
 Someone I never knew  
 I am not who I used to be  
 I am definitely not the same  
 The only thing that hasn't changed  
 Is the spelling of my name  
 I cry more than I ever did  
 I break down quite a lot  
 My heart hurts every day  
 The pain will never stop  
 A mother gives her child life  
 And a love unlike no other  
 When that is taken all the way  
 She then becomes a grieving mother

Submitted by  
**Christy Mae Hewitt**  
**Lucia Watters** in memory of my daughter,

**I'LL NEVER BE THE SAME**

Confusion reigns within my heart,  
 Within my soul, because  
 I know I cannot ever be  
 The woman I once was.

How can I be complete and whole  
 When part of me is gone ...  
 a special part ...a precious part ...  
 The part that was my son?

Conceived in love, how gratefully  
 I bore you ... filled with pride;  
 A bit of my heart, a bit of my soul  
 Went with you when you died.

One cannot lose a child to death  
 And still remain the same,  
 Untouched by tears of emptiness,  
 Undaunted by the pain.

The cruelest nightmares come to pass  
 Life's bitterest pill to swallow;  
 In light of this, I can endure  
 All else that's yet to follow.

There's nothing that can fill the empty  
 Spaces that remain;  
 I've tried and failed so many times,  
 I cannot try again.

No trying to regain the past ...  
 That's all a bitter sham ...  
 It's time that I resign myself  
 To being who I am.

To be the woman I've become  
 (Not acting out a part) ...  
 A mother with a shattered dream  
 And a broken heart

*Peggy Kociscin*, Albuquerque, NM



**CONCERNING SIBLINGS**

It's been said that when a child's brother or sister dies, actually three people are lost: the sibling and both parents. The sibling also loses a friend, playmate, confidant, role model, and lifelong companion. For the parents, the loss of a child is often so traumatic that they have little left to give to the surviving children. Yet the surviving sibling has fears, needs, and anxieties that must be explored and addressed if the child is to avoid negative long term consequences. Listed here are normal feelings siblings might have concerning the loss along with some suggestions on what to do to encourage their expression.

**Normal Thoughts**

- \* "Did I cause the death?"
- \* "Will the rest of my family die?"
- \* "Who will take care of me now?"
- \* "I'm all alone now."
- \* "Half of me died."
- \* "I'm different from all the other kids."
- \* "I'm not a child anymore."
- \* "I feel left out."
- \* "Things will never be the same again."
- \* "No one cares about my grief, only about my parents grief."
- \* "I can't cry because it will make my parents more upset."
- \* "I feel guilty to be happy or to laugh."
- \* "Why wasn't it me?"
- \* "Will I die young too?"
- \* "I made it happen by wishing him dead!"
- \* "If I act like my sibling, maybe my parents will feel better."
- \* "Maybe my parents would love me more if I died!"

**Normal Feelings**

- \* Impatient and angry at the world.
- \* Resentful over the attention the parents are getting.
- \* Resentful over the attention they are not getting.
- \* Fearful of having to replace the sibling.
- \* Guilt for feeling relieved over the death after a long illness.
- \* Guilt over all the "bad" thoughts, words, and fights with the deceased.

**How To Help**

- \* The bereaved parents should constantly remind themselves to be sensitive to the feelings of the surviving children.
- \* The parents should strive to maintain as much of a normal routine as possible for the survivors.
- \* The parents should encourage grieving, openness and the expression of feelings in the children by grieving openly and expressively in front of them.
- \* Reassure them that they are not going to die, too.
- \* Reassure them that they are loved, wanted and okay.
- \* Reassure them that they did not cause the death in any way.
- \* Give lots of physical reassurance in the way of touching and hugs.
- \* Contact the teacher/teachers or school counselors.
- \* Ask them what and how they would like the school to be told.
- \* Prepare them for questions and remarks they can expect at school.
- \* Encourage them to resume their normal activities at their own pace.
- \* Remember the sibling's birthday and anniversary of the death.
- \* Remember the sibling at special family gatherings and functions.
- \* Don't be afraid to talk about the child that died.
- \* Talk about all the qualities of the child that died - positive and negative.
- \* Talk about the differences between the siblings - good and bad.
- \* Don't promise them a replacement sibling with talks of having another child.
- \* Remember surviving siblings cannot become, or replace, the deceased - brother or sister.

TLC Group grants anyone the right to use this information without compensation so long as the copy is not used for profit or as training materials in a profit making activity such as workshops, lectures, and seminars, and so long as this paragraph is retained in its entirety.

Adapted From: *Helping Children Cope With Loss*  
*Buz Overbeck - Joanie Overbeck*

## WHAT TO DO WITH ANGER

Anger is one of the most difficult emotions for me to express. Reared as a "proper" young lady, I was taught that anger was not becoming. Many of the women I have spoken to were similarly taught.

I found, however, I did not have the tools to deal with the deep anger that came shortly after the death of my daughter. My anger was spilling over to people who did not deserve it, or I vented excess anger by overreacting to some situations.

With the loving care and patience of several people, I developed some tools that helped me express my anger. Rather than trying to suppress my angry feelings, I learned to release them in constructive ways. Hopefully, some of these coping techniques will be helpful to others.

**Exercise** - This is a great way to release anger, plus get into shape! I joined the YMCA, swam twice a week, did "Y's Ways to Fitness" three times a week and walked three to five miles each day. At first, I was concerned about doing so much exercise because I have a very bad back, so I took it easy and worked my way up to my present routine. I always feel much better after a good workout, and I had the extra benefit of getting out of our home and back into society. After my daughter's death, my life felt so out of control; but as I became more fit, I regained some control. This renewed strength aided my recovery.

**Writing** - When the anger bubbled up in me, I would write. Many times I didn't know where to begin, so I just started by writing, "I am angry because..." Soon, my thoughts were coming faster than I could write them down. After I had expressed my anger in writing, I often discovered that the sources of my anger were different than I had imagined. It usually sifted down to just being angry about my daughter's death. The technique of writing about your feelings is especially nice because you can just throw away or burn your words and the anger with them.

**Painting** - There is nothing like taking bright oils or acrylics and stroking them over an open canvass. I had not painted in over fifteen years, but I went up into the attic and got down the easel, brushes and paints. I always felt better after a good painting session. Those times were very private for me and no one ever saw my creations, but they were helpful in expressing anger.

**Talking** - Sometimes I would call a friend and just rant and rave. My friend was a very good and non-judgmental listener. She realized that most of what I said in anger I did not mean. She never gave advice or held me to any "anger" statements, she just lovingly listened.

This technique calls for a careful choice of friends who can maintain confidentiality and not be afraid of anger. It is even more helpful if the friend has had a similar loss.

**Energy** - Convert anger into energy and use that energy to change the world. Angry with the limited support that mothers of children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) had in the communities, I converted that anger into action. I joined several nation-wide support groups and helped to bring their support into our community.

My anger was further converted into energy which I used to raise money for SMA research. I baked over seven hundred loaves of bread (a lot of anger there!) for a fund raiser. My friends saw my energies and joined to help. Together, our efforts raised over \$6,00 in under six weeks. Reaching out to others can help in healing. If something good can come from our tragedies, it can add meaning to their deaths.

**Eggs** - Yes, eggs! When I just could not resolve my anger with any of the above techniques, I would take a dozen eggs and black felt-tipped pen and go into the back yard. Writing the reason I was angry on the egg, I threw it at the back fence. At first, I thought this was a little crazy, but after throwing the first egg and watching it shatter, I felt so much better!

I always used just one word to describe my anger. It might be: Death, SMA (the disease my daughter died of), Husband, a friend's name, God. No one need know what you write on the egg! Afterwards, the birds would have a treat eating the eggs; and listening to their happy noises while having their treat, eased my anger.

These are some of the techniques I used to express my anger. It is OK to be angry, and it is important to express, not suppress anger. Suppressed anger can result in deep depression.

It is also all right to be angry with God. He is forgiving and understands our emotions. He would rather have us angry with Him than shut Him out.

**THANK YOU REV. SIMON STEPHENS AND TCF FOR:**

(Rev. Simon Stephens is the founder of The Compassionate Friends)

- TENDER**
- (1) **HOPE** - when I believed in **none anywhere**.
  - (2) **REASSURANCE** - I'm **not** "crazy"! Confusion, displacement, preoccupation, forgetfulness, timelessness, panic, my journeys into **HELL** - all part of "normal" parental grieving. OK to feel **and** express feeling, or remain silent.
  - (3) **ENERGY** - An infusion via newsletters, a note or phone call when I'm exhausted, depleted, flat, not able and not caring to function.
  - (4) **UNDERSTANDING** - my bitterness and rage, there by miraculously reducing both.
  - (5) **CONTINUING GENTLE REMINDER** - to accept that most despairing of facts - **MY CHILD DIED!**
  - (6) **WATCHFULNESS** - Strive not to get stuck in denial, anger, etc. My child would not want this for me.
  - (7) **RESPIRE** - a release of tension from desperately "holding myself together".
  - (8) **COMPASSION** - " I know your pain". TCF members truly do.
- COMFORTING**
- (9) **FORGIVENESS OF SELF** - for real and imagined commissions and omissions as I'm forced to review my life, accept my humanity.
  - (10) **LOVE** - doesn't die. My significant others do not replace my child but do expand my caring.
  - (11) **SELF ESTEEM** - Slow rebuilding of a **DESTROYED SELF**. I will be worthwhile again and able to help others someday.
  - (12) **AWARENESS - I AM BLESSED** - My child lived and we loved.
  - (13) **FAITH** - My child, and your child, is in another dimension in **PEACE** and **LOVE**.
- FRIENDSHIP**
- (14) **SHARING** - I'm not alone. In my stark despair, others reach out or will reach out. Grief is very personal, but others are in a parallel lane.
  - (15) **ENCOURAGEMENT** - I'll fall back but I'll move forward again.
  - (16) **PATIENCE** - First with myself, then with others; only **TIME, TIME, TIME** can dull this agony.
  - (17) **REFUTES** - my desire for and attempts at isolation.
  - (18) **ACCEPTANCE** - I'm a **DIFFERENT SELF FOREVER** -the death of my child was the death of so much of me.
  - (19) **HUMOR** - can again be part of me despite the underlying devastation, the never ending awareness of this most searing, irreplaceable loss. My child smiles with me.
  - (20) **THANK YOU - TCF LEADERS** for giving so much of yourselves, for all your work behind the scenes.

*Ellen Bruno / Valley Forge, PA TCF  
dedicated to her son **J.B.** who died at the age  
of 29 of a massive heart attack 9/15/84*



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS, INC.**

Valley Forge, PA Chapter  
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**For parents, siblings & families**

**We offer friendship, love and understanding**

**We talk, we listen, we share, we care**

**The Compassionate Friends Credo**

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

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