



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**Brazoria County Texas Chapter**

**May / June 2011**

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families that have experienced the death of a child.

### **Monthly Meetings**

Second Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m.

**May 10**

**June 14**



Chapelwood United Methodist Church  
300 Willow Drive  
Lake Jackson, Texas

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## Forever in Our Hearts

Our Children, Loved & Remembered

### **REMEMBRANCE DAYS**

*Personal information deleted for internet edition.*

### **BIRTHDAYS**

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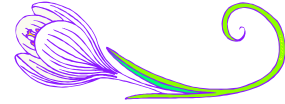
## HOPE

Hope is a seed waiting to germinate and grow  
and it will change your heart completely.  
Allow hope to come alive – just for today.  
Allow hope to thrive and guide you – just for  
one day. Allow hope to be yours – just for  
today!

- C. Hinton

At birth we cry.  
At death we understand why.

- Bulgarian Proverb



*For what is once given cannot  
be taken, except from the eye  
and the touch of the hand.*

- Polly Toland

*“There are souls which fall from heaven like flowers.”*

- Jean Paul Richter



## Love Gifts

We are grateful for the faithfulness of parents, grandparents, and friends who remember beloved children with love gifts to our chapter. Love gifts are tax-deductible and enable our chapter to offer resources, such as books, brochures, and special programs to bereaved families in our area.

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The mission of the Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and provide information to help others be supportive.

Hold on to what is good,  
even if it's a handful of earth.  
Hold on to what you believe,  
even if it's a tree that stands by itself.  
Hold on to what you must do,  
even if it's a long way from here.  
Hold on to your life,  
even if it's easier to let go.  
Hold on to my hand,  
even if someday I'll be gone away  
from you.

- Pueblo Indian Prayer



Courage doesn't always roar.  
Sometimes courage is the quiet  
voice at the end of the day, saying I  
will try again tomorrow.

- Mary Anne Radmacher

*Have courage for the great sorrows of  
life and patience for the small ones; and  
when you have laboriously  
accomplished your daily task, go to  
sleep in peace. God is awake.*

- Victor Hugo

## Monthly Birthday Table

In the month of your child's birthday, a table will be provided at our meeting where you may share photographs, mementos, a favorite snack, a bouquet of flowers – anything you'd like to celebrate the very special day of your child's birth.

## Photo Buttons

Connie Mosier has generously donated a button maker to our chapter in loving memory of her son Chris. You may bring favorite photos or other printed memorabilia to any meeting to create a button pin of your child. Buttons are **3 inches diameter**.



## *How to Handle Mother's Day*

By Clara Hinton  
[www.silentgrief.com](http://www.silentgrief.com)

Special days of any kind can be especially difficult for anyone who has lost a child. The first year following the loss of a child is often filled with days of dread and fear when anniversary dates and holidays approach. Mother's Day is a holiday that is one of the most dreaded holidays of all. A mother grieving the loss of her precious child often spends weeks in fearful waiting of the day, wondering how she will ever make it through. There is no real way of avoiding Mother's Day. The stores are filled with gifts made and designed especially for mothers and children. Advertisements for gifts on the radio and in the newspaper bombard us every day for weeks prior to Mother's Day. Card and flower shops experience their busiest season of the year on Mother's Day. Reminders of this special holiday are everywhere!

The pain of facing Mother's Day without a child can be the loneliest pain a mother will ever know. There is an empty ache that becomes increasingly more evident as the day approaches and there seems to be no way to find relief. It is wise to share these feelings with other family members and friends rather than to avoid the topic. By sharing how you feel, you can alert others to be more sensitive to your needs during this painful day of sad reminders. Sit down with your family and discuss what you would like to do for Mother's Day.

Remember that this is not a time to worry about hurting others' feelings but, rather, a time to make your wishes known. Remind yourself often that there is no right or wrong way to handle Mother's Day. Some mothers have found it helpful to go away on a mini weekend trip, totally avoiding any church service, special meals, or family gatherings that will be too painful to attend.

Other mothers choose to do something special in memory of their child such as take a walk to a quiet place, read a special poem and then release a balloon in memory of their child. The actual releasing of the balloon is known to give mothers a sense of letting go that is quite healing. Many choose to use Mother's Day as a special day to plant a flower or tree in memory of their child who has died. Seeing something growing is often a visible reminder of the ongoing love a mother has for her child. Whatever you choose to do, remember not to set expectations too high for the day. Plan to do something that is healing for you, but realize that you will still experience a wide gamut of emotions and many tears will fall. Because grief is exhausting mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually, be sure to eat nutritious food for the day, hydrate yourself with lots of fluids, and allow yourself time to rest and be replenished. Grief work is the hardest work you will ever do.

By planning ahead for Mother's Day, you have already crossed a big hurdle in your walk through child loss. Telling others that this is going to be a difficult day for you is a way of building up a support system that will help you get through the day. Remind yourself often that you will make it through Mother's Day and, when you do, you will be one step farther along in this difficult journey we call grief.

From the National Newsletter of BP/USA, A JOURNEY TOGETHER, Spring 2008  
<http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

## Mother's Day for Bereaved Moms

A day of joy and celebration  
for all mothers on this earth  
who love their children unconditionally  
from adoption or from birth  
This love lasts a lifetime  
but if your child should die  
the day is marked with sadness  
stained with tears that you will cry  
God bless you special mothers  
whose children have donned wings  
our thoughts are with you this bittersweet day  
and the melancholy that it brings  
No matter how many years will pass  
your heart will hurt this day  
like a glowing ember flaring up  
the pain returns your way.  
There is nothing that can be said  
nothing anyone can do  
no one can heal the pain  
so deep inside of you.  
It is your pain  
the greatest burden a mother can bear  
imbedded within all the joys of Motherhood  
there will always be some despair.  
Find solace the best you can in knowing a  
mother's love transcends all time and space  
and no matter where your child is  
they will feel your heart's embrace.

By Mitch Carmody, TCF Minnesota, author of  
"Letters to My Son" [www.heartlightstudios.net](http://www.heartlightstudios.net)



## A Mother's Prayer

Help me please  
Oh Lord, I pray  
To endure the trials  
Of each new day.  
Let me look them  
Squarely in the face  
And then put them  
In their rightful place.  
Give me patience  
And strength to cope  
But most of all God  
Give me hope.  
When all seems futile  
Please let me say  
"Look how far I've come  
To reach this day".  
Reach out Your hand  
And pull me through  
Cause, Lord,  
I'll never make it  
Without You!

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux  
Copyright 1978 Reprinted by  
permission of author  
In Loving Memory of My Angels...  
Michelle, Jerry & Danny

*Thank you, Marianne, for sharing  
these poems with our chapter.*

"Think of your child, then, not as dead, but as living; not as a flower that has withered, but as one that is transplanted and, touched by a divine hand, is blooming in richer colors and sweeter shades than those on earth."

- Richard Hooker

## FATHER'S DAY

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong - must not cry.

But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And inside, we must ask ourselves about our failures, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness; sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Oftentimes they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learning about the strength and stoicism of "big boy". A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard.

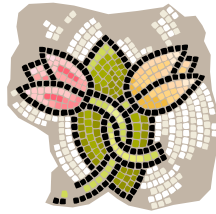
Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, "I'm sorry we haven't talked. Let's do it now." But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores, and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day. Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally. But they do hurt.

- Gerry Hunt, TCF White River Junction, Vermont

*Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our life sublime;  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

# Grief Journeys of Men and Women



Grief is very personal and cannot be compared easily with other people's experiences. Therefore, it is important not to judge others' reactions based on our own experience. Each person's loss and grief is unique. It is important to remember that when exploring the influence of gender on grief there is no "best" way to grieve. Neither way of grieving is right or wrong, just different. Each person must chart an individual course through grief. Try to help and support one another honestly and with as much communication as possible.

Many factors contribute to the differing grief journeys of men and women. Historically, men have been seen as protector and provider. Their role has been to watch out for others' safety and to take care of others' physical needs. This role of protector and provider can override their own emotional experience of loss. By contrast, women's role has historically been to nurture and care. In times of stress, they respond by connecting with others around them, so that seeking out others as a source of comfort is a natural way of handling grief.

The way we think, act and feel is also shaped by the way we were raised and our subsequent life experiences. Boys are typically discouraged from crying, while girls are shown affection and attention when upset. Boys' toys tend to focus on action and movement; girls' toys center on role play and activities that encourage talking, nurturing and caring.

These social expectations of behavior continue well into adulthood. A man exhibiting a public display of emotion is often not socially accepted. And women who prefer to grieve alone and find it difficult to publicly express their feelings are often labeled as "cold" or "hard." Those around her may believe she is in denial because she is not showing the emotions that are expected of her. Approaching our own and others' experience of loss with acceptance may help bridge some of these barriers. Here are a few suggestions for supporting each other's experience of grief:

## **UNDERSTANDING HER GRIEF:**

- Expect lots of tears; they are natural and normal and do not need to be stopped.
- Respect the need to share and communicate about the loss as a source of comfort. This is not a search for answers but a means to make sense of the new world faced.
- Accept and respect the need for social support. This is not a betrayal of intimate relationships or a rejection of support already offered; it is an ongoing need for social connections.
- Accept and respect a focus and investment in the past; this is a way to hold onto connections of the loss.

## **UNDERSTANDING HIS GRIEF:**

- Do not expect tears, but understand that there is an intensity of emotion, whether outwardly expressed or not.
- Do not expect words to describe feelings. Instead, physical activity may be a way to express and release emotion.
- Expect a need to intellectualize and problem-solve as a means of making sense of the loss and the new world faced.
- Accept and respect the need for privacy and solitude. This is not a rejection of your support but rather the need for a sense of independence and control over the loss.
- Accept and respect a focus and investment of energy in the future rather than the past. This is a way of integrating the loss into life.

*From TCF - Sugar Land, TX handout*



**The Compassionate Friends**  
**Brazoria County Texas Chapter**  
P.O. Box 1395 Brazoria, TX 77422

*Support & Friendship for Bereaved Families*



May / June 2011



*34th National Conference*  
*Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN*  
*July 15-17, 2011*



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

The Compassionate Friends' 34th National Conference will be held July 15-17 in Minnesota. Early registration discounts will be available through June 10.

Registration is open both online and by mail. Information and a complete Registration Brochure are available at [Compassionate Friends 2011 National Conference](#).