



SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER 2013



Seattle-King County Chapter P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166 206-241-1139



We Made It Through the Summer

Pam Duke, TCF, Dallas, TX

**We made it through the summer;
Another season has passed.
When I look back now,
I did not think I had the courage
To reach this point in time.**

**The worst may not yet be over,
But things seem better than yesterday.
I've realized it's all right to wish for you
Daily... and nightly...**

It's my prerogative as your parent.

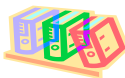
**I do not have to look forward to the
seasons coming soon, but I will...
because I know it's what
you would want me to do.**

**Just please know, I still love you
As though you were in our home.
That love will never die.**



SCHOOL STARTS

Mary Cleckley, TCF, Stone Mountain, GA



Strange things happen to you when your child dies. You'll fail if you try to make sense of most of it. Both my children had finished high school when my son died, yet I found the beginning of school – especially the first year – to be difficult. The bus stops in front of my home for the neighborhood children. Suddenly, as they all gathered to wait for the bus, I found myself reliving those simpler, happier days of old; longing for them actually. It was a peaceful time.

Now if I, whose children are grown and gone, had a problem with school starting, those of you who do have school age children must know that your pain is normal. It's another reminder that life goes on – with or without our children – and acknowledging that hurts!!! I came to the conclusion that it is all right to pine for happier times and it was nothing to get upset about. As with many remnants of grief, I recognize it, allow it and then get on with my life. Maybe you're like me, you'll always be a little nostalgic about school starting. That would probably have been true even if my son had lived. Maybe you, too????



COPING WITH OCTOBER

Tracy Stackhouse, BP/USA, Central Arkansas

The coming of autumn with the beautiful colors of the leaves and their falling will bring different emotions to different families. Maybe your family had a tradition of driving through particularly scenic areas. Maybe the child you lost was the one who raked the leaves. Perhaps all of this will simply be a reminder that winter and a barren landscape are coming.

Halloween is a favorite holiday for most children, but it can be hard for bereaved parents. This formerly innocent holiday, the yards decorated as graveyards with markers and ghosts and skeletons, the stores of unhappy spirits that must walk the earth, all have a completely different impact on us now.

Many of us have opened the door to give out treats and been faced with a costume so similar to one our child wore for a Halloween past that either we really want to pull aside the mask to see the face behind or we want to dream that this was one last visit from our precious child.

Some parents have surviving children who still want to join in the fun – and, oh, how hard it is to “trick or treat” when you feel the victim of the ultimate “trick”.

Stop and think – What can you do differently? For autumn and its beauties and chores, what routines can you change? Hire someone or ask a friend who has been offering to help and asking for specific tasks. Maybe you could do it together. For Halloween, take surviving children to a carnival (many schools and churches sponsor these). Or, if a carnival was an every year event, go to the zoo or go door-to-door this year. If you don't have surviving children wanting to celebrate, maybe you can leave your house dark and go to a movie and skip the holiday. In any event, planning ahead will help you get through a difficult time.



CAN IT BE FALL AGAIN ALREADY?

Kathy McCormick, TCF, Lower Bucks County, PA



Here we go again, that downward spiral into Fall that every bereaved parent dreads. For as sure as we turn the calendar page to October, here comes Halloween, followed by Thanksgiving and then (oh, NO!) Christmas and Hanukkah. As I contemplate my fourth fall without my child, I can tell that the pain will be less intense and come less often. This does not mean I love her less. It just means that no one can grieve as intensely as in the beginning for very long. Your body couldn't sustain it.

Take care of yourselves. Learn to be selfish if you need to be. Tell those closest to you what you need in order to get through this time. You will survive, whether you like it or not. We're here if you need us, your compassionate friends.



The Compassionate Friends

Seattle-King County Chapter



The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a *non-profit mutual assistance, self-help* organization offering *friendship, understanding, and hope* to bereaved parents and families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings provide an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, but to support bereaved parents, grandparents and adult siblings in the positive resolution of the grief feelings and issues that revolve around the death of their loved one and support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words that will help you in your grief work. Try to attend three times before deciding if TCF is right for you.

TO OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE FURTHER DOWN THE "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF 'veterans' to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

INFORMATION REGARDING OUR MEETINGS

PLEASE come to a meeting. We are here to discuss whatever is on your mind. This is YOUR group and we are here for each other. You do not have to talk at meetings. We welcome your participation in our group, but it is not a requirement. Coming to listen to the other members is okay, too. Our meetings are open to parents, grandparents, adult siblings, or other adult family members.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

This group belongs to you and cannot survive without assistance. Areas of help needed are refreshments, setting up before a meeting, being a phone friend for those who may be having a particularly difficult day, help with the newsletter, send thank-you notes, become a facilitator, volunteer to help with Chapter activities or serve on the steering committee.

Part of getting better, is being there to assist others, too, through this journey.

If you'd like to help, please contact us.

Chapter Co-Leaders: Mike McLeod: 206-369-7366 and Marge Tomlinson: tcfmarge@aol.com



KEEPING IN TOUCH



Seattle-King County Chapter **Phone: 206-241-1139** (TCF Line)

Seattle-King County Chapter **Mailing Address: P. O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166-0896**

Seattle-King County Chapter **Website: www.tcfseattle.org**

Seattle-King County Chapter **Facebook: The Compassionate Friends, Seattle King County Chapter**

Phone Support: Having a rough moment? Need someone to talk to? Call Robyn at 360-259-8006 ♥

Western Washington Regional Coordinator: Jacqueline Russell 360-457-7395

TCF National Office Phone: 877-969-0010

TCF National Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3696 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

TCF National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org (website has link to Facebook)

♥ **TCF Online Support** - Please visit the National website to get the session schedule for the following groups:

♥ Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

♥ No Surviving Children

♥ Bereaved Less than Two Years

♥ Pregnancy / Infant Loss

♥ Survivors of Suicide

♥ Bereaved More than Two Years

TCF National Magazine 'We Need Not Walk Alone' Available Free Online!

To sign up for a free electronic version of TCF's **We Need Not Walk Alone** magazine, go to TCF's national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and click on "Sign up for National Publications" at the top of the Home (or any inside) page. Fill out the information and when each issue of the magazine is published, the National Office will send you a special link so you can be among the first to read its great content. It can be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use. When you sign up for *We Need Not Walk Alone*, you also have the opportunity to sign up to receive the monthly national e-newsletter which provides information about what is currently happening within the organization.



Our Chapter's Sharing Group Location:

FEDERAL WAY

~2nd Wednesday evening of each month~

Our 2013 Meetings:

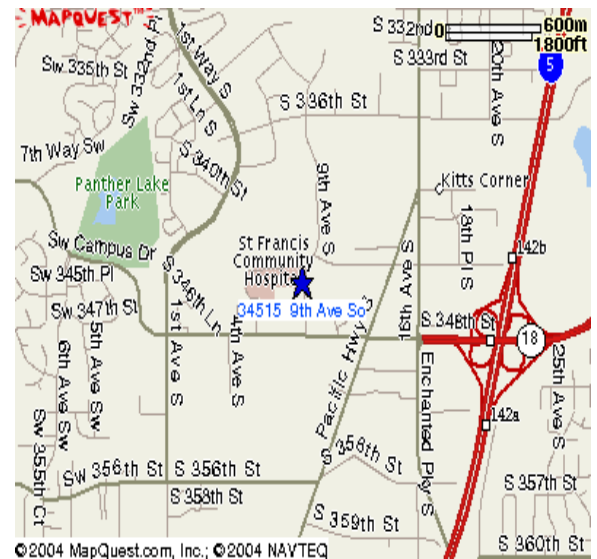
**September 11, October 9,
November 13, December 11**

6:30pm – 8:30pm

St. Francis Hospital
34515 9th Ave. So.

Federal Way, WA 98003

Ask at the information desk in the main lobby for directions to the meeting room.



Books on Grief Available

We have quite a large selection of grief books at our monthly meetings. We invite you to look over the books from our library. We hope you can find something that may help you and your family. If you have a book you would like to donate and share with other bereaved parents, please bring it with you to the meeting.

Birthday Table



In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers – anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth and for us to become better acquainted.

You Were On My Mind...

Michael Tyler, TCF Lighthouse Chapter, Lewes, DE

When I woke up this morning ...
you were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm,
like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement
that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me.
Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or
that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and
inner feelings of pain and sadness pass

We will have joy and great happiness because
we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning
it will be OK that you were on my mind...
You *are* on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be,
because it will be forever.

Back to School: Suggestions for Helping Our Children

Pat Pruss, TCF, Southern Maryland

Children experience some of the same challenges their bereaved parents know all too well – difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, and poor attention span. Grieving siblings may find these make learning more difficult. Here are suggestions to consider to make the school year less daunting for your grieving child.

- Talk with his/her teachers. Teachers may not otherwise understand changes in our child's grades or behavior. Sensitive teachers will often have suggestions – ensuring homework assignments are written down, including due dates, for example.
- Take your child's lead, especially with older children, on whether to communicate details of their sibling's death with teachers and other parents or peers.
- Provide structure at home to help your child stay organized. Create a spot in the house for drop-off of lunch boxes and book bags when coming home, and where items can be placed each evening so they aren't forgotten in the morning rush out the door.
- Consider posting a family calendar with school dates, as well as doctor appointments, parent-teacher conferences, etc. We all need extra reminders.
- Ensure there is after-school time for your child to relax and be free of the demands of keeping on a good face. Grief requires a lot of energy, and everyone needs time to take a break, including your child.

The Simple Do's and Don'ts of Compassion

Marian Lambeth, TCF, Tallahassee, FL



I received an email one day that caused me to think about how challenged we are when it comes to communicating condolences to a grieving parent, grandparent or sibling. It doesn't take much to figure out that many of us, having lost a child or not, are often challenged by how to really comfort or assist a grieving person. I have lost my son yet I often feel I can't find the right thing to say or do to comfort another grieving parent.

The email read that people shouldn't say, 'How are you?' but rather ask about a specific area: 'Is your health better?' or 'Are you getting out more?' something particular rather than an open-ended question. I couldn't agree more. I'm of the philosophy, if they asked, they must want to know. The advice continued: don't just offer empty words of encouragement, find out what is really going on in another person's life, and keep track of how he or she is progressing through the struggle. That is some serious advice!

After our son died and during his struggle to live, our friends and family showered us with love and support. There are things though that I will never forget, our friends and Wyatt's friends driving to Shands Hospital to sit with us, paying for hotel rooms, bringing us food, truly supporting us daily. I will never forget, after Wyatt died, a friend came over and said not one word, he walked in the door and held me in a tight hug and wept with me, he hurt for me, for us, for Wyatt. The mother of one of Wyatt's friends, whom I'd never met, stopped by a few weeks after Wyatt's death just to give me a hug, to say she was thinking about us and that she was sorry for all that was lost. Dear friends of ours came to our home for six weeks every night and sat in the dark, loneliness of our childless home. They held us up when we could not stand alone. Another friend calls every week still, to chat, catch up, check on me to tell me she cares.

The things I remember are not so complicated, but what I know is they were actions more than words. I often feel very alone in this journey, but I will never forget their actions held me up when all I wanted was close the door to life. There are some things about the death of a child that even compassion will not heal. The absence will always remain, but there are things that may bring a healing balm, if only briefly.

With this I began to think, what do our Compassionate Friends think, what did they experience that was supportive and helpful, what was painful or even hurtful. What can we share with the people of our community on how to better communicate, better share their heartfelt sympathies, and better help us as we traverse this life without our child or our children.

So we asked, and here are some suggestions and the rationale:

Don't tell me to call you if I need something, because I will not. Make specific offers to help: I am going to the store, what can I pick up for you? Can I take the kids to the park on Saturday afternoon? I will be bringing dinner on Monday for the family. Does everyone like spaghetti? I'd like to come over and mow the lawn for you. It's a nice day outside, let's go for a walk.

Don't think time is a miracle. Stay in touch with the grieving parents just to let them know you haven't forgotten their loss and you have them in your prayers. No one wants to feel their tragedy can be so easily "put to the side" and

forgotten when it is (was) such a dominating presence in their own lives.

Don't let the child's death be the only topic of discussion. It's ok and helpful to be uplifting and to include other topics that are happy, and still make it known that you care.

Don't talk "around the hurt" as if it never happened. This loss is a part of the parent's life, it's ok to discuss it in a plain and thoughtful way.

Don't discuss the details of a child's death in front of the parent as if they are not there. The parent is fully aware of their child's death, include them in the conversation, parents can often offer insight.

Don't use clichés that minimize the nature of a child's death. Avoid comments such as, "he shot himself in the head with that dumb answer" when in the presence of a parent who lost a child to a gunshot wound.

Don't say, "You can try again for another baby" or "You're young, why don't you have another baby?" Parents are grieving the death of a unique, wonderful and loved child, it is that child they miss and long for. Grieve the loss of their child with them and leave the future to them.

Don't say "at least" about anything, ever. At least they didn't suffer ~ maybe, but my child is dead. At least you have your memories ~ yes, but I want my child. At least you have other children ~ yes, but I want the child I lost. It was just her time to go or "It was meant to be" ~ While some believe there is a purpose to every action or maybe a universal plan, others do not.

What seemed to be most compelling of the responses received was the DO list. It is short, but concise:

Do act normal, don't try so hard not to talk about the child as if he or she had never existed. In describing a visit from a person who brought food and visited quite a while, one Compassionate Friend recalled they never once mentioned her child. She expressed how this made her feel by saying her daughter, "was and is a real person, just because she changed addresses doesn't mean we can't talk about her."

Do share your favorite memory. Parents often enjoy hearing people share their favorite memory. When those memories are memorialized in writing and the person shares what they loved or appreciated about the child, things that made them laugh or smile, it can be read again later and cherished as memories shared by others.

Do show you care and spend time in fellowship. Grieving parents become very lonely or feel alone in their grieving and the company of others can be comforting or soothing, so don't just bring dinner, but share dinner, or visit and eat leftovers or encourage them to go outside for a walk.

Do offer to clean their house, mow their lawn, take the kids somewhere, babysit or bring dinner. Many of the things people do on autopilot are unimportant or incomprehensible to a parent who is trying to plan a funeral or is in the depths of grieving.

Do Give Hugs, Real hugs. They are powerful. One mom said about "real hugs" that people gave her, "it was like I could draw strength from them and I would feel a moment or two of peacefulness or connection that they might not understand my pain, but they understood I needed them." ♥



ARE MEN REALLY FROM MARS?

Sheryl Charvat, Eastside TCF, Kirkland, WA



I have a vivid and long-lasting memory, which is not to say I always remember why I walked into a room, but the Big Stuff I remember with precise and sometimes excruciating detail. When parents lose a child, generally there is one male and one female parent left behind; in my own experience, our grief progressed very differently. For my husband of 32+ years and I, our grief was expressed so differently I actually did wonder if he was from another planet, or if we had lost the same son! I knew he was sad; I knew how much he loved and adored our son, but virtually all of his actions and interactions with others were definitely not anything like mine. Naturally this difference can cause conflict, and for us it did.

Early on in our grieving my husband functioned better on every level than I did. He was ready to go back to work much earlier, ready for socializing, for life, for everything. I know part of his ability to cope was him wanting to be strong for my sake and I appreciated him tremendously for this. Since we had lost our only child, when we came home from saying good-bye at the hospital I literally couldn't get out of the car, it didn't feel like 'home' anymore and I didn't think it ever would. Some people that lose their child actually move to a new house because of this feeling about their home. I remember that night my sweet husband came around to my side of the car and pulled me out, and somehow he got me tucked into bed. I was exhausted from caring for our son for months before he died from brain cancer and I think I slept for over 24 hours straight. I don't know for sure though, that time was a bit of a blur – except for the biting and unrelenting sadness. I was grateful that there was someone to take care of me.

But after a few weeks went by and I didn't die of some mysterious illness (or by my own hand...but that is another story), I had to get out of bed and face what was coming, which was my life. My new reality was entirely overwhelming and I was unable to perform even the smallest tasks. My husband hovered over me for exactly two weeks and then went back to work. He didn't think of our dead son when he was at work, and within a month he hosted his monthly poker party because it was "his turn". I felt glad he wanted to host, but was flabbergasted when I could hear the rowdy and boisterous peals of man-laughter coming from our basement. There I was upstairs curled tightly in a ball, no longer wanting to cry because it simply gave me headaches and made me feel physically ill. I was no longer capable of such laughter and was convinced I never would be again. I could hear my husband joining in the fun as well, which I didn't understand. I was baffled, even a bit jealous and resentful that he could have *fun* when our son had died so recently.

I asked him a few weeks later how he did that and he answered honestly, "It's a defense mechanism." That was pretty reasonable and clear to me., but as we continued our 'new life' together it seemed like he was progressing better and so much faster than I was. In retrospect 7+ years later, I think he had a head start on me. He accepted our son's death at the time of his diagnosis of brain cancer, which was close to three years earlier. I absolutely did not. Neither of us was right or wrong in how we confronted his disease, nor his death. I do not believe there is a right or wrong way to grieve. And I do not like calling this grief thing "transitioning"; that word is much too pretty to label this kind of grief.

It wasn't until much later when I watched a documentary about how men's and women's brains process emotion. Once I saw this, I understood at last why we had been grieving so differently. We were not just at a different pace from one-another, but every single facet of our grief simply was not the same as each other. The biological fact is, our brains work very differently, which I learned watching the documentary. I'm sorry I do not know the name of the show, and of course all of the results were generalized about 'most' men and women, not 100 percent. Also, I am not by any means any kind of expert, except in losing my own child – I'm not a doctor, or psychologist, but I am an avid reader and I have studied more about the brain than I ever thought I would since our son had brain cancer.

In the experiment shown, men and women of varying ages were given contrast MRIs. They were shown emotion-evoking scenes while images of their brain function were taken. The men's MRIs showed their emotions traveled along a very specific pathway where they were lodged and fully contained in a precise area of the brain. The conclusion was, men are able to compartmentalize emotions, putting them away for appropriate times to express and experience, and therefore able to concentrate on tasks at hand. I suppose, anthropologically, this helped them hunt and protect without clouded minds, or so was my theory at least. Women were another story entirely.

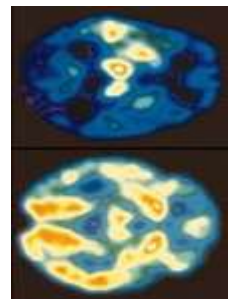
The women were shown the same emotion-evoking scenes and their brains lit up like blinking neon signs in Las Vegas. Watching this, I finally understood that while I may have wanted to control my emotions better, I wasn't able to accomplish this physically. I wanted to put my own grief into a storage bin in my brain like my husband had, and concentrate enough to work and enjoy other activities, but doing so was absolutely not possible for me. Or, at the very least, doing so required herculean effort I did not possess at that time. On a couple of occasions this difference caused conflict between my husband and I, one being a pretty good argument.

Once I understood the way our brains were handling emotions, we were able to have a discussion about our different approaches to getting through the unthinkable event of our son's death. My dear husband asked what I needed from him, as most men are solvers and want to solve all problems, for everyone.

I answered simply, "I want you to be nice to me."

He replied, "I can do that."

I agreed to allow him space to do any and all social activities I was not able to participate in, to grieve in his own way, and not to try to hold him to some kind of expectation of grief I thought he 'should' be having. He agreed to zero expectations from me, including socializing and even the smallest tasks of living until I was ready. I believe all couples who have lost a child need to allow each other to grieve in the way right for them, separately but together. I wish the rest of society would make this same allowance, but that too, is another discussion.





Grandma Wanna-Be

JoAnne Rademacher, TCF, Minot, North Dakota

Last fall, my son Darick and his wife, Jenny, announced that we would be grandparents this summer. At 47, I no longer had a desire to raise another child of my own and was already a self-confessed "grandma wanna-be." Their news made my heart dance. My joy however, was turned to anger when the pregnancy ended in miscarriage.

As a grandma wanna-be with that first grandchild on the way, I was picturing myself baby-sitting and cooing my way to old age with this child and those to follow cuddled around me. I bought patterns for sewing baby clothes and books filled with baby projects. Would the new parents want the crib my children had slept in? If not, where would I set it up for those visits to Grandma's house? My thoughts were overflowing with being a grandma.

After a one o'clock a.m. call from Darick, I knew that Jenny was probably miscarrying. My knees hit the floor and I sobbed my prayers. "Please, God, don't let this child die, too!" I implored. When it was confirmed that this child would never be born, all of my happy imaginings were replaced by anger. The raging thoughts of a protective mother quickly replaced those of the grandma-to-be.

In September of 1994 our only daughter, 13-year-old Melissa, died in a car accident. Our sons, Darick and Wade, were also in the car. At 15 and 11, respectively, they were devastated emotionally though they had only minor physical injuries. We have all worked hard at living without Melissa, but some days it seems that there is a dark cloud hanging over us determined to block the sunshine from our lives.

Darick blamed himself for the accident. He put himself in a world of self-induced guilt, a place from which we sometimes wondered if he would ever return. Retrieving his soul has been a long and arduous journey, Jenny beside him every step of the way. I knew immediately upon hearing the baby was lost that he would somehow go back there, which he did. In his mind, Melissa's and his baby's deaths were connected by his feelings of helplessness in the face of tragedy. The fact that this could happen, placing him back in that hell, made my blood boil. Those beautiful children had been through enough! Why couldn't Darick and Jenny have just this one blessing free of heartache?

Many people reminded me of all the medical reasons for miscarriage, making it sound like some grand act of mercy. They said that the baby was very likely genetically damaged and, if brought to term and live birth, it may have been afflicted with any number of maladies. I know they were trying to make me feel better, and it is likely they were right, but their words only made me angrier. There didn't have to be anything wrong with this baby! My mind screamed. Babies are carried to term and born every day. Why did this one have to be damaged? Darick and Jenny needed this joy. And we were already grieving the loss of the grandchildren Melissa would never deliver. Wasn't that enough?

I did not feel guilty or sorry for my anger. I have learned through grieving for Melissa that anger is a natural part of grief. Until now, I simply felt that it was unfinished business. I needed time to come to a place of peace in the face of another child lost to us.

When Melissa died, as deep as my grief was, I rejoiced in the lives of my sons. The fact that they survived that accident was declared a miracle, and it spun a web of protection around my broken heart. Then, in the summer of 2001, Wade was in another accident. The fact that he walked away from it only sore and bruised was declared another miracle. I remember the gratitude and grace I felt when I wrapped my arms around him and sobbed for the words I could not speak.

That memory began to emerge as my initial anger over being denied our first grandchild lost some of its steam. My gratitude for lives saved began to spin around in my head, seeking domination over the anger for lives lost. As much as I wanted to let go of the anger and embrace gratitude, I just couldn't find the resolution I sought.

Until now. It is summer again, 2002. Wade was in a third accident, this time escaping the rolled vehicle only seconds before it burst into flame within sight of where Melissa had died. When I arrived at the scene I walked past the incinerated mass of metal. Again, I could not speak, but only held Wade until I could peel my arms from his healthy, whole self. I was calm and in control until later that night when I was alone.

The mash of emotions in my head and heart were too great to hold inside. I was in my car so I opened the roof, cranked up the music, and sobbed for twenty miles. The mother of Melissa grieved yet again. The grandmother of an unborn child also grieved as the mother of Darick fought for rights to her anger. The mother of Wade wailed prayers of thanks.

From this tangle of emotions, one truth emerged: As long as I choose to embrace the miracles around me, my heart will dance. Whether in the slow dance of grief or skipping to the beat as I cuddle and coo with grandbabies yet to come, hope and joy will emerge in the rhythms of the dance.

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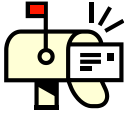
We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty. ~ Maya Angelou



♥ TCF asks for donations in memory of our children who have died. ♥

Our chapter is funded solely through donations; therefore we sincerely appreciate your support. Your generosity helps us send newsletters, purchase brochures and cover the many expenses to help grieving families in our community. All donations are tax deductible. You and your child's name will be noted in the next newsletter. Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation by 50-100%.

♥ Please help us help others by making a LOVE GIFT today. ♥



Love Gift Form



Love gifts are **tax-deductible donations** made to the Seattle-King County Chapter of TCF in memory of your beloved child, sibling, grandchild or loved one.

Send checks and forms to: Seattle-King County TCF
Love Gifts
P.O. Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166-0896

Your name: _____
Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone Number (if we have any questions): _____
Amount Enclosed: _____
In memory of (name of child): _____
Date of Birth: _____
Date of Death: _____
Special Message: _____

Send checks and forms to: Seattle-King County TCF
Love Gifts
P.O. Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166-0896



With Love, We Remember Them...



Autumn
Lily de Lauder, TCF Van Nuys, CA
In the fall
When amber leaves are shed,
Softly—silently
Like tears that wait to flow,
I watch and grieve.
My heart beats sadly in the fall;
'Tis then I miss you most of all.

**In Memory of ...
STEVEN**
March 1968 – March 1994
"Forever in our heart and memory.
Love, Mom, David and Brian."
From Sheila Kauer

**In Memory of ...
KEVIN**
May 1983 – December 2008
From Ken and Jenny Stoner

**In Memory of ...
JOEY**
July 1987 – February 2013
"We love and miss you."
From Mark & Colleen Wojociechowski

**In Memory of ...
DEANNA
MELINDA**
January 1959 – October 1981
July 1960 – August 1994
"You will never be forgotten.
Love, Mom"
From Marvia Custer Stratis

**In Memory of ...
AMBER**
From Kevin Williams and family

**In Memory of ...
JAMIE**
October 1994 – December 2010
From Steve and Sarah Lundin

After October
Sascha Wagner
and if there be a perfect month,
for me, it is October...
with days and nights like laughing fauns,
with mornings bright and sober.
when wind will dance in sudden glee
to do the autumn-sweeping
or cloud and fog and wistful rain
can move a heart to weeping.
and in October You were born,
four days before November...
and four years later you were gone,
my little son, my only son,
I love you.
and remember. . .



The Compassionate Friends
Seattle-King County Chapter
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MY GRIEF RIGHTS

Alan D. Wolfelt

- 1. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE MY OWN UNIQUE FEELINGS ABOUT THE DEATH.** - I may feel mad, sad, lonely, scared or relieved. I may be numb or sometimes nothing at all.
- 2. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT MY GRIEF WHENEVER I FEEL LIKE TALKING.** - I will find someone who will care and listen. If I don't want to talk, that's ok, too.
- 3. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO SHOW MY FEELINGS OF GRIEF IN MY OWN WAY.** - I may get mad and scream, or I might cry. I might want time alone.
- 4. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO NEED OTHER PEOPLE TO HELP ME WITH MY GRIEF, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT ME.** - Please pay attention to me, to what I am saying and feeling. Love me no matter what.
- 5. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO GET UPSET ABOUT NORMAL, EVERY DAY PROBLEMS.** - I might feel grumpy and have trouble getting along with others.
- 6. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE "GRIEFBURSTS."** - These are sudden, unexpected feelings of sadness that just hit me even long after the death; these feelings can be very strong.
- 7. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO USE MY BELIEFS ABOUT MY GOD TO HELP ME DEAL WITH MY FEELINGS OF GRIEF.** - Praying might make me feel better, closer to the person who died.
- 8. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHY THE PERSON I LOVE DIED.** - It's okay if I don't find the answer.
- 9. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO THINK AND TALK ABOUT MY MEMORIES OF THE PERSON WHO DIED.** - Memories might be happy or they might be sad. Either way, these will keep alive my love for the person who died.
- 10. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MOVE FORWARD AND FEEL MY GRIEF AND OVER TIME TO HEAL.** - I'll go on to live a happy life, but the life and breath of the person who died will always be a part of me.

We all have the right to grieve individually and differently. We are all unique individuals with our own personalities and identities. So why wouldn't our grief be unique to the person that we are? There is no right or wrong way to grieve. It is a process and a lifelong journey when it involves losing our children. Be kind to yourself and true to yourself as you travel the path of grief.