



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**  
Rim Country Chapter

Rim Country Chapter  
P.O. Box 3482  
Payson, AZ 85547  
(928) 978-1492

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September 2009

*RIM COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER*

VOL. 3 NO. 9

### **MISSION**

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 to provide information to help others be supportive.

### **Payson, Arizona**

#### **Meeting Information**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month -  
6:30 PM—8:00 PM  
Ponderosa Baptist Church  
1800 N. Beeline Hwy  
(Just South of Home Depot  
& the Roundabout)

#### **Chapter Website**

www.RimCountryTCF.org  
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info@rimcountrytcf.org

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#### **Regional Coordinator:**

Gene Caligari 480-361-1877

### **CHAPTER NEWS**

The 32nd National Conference in Portland is now history--but with a lot of great memories. There were over 1,000 present at the conference and in the Walk to Remember.

If you would like to see more pictures from the conference and the Walk to Remember, please visit the Compassionate Friends Facebook Page and take a look at the albums posted.

Next year's TCF National Conference will be held on July 2nd-4th in Arlington, VA. We hope you will consider attending!

We are planning our Rim Country Chapter Picnic in October. Stay tuned for details.

Our meeting this month is on

**Tuesday, September 8th**



**Grief is**

**the pulling of memories into focus.**

Darcie Sims—  
Footsteps Through The Valley

## Common symptoms of grief

While loss affects people in different ways, many people experience the following symptoms when they're grieving. Just remember that almost anything that you experience in the early stages of grief is normal – including feeling like you're going crazy, feeling like you're in a bad dream, or questioning your religious beliefs.

**Shock and disbelief** – Right after a loss, it can be hard to accept what happened. You may feel numb, have trouble believing that the loss really happened, or even deny the truth. If someone you love has died, you may keep expecting them to show up, even though you know they're gone.

**Sadness** – Profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.

**Guilt** – You may regret or feel guilty about things you did or didn't say or do. You may also feel guilty about certain feelings (e.g. feeling relieved when the person died after a long, difficult illness). After a death, you may even feel guilty for not doing something to prevent the death, even if there was nothing more you could have done.

**Anger** – Even if the loss was nobody's fault, you may feel angry and resentful. If you lost a loved one, you may be angry at yourself, God, the doctors, or even the person who died for abandoning you. You may feel the need to blame someone for the injustice that was done to you.

**Fear** – A significant loss can trigger a host of worries and fears. You may feel anxious, helpless, or insecure. You may even have panic attacks. The death of a loved one can trigger fears about your own mortality, of facing life without that person, or the responsibilities you now face alone.

**Physical symptoms** – We often think of grief as a strictly emotional process, but grief often involves physical problems, including fatigue, nausea, lowered immunity, weight loss or weight gain, aches and pains, and insomnia.

### *I've Often Thought*

*I've often thought, the pain of losing one's child  
the most precious, the most beloved,  
was the worst tragedy one could ever endure.  
Now, I know for sure, it is.*

*I've often thought of some who consider life so bad,  
their problems so major when, in fact, their child is  
still alive.*

*Now, I see how wrong their thought.*

*I've often thought if the worst calamity of life  
occurred--that of the death of a child - one surely  
could not survive.*

*Now, I see parents can and do survive. But I've  
often thought I would rejoice at the funeral of a  
parent whose child predeceased them when their  
own time is through.*

*Now, I know for sure I will. For now I believe  
the joyous reunion that awaits in the better place will  
far outweigh anything else this world could offer.*

*Now I know how true.*

*---by Rachel Ingles  
In Loving Memory of  
Blake E Ingles  
12/27/1990 - 11/28/2007*

## Myths and Facts About Grief

**MYTH: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it.**

**Fact:** Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. For real healing it is necessary to face your grief and actively deal with it.

**MYTH: It's important to be "be strong" in the face of loss.**

**Fact:** Feeling sad, frightened, or lonely is a normal reaction to loss. Crying doesn't mean you are weak. You don't need to "protect" your family or friends by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings can help them and you.

**MYTH: If you don't cry, it means you aren't sorry about the loss.**

**Fact:** Crying is a normal response to sadness, but it's not the only one. Those who don't cry may feel the pain just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing it.

**MYTH: Grief should last about a year.**

**Fact:** There is no right or wrong time frame for grieving. How long it takes can differ from person to person.

*Source: [Center for Grief and Healing](#)*

### Are there stages of grief?

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced what became known as the "five stages of grief." These stages of grief were based on her studies of the feelings of patients facing terminal illness, but many people have generalized them to other types of negative life changes and losses, such as the death of a loved one or a break-up.

#### The five stages of grief:

**Denial:** "This can't be happening to me."

**Anger:** "*Why* is this happening? Who is to blame?"

**Bargaining:** "Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_."

**Depression:** "I'm too sad to do anything."

**Acceptance:** "I'm at peace with what happened."

If you are experiencing any of these emotions following a loss, it may help to know that your reaction is natural and that you'll heal in time. However, not everyone who is grieving goes through all of these stages – and that's okay. Contrary to popular belief, **you do not have to go through each stage in order to heal.** In fact, some people resolve their grief without going through *any* of these stages. And if you do go through these stages of grief, you probably won't experience them in a neat, sequential order, so don't worry about what you "should" be feeling or which stage you're supposed to be in.

Kübler-Ross herself never intended for these stages to be a rigid framework that applies to everyone who mourns. In her last book before her death in 2004, she said of the five stages of grief, "They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but **there is not a typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss.** Our grieving is as individual as our lives."

#### Grief is a roller coaster, not a series of stages

It is best not to think of grief as a series of stages. Rather, we might think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss. Even years after a loss, especially at special events such as a family wedding or the birth of a child, we may still experience a strong sense of grief.

## **Coping with grief and loss tip: Get support**

The single most important factor in healing from loss is having the support of other people. Even if you aren't comfortable talking about your feelings under normal circumstances, it's important to express them when you're grieving. Sharing your loss makes the burden of grief easier to carry. Wherever the support comes from, accept it and **do not grieve alone**. Connecting to others will help you heal.

### **Finding support after a loss**

**Turn to friends and family members** – Now is the time to lean on the people who care about you, even if you take pride in being strong and self-sufficient. Draw loved ones close, rather than avoiding them, and accept the assistance that's offered. Oftentimes, people want to help but don't know how, so tell them what you need – whether it's a shoulder to cry on or help with funeral arrangements.

**Draw comfort from your faith** – If you follow a religious tradition, embrace the comfort its mourning rituals can provide. Spiritual activities that are meaningful to you – such as praying, meditating, or going to church – can offer solace. If you're questioning your faith in the wake of the loss, talk to a clergy member or others in your religious community.

**Join a support group** – Grief can feel very lonely, even when you have loved ones around. Sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced similar losses can help. To find a bereavement support group in your area, contact local hospitals, hospices, funeral homes, and counseling centers.

**Talk to a therapist or grief counselor** – If your grief feels like too much to bear, call a mental health professional with experience in grief counseling. An experienced therapist can help you work through intense emotions and overcome obstacles to your grieving.



### Travis

**I close my eyes**

**I see your face**

**I hear your voice**

**I enjoy your smile**

**I wake up**

Submitted by your mom:  
Patricia J. Edwards Glendale, AZ



## The Gift of Someone Who Listens

Those of who have traveled a while,  
along this path called grief, need to  
stop and remember that mile—the  
first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers.  
who told us of ways to deal,  
it wasn't the one who talked and  
talked that helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat,  
and held our hands in theirs.  
the ones who let us talk and talk, and  
hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember that  
more than the words we speak. It's  
the gift of someone who listens that  
most of us desperately seek.

written by.....Nancy Myerholts

## **END OF SUMMER**

On the beach, cool breezes blow across the water, but the sun's rays feel warm upon my face. The ocean laps gently at the shore. One golden haired lad I spy with shovel and pail filling the moat around his lovingly constructed sand castle.

I remember another golden haired boy of years long past, in his bright red swimsuit, busy at his task and oblivious to all around him. Carefully, patiently, he fills and empties his pail again and again, molding and shaping the sand until he has it just right, until his perfect castle is completed. He runs to me, eyes aglow with pride, his dimpled smile stretched from ear to ear. He dances around me.

"Mommy, come see; it's finished; it's perfect." We stand and admire it together, one bucket of sand turned down, a tiny trench encircling it. To us it is a perfect castle.

But then it happens. A wave, much bigger than the rest, washes away his labor of love. His green eyes fill, his lip quivers momentarily, and then he squares his shoulders and announces, "Oh well, I'll begin again tomorrow."

And now, recalling that other sunny summer day, my own eyes brimming with tears, my own lip quivers until! remember that I, too, can square my shoulders and begin again tomorrow.

Betty Stevens  
TCF-Baltimore

### **It was only a dream**

I came home one night and headed to our bedroom. Things did not seem quite right. It was not as I had left it! I had no fear of anything and just walked in the room. I remember making the bed that morning, and yet it was undone now. It appeared as if someone was sleeping on the far side, (not my side) which I took special note of. As I looked at the foot of the bed, I saw what I thought were feet moving!

I still remember my curiousness and still unafraid of what was going on. So I walked around the side of the bed and looked towards the pillow. I saw my son (Dalton William) peeking out of the covers. I think back now and remember how he always liked to have his blanket over his head in the early morning, even at the breakfast table. I was so excited to see him – I couldn't hold my excitement. I reached out to him and him out to me. I was so happy; I asked him where he had been and how he was.

He told me he was ok and just kept smiling HIS smile. Then we hugged. Oh how special that was, to hug him again and feel his WARMTH, not cold. I can close my eyes still and remember that feeling. This dream has given me so much comfort lately. I only wish it were real!

When I woke up that morning, I couldn't wait to tell my husband, Bill. I just wanted him to know what I had experienced that night. I only wish we could all have these wonderful dreams that help to brighten the day as mine did.

Marilyn Knauss  
Payson, Arizona  
In memory of Dalton William  
My son

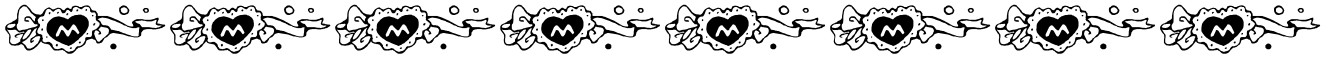
### **To the Newly Bereaved**

As the years pass, we see new members come into our chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know- because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends – that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that first step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began your journey.

The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed "light at the end of the tunnel." We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.

Karen Schendel  
TCF- Houston, TX



**LOVE GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

A love gift is to **"REMEMBER THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN."** Since TCF has no membership dues, we rely upon tax-deductible donations for funds to pay the chapters expenses: printing and mailing of our newsletter, books for our lending libraries, our phone message line and information packets sent to newly bereaved families and professionals in the community. Books donated for our libraries and volunteer work for your chapter also qualify as "love gifts." Make your checks payable to The Compassionate Friends and mail to: PO Box 3482 Payson Arizona 85547. **Love gifts received prior to the 23rd of each month will appear in the following month's newsletter.**

**MEMORY PAGE**

If you wish to have your child remembered on our Memory Page, please complete the form below and Mail to PO Box 3482, Payson Arizona 85547

PARENT(S) NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ M or F (circle)

DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF DEATH \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a love gift in memory of my child to help defray costs of the Rim Country Chapter:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other **THANKS!!!!**

The anniversary of your child's birth and death are often extremely painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents who are observing such days. In this newsletter is the memory page update. If you haven't sent one in yet, please take a moment to fill it out and send it in. We would like to share your memory days with you.

**SEPTEMBER MEMORY PAGE**

**Our children ... always loved, missed, remembered ...**

**HAL STEVEN PEACHER ... Son of Carol Cavanaugh  
MONICA ROSE CASEY... Daughter of Tim & Annette Casey  
JIMMY (The Kid) HARRIS... Son of LQ Harris III**



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***We Need not Walk Alone.....  
We are The Compassionate Friends.***

E-mail us at [info@rimcountrytcf.org](mailto:info@rimcountrytcf.org) or call us at 928-978-1492 if you would like to submit articles, be added to or removed from this newsletter mail list or to correct information.

Newsletter printing & mailing donated by Able Steel Fabricators in memory of Cory James Clark

## **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**We need not walk alone...  
We are The Compassionate  
Friends.**

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children 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 and creeds. 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 we feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source for strength; some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in a deep depression; 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 our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and 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 grieve as well. as to grow.