



The Compassionate Friends, Queensland Inc

Grief Support for Bereaved Parents, Grandparents & Siblings

Newsletter (Extracts) Apr - May 2004

Mothers' Day: A Father's View

Al Bots, TCF Cleveland, OH, USA

In our house as in all bereaved parents' households, Mothers' Day comes with mixed emotions.

Setting aside a day to honour motherhood is only right. Mothers do tend to be taken for granted. I remember the childhood joy of getting my mother a special gift, even if it was only a crayon drawing. As an adult, buying gifts for your mother and the mother of your children still brings back those happy childhood memories.

But this changed after Erin died. Looking through all the cards at the gift shop only reminds me of this irony. Cute, humorous, sweetly sentimental cards await the bereaved father shopping for his grieving wife. I can't find a card that will comfort my wife on this day, and even worse, I'm afraid that I'll buy a card that will bring back only painful memories of the child she lost.

I realise this day, perhaps because it is widely celebrated, can even years later take my wife back to the grieving she thought she was "through with".

I can never do enough on Mothers' Day; maybe I try to do too much. I know, of course, that all the cards, gifts, flowers and messy breakfasts in the world can't make up for the loss of our child. But I still do these things; she deserves them.

The unfairness of our daughter's death will always be there. I know I can't change that with a card. But I can remind her she is a great mother, a loving mother, and most importantly, she is still mother of the child we lost.

If she's happy on Mothers' Day, I will try to keep her there. If she's depressed, I'll try to cheer her up as best I can, even though I feel I'm not very good at it. This, then, is the wish I have for her and all bereaved mothers on this day; Please be as happy (and proud) as every other mother today; no-one can dispute the fact that you brought your child into the world. Although that child is no longer with you, the love you had can never be taken away from you. If you should be depressed, may there be family and friends there to remind you of this and comfort you.

HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY.

Taken with thanks from TCF Vic, April-May 2002

My Mothers' Day Gift

Author Unknown

I didn't think I'd gotten one,
for I'd searched the whole day through,
for that special little gift,
Which could only come from you.

While sitting on the plane,
flying high with the setting sun,
I realised my little gift from you,
had been with me all day long.

So many different "reds" I'd seen,
In every shade and hue.
Spectacular colours, that I know,
Could only come from you.

The beautiful colours of the Autumn leaves,
On a cool, crisp Autumn day.
The burgundy, scarlet and crimson,
It just took my breath away.

And the sunset from above the clouds,
Was a wondrous sight to see,
The different, colours, the different "reds",
I knew it was meant for me.

I even saw a colour,
The same red as your hair.
Oh, the memories which that brought back,
Of the moments that we shared.

I know you must be happy,
for that gift was heaven sent.
I think I'm more at peace now,
'Cause I've had proof of where you went.

My mum is a survivor,
Or so I've heard it said.
But I hear her crying
When all the others are in bed.
I watch her lay awake at night
And go to hold her hand.
She doesn't know I'm with her
to help her understand.

But like the sands upon the beach
that never wash away....
I watch over my surviving mum,
who thinks of me each day.
She wears a smile for others....
A smile of disguise
But through heaven's open door
I see tears flowing from her eyes.

My mum tries to cope with my death
to keep my memory alive.
But anyone who knows her
knows it's her way to survive.
As I watch over my surviving mum
Through heaven's open door.....
I try to tell her
Angels protect me forevermore.

I know that doesn't help her....
Or ease the burden she bears.
So if you get a chance, talk to her....
And show her that you care.
For no matter what she says....
No matter what she feels
My surviving mum has a broken heart
That time won't ever heal.

Taken from TCF Vic N/L Feb-Mar 2003

A Reason. A Season. A Lifetime.

People come into your life for a reason, a season, a lifetime.
When you figure out which it is, you know exactly what to do.
When someone is in your life for a reason,
It is usually to meet a need expressed outwardly or inwardly.
They have come to assist you through a difficulty;
To provide you with guidance and support;
To aid you physically, emotionally or spiritually.
They seem like a Godsend, and they are.
They are there for the reason you need them to be.
Then, without any wrongdoing on your part or at an inconvenient time,
This person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end.
Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away.
Sometimes they act up or out and force you to take a stand.
What we must realise is that our need has been met.
Our desire fulfilled. Their work is done.
The prayer you sent up has been answered and it is now time to move on.
When people come into your life for a season,
It is because your turn has come to share, grow or learn.
They may bring you an experience of peace, or make you laugh.
They may teach you something you have never done.
They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy.
Believe it! It is real! But, only for a season.
Lifetime relationships teach you lifetime lessons.
Those things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation.
Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person/people (any way).
Put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life.
It is said that love is blind but friendship is clairvoyant.
Thank you for being a part of my life.

Received from Margaret Harmer, TCF Vic, Co-founder of TCF in Australia

The Anger of Bereaved Parents

From an article by Denis Pye, TCF UK Newsletter 1992

The anger of bereaved parents can often be seen as a reaction to feelings of helplessness and loss of control over events. Our beloved child has died, whether suddenly through accident, suicide or murder, or as a result of illness and disease — and we have not been able to prevent it. Our desperate frustration emerges in anger, either against particular others, against the whole world, or against God. Someone must be responsible, someone must be to blame for our loss, our suffering and our pain. After all, the inevitable process of ageing cannot be an explanation for such an early death. So, our anger is directed against those seen to be responsible, or sometimes simply against those nearest to us. In this way, our anger may be turned on doctors and hospital staff, on police, or on the driver of the vehicle involved in our child's death.

Writers on bereavement have often mentioned the anger, conscious or submerged, which can exist against the loved one who has died. This can present an enormous problem to bereaved parents. How could we be angry with the daughter or unreasonable or unjustified though they may be. But we could, after all, be angry with our children when they were alive, and still love them, couldn't we? Better, surely, that the anger is brought to the surface rather than repressed and added to our burden of unnecessary guilt?

The very worst outcome is that anger, unacknowledged and unexpressed after our child's death, is turned inwards against ourselves, gnawing away at our sense of self-worth and leading to the despair of deep depression. We have all felt the beginnings of this descent in a temptation to blame ourselves. Like all the welter of emotions which hit us in the terrible weeks and months following our loss, it needs to be faced and talked out with those who will listen with real empathy and understanding.

Off Peak: Giving of Ourselves

TCF Rochester, NY

Emerson said it well: "Rings and jewels are not gifts. The only true gift is a portion of thyself." We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the mind: ideas, principles, plans, projects, poetry. We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the spirit: prayer, peace, faith. We give of ourselves when we give the gift of time and when we give words of encouragement, inspiration, guidance. We in The Compassionate Friends give of ourselves every time we gather in our meeting room in our circle ... we share our innermost thoughts, we surely give each other encouragement and strength when we listen, when we cry those hot salty tears. We laugh together ... something most of us thought we had forgotten to do at the time we entered that room for our first encounter. We give each other hope to carry on our shattered lives ... hope that there really is a future for each of us out there somewhere. Together we go forward month after month, continually giving of ourselves to each other. Remarkable, isn't it? No doubt about it. This is what The Compassionate Friends is all about.

Taken from Focus, TCF NSW, Dec-Jan '01

Grief

Verna Smith, TCF, Ft Worth, TX, 'We Need Not Walk Alone'

GRIEF is sometimes silent - like snowflakes falling on a dark winter's night—but never peaceful or serene or pretty like the pure white snow. When grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to ice, like the snowflakes, before they reach our eyes.

GRIEF is sometimes raging - like a monstrous thunderstorm - with all its fury and bolts of lightning striking our hearts at every angle. When grief is raging, the tears come in torrents like the rain and flood our soul.

GRIEF: Whether is be silent or raging . . . HURTS.

Grief is like a Bucket of Water

You can start out with a full bucket, but when you find it too heavy to carry, you can bump it a little, so that some spills, and carry it a little farther. As you continue, you bump it again so that it becomes a little lighter to carry for the longer distance. You must do the same with grief. To keep the burden from becoming intolerable, you must 'bump the bucket' a little and let a little of your grief spill out from time to time, so that you can continue.

Taken from Northshore, Boston, April 1998

The above writings have been extracted from the official members newsletter originally compiled and printed by The Compassionate Friends, Queensland Inc. Our printed newsletter contains additional stories, verses, news, events, memorial notices & contacts. It is also sent to members much earlier than available on our website. Please contact our office if you wish to become a member to receive the full newsletter. We welcome contributions of articles, stories, verses etc to the newsletter. All contributions should be emailed to the Newsletter Editor.

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