



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

ALBANY/HAROLD MITCHELL CHAPTER & SARATOGA SPRINGS CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

WWW.TCFALBANY.ORG

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020

ALBANY/HAROLD MITCHELL CHAPTER

3rd Tuesday every month at 7:30 pm
ZOOM MEETING

Please contact Kathleen Kelleher at
Kathleen.Kelleher17@gmail.com or
518-439-1114 for instructions on how
to join the Zoom meetings.

OTHER LOCAL CHAPTERS

Due to the Coronavirus, many chapters have ceased in-person meeting, but may be holding virtual meetings. Please call your local chapter to inquire about meetings.

SARATOGA SPRINGS CHAPTER

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SCHENECTADY CHAPTER

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COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS GREENE COUNTY CHAPTER

georgeknoll64@yahoo.com

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A Double Whammy of Heartbreak

You've been gone almost as long as you were here;
we continue to shed many a tear.
The pain of losing you remains (though not as raw),
for you were the most precious of them all.
Your parents continue to mourn, with no end in sight;
what we've all experienced is just **not** right!
As a grandparent your death was a double blow;
your mother, our daughter, was hurting so.
We couldn't help her, plus losing you, inflicted double pain;
that much we knew.
The years have passed; we don't miss you less, but your mom,
our daughter, has passed the test!
She misses you more than even I know, but she's carried on;
grief seldom does show.
You'd be so proud of her and the path she has taken; she works hard,
laughs often, and is seldom shaken.
But I know in *my* heart, hers is broken still;
what keeps her going is her strong will.
She thinks of you every day, but those thoughts don't get in her
way of living life to its fullest and being her best;
she honors you by doing nothing less!
While living thus, she makes her own parents proud,
and she's like a ray of light within a crowd!
We wish we could do more to mend her heart,
which your death so badly tore apart.
To us, a double whammy was your death;
we'll cherish both you and your mom 'til our dying breaths.

*Grandma Jan
Janice G. Newport
TCF, Albany, NY*

This newsletter is made possible by donations through love gifts. Love gifts are a way that we can honor our children throughout the year, on their birthday, anniversary of their death or during the holidays. Please consider giving a love gift in memory of your children. Love gifts can be made in any dollar amount and mailed to Debbie Bouchey, 26 Berkshire Drive, East Greenbush, NY 12061.

Call for Submissions

Anyone wishing to submit an original poem or story for publication in our newsletter can do so by sending the writing to Debbie Bouchey at alyssabob@yahoo.com

Please remember that editing may occur and not all submissions are guaranteed to be printed.



LOVE GIFT

Living on in our hearts.

This section is reserved for Love Gifts given in honor of your child. You can post a special message to your child right here and even include a picture. Your Love Gift donations help to fund the activities of our Albany Chapter. Please consider giving a donation today. (See the left side page for instructions). Thank you.

ASK Dr. Heidi

Question: I am worried about my teenage son. He seems ok but he is not crying or releasing and is short with me when I grieve too much. He tells me I am giving up. I have some okay days when I keep busy and some really hard days. He doesn't understand how hard it is to lose a child, and I need him to be more supportive and share his grief with me also. I am at a loss about what to do.

Answer: It is not unusual for bereaved siblings to hide grief from their parents. Siblings often think they are being "good kids" by not grieving in front of their parents. They worry about their parents, and want to spare them further pain by not showing them how they truly feel. It is extremely painful to see their parents so upset. In many ways, it is a double loss for siblings, as they have lost not only their brother or sister, but in many cases the emotional availability of their parents. Siblings also need to be reassured that their parents don't want to give up on life, and that life is worth living. Many siblings I have worked with tell me that when their parents say they no longer feel life is worth living, it really hurts them because they feel like they are "not enough." I would recommend that you listen to my sibling loss webinar on The Compassionate Friends website. It addresses the unique aspects of sibling loss. I would also encourage you to reach out to other bereaved parents with teenagers for help and support. My heart goes out to you. All the best to you on your journey.

Dr. Heid Horsley, PsyD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a psychologist. She is the executive director of the Open to Hope Foundation, www.opentohope.com.

This Article was lovingly lifted from The National Magazine of the Compassionate Friends, Autumn 2013.

**LOVE GIFT DEADLINE FOR
THE NEXT NEWSLETTER:
October 20, 2020**

HOW NATURE HEALS BROKEN SOULS

By Love Wide Open

When you get to the point that starts to bring you down, nature can heal. Nature is a powerful tool that humans have become increasingly disconnected from over time. It has the power to heal a broken soul, to mend a broken heart, and probably most notable, has the power to bring you back to yourself.

When is the last time you took a long walk through the woods; the last time you admired the size of the trees, or traveled to the ocean to watch the waves crash upon the shore? Nature and all of its beauty is far more powerful than the individual person. Sometimes when we sit back and allow the power of nature to overcome us, we become aware of how it makes us feel. At that time, we realize our connectivity. We realize that what we are experiencing in nature is what makes us who we are. We can connect with nature; we can let our problems go into the universe of chaos. We can let go of control, power, stress, and negative feelings. We can let nature decide what to do with those things. Nature has the power to heal brokenness Here are four ways nature can become a healer for you.

1. Nature relieves anxiety and daily stress.

The way that nature can reduce anxiety and alleviate stress is actually quite physical. Studies show that when you are out in nature, getting fresh air, taking a stroll, it not only pulls you away from the daily activities that cause stress, but also decreases blood pressure and increases the heart beating to a healthy level. This all decreases stress and anxiety.

2. Connecting with nature takes us out of our daily routine.

It allows us to leave the cell phone behind for a moment along with the stress of work, home, or

whatever else may be the cause of overstimulation in your life. Nature puts life into perspective. When we are out in the vastness of nature, we can realize how large the universe really is. We are small compared to nature as is the length of our lives. It helps to put the trivialities of daily life into perspective. It helps us remember what's really important in life.

3. Nature helps us to gain mental awareness.

Being present in the beauty of the earth stimulates the brain. According to the website Psychological Healthcare of Australia, "spending time in nature actually has a physiological effect on the body, reducing blood pressure and the hormone cortisol, which is linked to stress. Being in beautiful outdoor surroundings acts as refreshment for the brain, which can also improve focus, creativity, and problem-solving abilities."



4. Nature is the best teacher of how to let go of negative emotions or things in the past that are tearing you down.

Just watch the way the water flows. Watch the waves break on shore, how they wash away the sand and push it back renewed. When you are in nature and you feel amazing and have complete mental clarity, it is the best time to let go of our troubles, to watch them be taken away by the waves along with the sand.

In the end, nature gives us a place in the universe. Remember, your place although it may seem small, is very special and it's yours. When you are broken, try going outside. Nature will know what to do for you.

Lovingly lifted from Bereaved Parents of the USA,

Spring 2020 newsletter

Smile

By Chelsey McHale

By definition, grief is deep sorrow especially caused by someone's death. To me, grief is a lifelong suffering that can slowly deplete but never goes away, a pain that is so strong, yet so beautiful as our love for them shines through the broken parts.

It's every emotion you can think of, felt for the rest of your days on this earth. It hurts and hurts. But remember it could be worse. You ask how this is when you feel such remorse. Well, you could look back and not feel grateful about one memory. They say when you grieve so much for someone, it means you had true happiness in your life. So grief is bittersweet. And nothing I say will make it all okay.

I know it's easier to wallow in the pain than keep it small and contained, but we talk with others who share our pain, and are in that club we never wanted to join. I know sometimes it's easier to destroy ourselves than it is to heal ourselves. But when you start to feel the guilt, and when your world starts to tilt, as hard as it may be, think of a good memory. It may make you cry, it may make you ask why, it may make that heaviness on your chest feel heavier. But remember to breathe and remember to smile. Your loved one watches you from above, feeling your pain and your unconditional love. But we owe it to them to not always be so sad. We owe it to them to look back on positive memories we had. But every so often, subside the tears and once in a while, look up, and give them a **smile**.

Chelsey lives in Phoenix, Arizona and works at a mortgage company. She went back to school to get her mater's degree in counseling with an emphasis in bereavement. She created and facilitates a sibling loss group in Arizona for the Eastside Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

This Article was lovingly lifted from The National Magazine of the Compassionate Friends, Autumn 2013.

Understanding My Bananas

By Louise Lagerman

A bereaved mom posted a picture of her beautiful little girl, happily munching on a banana. Under the picture the mother had written that eight months after losing her little girl, she and her surviving children were finally able to go to the food store to buy bananas again. She went on to describe how traumatic the experience was; that people who have not lost a child can't understand how challenging it can be to face your fears, to walk into a store to buy bananas — the whole time thinking of your child's love of bananas and that now she wasn't here to enjoy them. She said it ripped to the core of her soul, reducing her to tears. Her simple words had a profound effect on me. I knew just how she felt. Having been crushed with the anguish and heartache of losing our children, little ordinary day-to-day things like bananas can bring us to our knees. I wrote back to the mother and said I was so sorry she lost her beautiful little girl; that I understand how she felt because I have my bananas too.



The bereaved mother wrote back and thanked me for truly understanding when so many people do not. As grieving parents we all have our triggers — or bananas, if you will. Every time I see a Mini Cooper car or a young, pretty woman with long light brown hair wearing a certain name brand of clothing, or hear a certain song on the radio, my heart breaks, and these are just a few examples. All bereaved parents have them. Realizing and understanding these triggers will help you prepare for those times when you're faced with your own bananas. The dictionary's definition of a trigger is an event that precipitates other events. It is my hope that the day will come for each of us that when confronted with our own bananas, we can instead smile and be comforted with the exquisite and beautiful memories of our beloved children as they envelope us in their love.

Louise Lagerman has three children: Eric, James and Keren, who died in 2006 at the age of 23. Louise works in health care and lives with her husband, Steven, outside Houston, Texas.

This Article was lovingly lifted from The National Magazine of the Compassionate Friends, Autumn 2010.

FEELINGS

Her clothing is folded in tidy array
 How it was left is how it will stay.
 Her desolate dresser silently weeps,
 In the still of the night, when everyone sleeps.
 The closet continues to guard and protect
 Items hanging on hangers, forlorn with neglect.
 The bed she adores, where she bounced high with glee,
 Cries invisible tears when no one can see.
 The bathtub she splashed in will not again see
 Someone who will love it as fiercely as she.
 It sits idle now, no longer a “star”
 And asks (in its way) if I know where you are.
 The house that she lived in, the yard where she played
 Are missing the landscape of love that she laid.
 Her numerous playthings, her once favorite toy
 Languish mournfully now without any joy.
 This dwelling called “home” has relinquished its heart,
 That gift from the one who was forced to depart.
 Now it withers from grief — its spirit extinct
 And we watch through our tears as the walls seem to shrink.
 Our angel is gone in the blink of an eye.
 She took the light with her that day in July
 Yet now there are times when my heart feels her near
 Then I know she’s not left me...her love is still here.

(For Tracey, Always)

*Sally Migliaccio
 TCF West Islip, NY*

TRICK OR TREAT

The night is dim
 And the pumpkins grin
 At children on the porch.

The doorbell rings,
 “Trick or Treat” they sing,
 My heart burns like a torch.

The Dracula’s face
 And a princess in lace
 Are peering in at me.



How I’d love to ask,
 May I lift your mask,
 And hiding, there you’d be!

You’d get such a kick,
 From that silly trick,
 But disguised you must stay.

In the wind that blows,
 My heart still know
 You’re playing October charades.

*Kathie Slief
 TCF, Tulsa, OK*

YESTERDAYS

I think of my yesterdays and I can recall,
 the days full of wonder of when you were small.
 The laughter, the sweetness, the joy, the all,
 The days filled with sunshine
 of when you were small.

Your smile - so wide, your eyes - so large,
 And you - not tall,
 My days filled with happy thoughts
 of when you were small.

Lynn McCurdy

WAITING FOR A SIGN

A sign! A sign!
 I’m still waiting for a sign
 to let me know that you are fine.
 I could sit and imagine you are here
 but I need to know that you are near.
 Maybe I have no right to ask
 but I will suffer any task.
 Just one more time to hear you say,
 “Don’t worry Mom, I’m okay.”
 Even if the sign is brief
 It will bring me solace for my grief.
 I need to know that you are fine.
 So won’t you send me one small sign?

*Ginny Sloan-Toselle
 Union County, NJ*



Leadership

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Albany Co-Leader: Kathleen Kelleher
518-439-1114

Saratoga Springs Leader: Gabby Gravelle
518-596-4275

Newsletter Editor: Debbie Bouchey
518-435-5321 or alyssabob@yahoo.com

Regional Coordinator:

Al Visconti: 518-756-9569

TCF's MISSION: 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.

TCF's VISION: That everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.



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