



The National Lotteries Commission relies on funds from the proceeds of the National Lotteries. The Lotteries Act guides the way in which NLC funding may be allocated. The intention of NLC funding is to make a difference to the lives of all South Africans, especially those more vulnerable and to improve the sustainability of the beneficiary organisations. Available funds are distributed to registered and qualifying non-profit organisations in the field of charities; arts, culture and national heritage and sport and recreation. By placing its emphasis on areas of greatest need and potential, the NLC contributes to South Africa's development.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Offering friendship and understanding to Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents
Johannesburg Chapter
March 2018

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In This Issue:	My dear Friends,
Editorial	There's a myriad of beliefs, customs and traditions attached to death. For example, Hindus cremate, the cleansing flames meant to prepare the soul for reincarnation. Moslems bury their shroud-wrapped dead within 24 hours. Jews are interred in plain box coffins, other denominations choose caskets ranging from the simple to the ornate. In old African societies the corpses were wrapped in animal skins, hence the custom of slaughtering a cow today. The Irish traditionally hold wakes; the Jewish community sits 'Shiva' for a week. Some mourners wish to see the body, others don't, while monarchs and other royalty and dignitaries lie in state with lines of citizens filing past to convey respect and grief, and in Moscow the embalmed body of Lenin still attracts Russian and tourist viewers. There are cultures imposing dress codes and periods of seclusion for the families. Food appears to be an important post-burial feature; obviously giving sustenance to mourners and extending hospitality to those who've come to condole; and console is universal. Funerals and memorial services are important rites of passage and not only for the departed. They demonstrate respect for the dead and sympathy for the living. The rituals could help ease the families into the next stage of bereavement and the slow, faltering beginnings of closure.
Birthdays	
Anniversaries	
TCF Needs and wants lists	
Ten Biggest Lies I Told Myself	
Poem	All these practices are fascinating in their variety, but the bottom line, certainly for the immediate mourners, is the loss of a loved one. If you've met parents of all faiths and backgrounds you know that we share the sensations of grief. No group cries more, or less, manages better, or worse, displays greater valour or more frailty. The deaths of our children have levelled the playing fields of creed and class, age and gender, education and status. None of that is relevant when we face the dark nights and the merciless days. None helps us meet the challenges of working through our pitiful condition.
After the Loss of a Sibling	
Loss of a Child	
Creating Rituals to Move through Grief	What does matter is that we overlook our differences as we reach out to offer and receive the tenderness of those we now know to be 'our own kind'. All are united in that closeness. This togetherness we have with other bereaved families remains long after we've found our way out of the labyrinth of grief and are ready to resume our place in the sun.
Thanks	Much love
Love Gifts	Rosemary Dirmeik
Meetings	From the Book "String of Pearls" available from the office
Contacts	

We apologise most sincerely should there be any errors or omissions. Please let us know.

Birthdays

Hloni Modiselle 1.3.1976 - Beloved son of Stella Modiselle and brother of Morongwe: Gun - Homicide

Yadin Moodley 6.3.2006 - Beloved son of Manju Moodley and brother of Elahn: Homicide

Bokang Branden Mulaudzi 7.3.2016 - Beloved son of Constance Montwedi and Happy Malaudzi and brother of Rorisang and Kabelo: Dehydration

Richard Colsen 9.3.1981 - Beloved son of Peter and Clare Colsen and brother of Karin and Julia: Plane Accident

Thato Monare 9.3.2006 - Beloved son of Kate Monare and brother of Pinkie and Boyzi: Unknown

Gareth Craig 10.3.1985 - Beloved son of John and Debbie Craig and brother of Taryn: Motor Vehicle Accident

Patrick Deas 10.3.1955 - Beloved brother of Coralie Deas: Down's syndrome - Old Age

Marc De Beer 15.3.1973 - Beloved son of Nanette Day and brother of Robyn Moreira and Mehan Jarvenin: Motor Vehicle Accident

Shana Levy 17.3.1967 - Beloved daughter of Mayer and Doreen Levy: Cancer

Gregory Hawarden 18.3.1972 - Beloved son of Judith Hawarden and brother of Hugh and Verity: Motor Vehicle Accident

Blayne Hullett 18.3.1981 - Beloved son of Ed and Carren Emary and brother of Kyle and Rourke: Motor Vehicle Accident

Baby Bennie 21.3.2016 - Beloved daughter of Leigh Bennie: Still Birth

Kevin Staessen 22.3.1984 - Beloved son of Guido and Marleen Staessen and brother of Barbara: Drowning at Half Iron Man

Lwandle Mncube 22.3.2016 - Beloved son of Thobeka and Prince Mncube: Stillborn

Justin Backos 22.3.1974 - Beloved son of Keith and Lynne Backos and brother of Talia: Motor Vehicle

Kim Shor 22.3.1969 - Beloved daughter of Sandra and Jack Lurie: Illness

Bryan Simms 23.3.1952 - Beloved husband of Lillian Simms and father of Stephen Simms and Claire Moller: Aeroplane Accident

Lwazi Mncube 23.3.2016 - Beloved son of Thobeka and Prince Mncube: Lung Problem

Rob Simms 27.3.1990 - Beloved son of Lillian Simms and brother of Stephen Simms and Claire Moller: Aeroplane Accident

Shaun Easton 28.3.1978 - Beloved son of Bets Easton and brother of Charmain: Suicide

Karen Engelbrecht 30.3.1966 - Beloved daughter of Janet Engelbrecht: Illness - Malaria

Petunia Molefi 30.3.1993 - Beloved daughter of Tshidi Annah Molefi: Taxi Accident

This page is sponsored in loving memory of Warren Damelin by Mike and Linda Damelin

Anniversaries

- Kimon Moutzouris** 3.3.2002 - Beloved son of Johnny and Thea Moutzouris and brother of Lee and Tony: Homicide
- Koketso Madisa** 5.3.2017 - Beloved son of Evelyn and Elmont Madisa and brother of Benjy: Homicide - Stabbed
- Catherine Knowler** 6.3.2014 - Beloved daughter of Jill and Kenneth Collins and sister of Jennifer Jones: Lung Cancer
- Phineas Taukobong** 6.3.2017 - Beloved son of Anna Taukobong and brother of Thabang and Tankiso and father of Thabo: Suicide/Homicide
- Matthew Bowes** 6.3.2011 - Beloved son of Megan Bowes and brother of Lauren: Medical
- Johannes Mamabolo** 7.3.2017 - Beloved son of Christina Mamabolo: Asthma Attack
- Nicole Green** 10.3.1983 - Beloved daughter of Stephen and Heather Green and sister of Danielle and Brad: Genetic
- Lloyd Hesselberg** 11.3.2016 - Beloved son of Mark Hesselberg and brother of Simone: Suicide
- Darren Steenkamp** 11.3.2000 - Beloved brother of Lisa Steenkamp: Gun Shot - Self Inflicted
- Andrew Jones** 12.3.1990 - Beloved son of Myrtle Fleming and brother of David, Pete and Kim: Motor Vehicle Accident - Defence Force
- Stuart Connon** 13.3.2009 - Beloved son of Dave and Jean Connon and brother of Fiona Higgs: Perforated Gastric Ulcer
- Lex Van Der Zwan** 13.3.2011 - Beloved son of Gay Van Der Zwan and brother of Royce, Alfie and Richard: Road Accident
- Mac (Maqhawe) Fakudze** 13.3.1999 - Beloved son of Dudu Fakudze and brother of Thulani: Road Accident
- Xola Ndhlovu** 15.3.2001 - Beloved son of Zoleka Ndhlovu and brother of Ashley: Asthma
- Nikki Reabow** 16.3.1996 - Beloved daughter of Glenn Reabow: Motor Vehicle Accident
- Maria Anesu Chikanyora** 18.3.2017 - Beloved daughter of Otiliah Mangi and sister of Kudzai and Tafookwa: Drowning
- Jessica Strydom** 19.3.2015 - Beloved daughter of Matty and Hennie Strydom and sister of Clea and Grand Daughter of Olga: - the angel of death called and Jessica said... "yes"
- James Haybittel** 19.3.1993 - Beloved son of Debbie Haybittel-James: Down syndrome - Heart Surgery
- Baby Bennie** 21.3.2016 - Beloved daughter of Leigh Bennie: Still Birth
- Kealeboga Shago** 22.3.2009 - Beloved son of Naomi Shago and brother of Mathabo: Kidney Failure
- Lwandle Mncube** 22.3.2016 - Beloved son of Thobeka and Prince Mncube: Stillborn
- Lwazi Mncube** 23.3.2016 - Beloved son of Thobeka and Prince Mncube: Lung Problem
- Brandon Chatadza** 23.3.2017 - Beloved son of Chengetai and brother of Brenda: Motor Vehicle Accident
- Thabiso Sebesho** 24.3.2010 - Beloved daughter of Sybil Sebesho and sister of Freedom: Tuberculosis
- Shaun Easton** 24.3.1993 - Beloved son of Bets Easton and brother of Charmain: Suicide

Warren Damelin 26.3.1989 - Beloved son of Mike and Linda Damelin and brother of Hayley: Motor Vehicle Accident

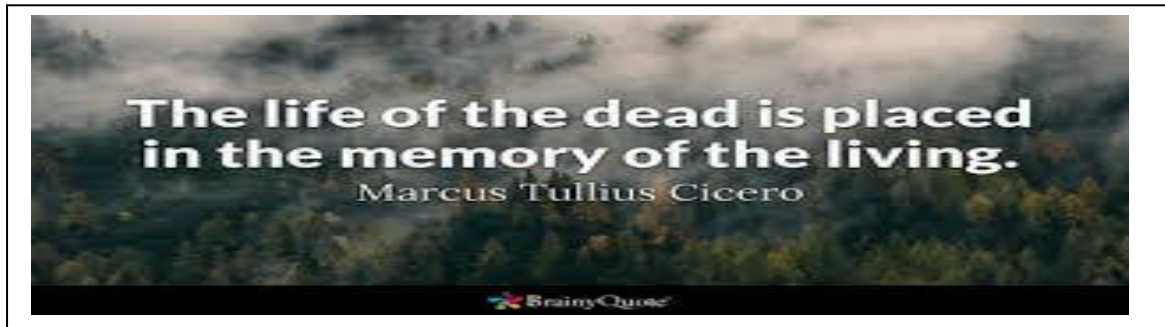
Marc De Beer 26.3.2016 - Beloved son of Nanette Day and brother of Robyn Moreira and Mehan Jarvenin: Motor Vehicle Accident

Lloyd Miles 27.3.2004 - Beloved son of Karen Miles and brother of Chloe and Devin: Cancer - Brain Tumour

Sifiso Mndaweni 27.3.2016 - Beloved son of Khosi Mndaweni and brother of Sandile: Drugs and HIV

Storm Riyadh Limbada 28.3.2012 - Beloved son of Aysha Limbada: Unknown

Graeme Johnson 31.3.2016 - Beloved son of Cedric and Margaret Johnson and brother of Luzal: Motor Vehicle



TCF's Wants and Needs List –

People do not always have spare cash to donate but you may have things/skills you could donate that could help us. OR you may have contacts that could help us...

Needs

Sponsorship for an advertising card to be placed at hospitals etc

Donations of everyday things we use in the office – stationery;
Refreshments for meetings/tissues/
Cleaning materials –things that would cut down our overheads.

If you are a counsellor who has counselled at TCF in the past – we need you... if you are interested in doing counselling we need you please contact the office.

Wants

A Fund raising committee - We would like to thank Sage Mallinson for stepping forward to be part of our Fund Raising Team.

If you would be interested in being part of a committee to organise an event/s to help raise funds for TCF please contact me – Debbie James – 0843321876

Prizes for a raffle to be run in 2018

We would like to thank the National Lotteries Commission for the Donation Received: The National Lotteries Commission relies on funds from the proceeds of the National Lottery. The Lotteries Act guides the way in which NLC funding may be allocated. The intention of NLC funding is to make a difference to the lives of all South Africans, especially those more vulnerable and to improve the sustainability of the beneficiary organisations. Available funds are distributed to registered and qualifying non-profit organisations in the field of charities; arts, culture and national heritage and sport and recreation. By placing its emphasis on areas of greatest need and potential, the NLC contributes to South Africa's development.

The Ten Biggest Lies I Told Myself - Andy M Davidson, Psy.D.

When someone close dies, it is easy to distort our world and accept lies about our self.

As a military psychologist who works with returning warriors dealing with the effects of losing someone close to them, I found that stages of grief are a myth.

When my own son was killed, I lied to myself. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross got close when she talked about the characteristics of grief being denial, anger, depression, and bargaining. I have yet to find complete acceptance.

Grief research does not support distinct stages but suggests that grief is a combination of feelings, actions, and biological changes. So, let's look at the 10 biggest lies that you may hear or tell yourself about the death of a child:

1. You will stop grieving after the year anniversary.

I wish it were true but it's not likely. Everyone is on a different timeline. When my son died, I didn't want to feel better. The one year anniversary was an extremely difficult time and yes, I felt relief, but I continue to grieve.

2. You are crazy if you are seeing dead people.

No way. Seeing your loved one means you are missing them. Possibly, you have unfinished business with them or possibly, you were not prepared for them to leave.

Seeing them means you care. No one knows how this happens because no one has the answers to life's most difficult questions. A corollary to this is, "That superstitious stuff is weird." Not so. Hearing your name called, finding a dime, seeing a butterfly, or hearing a special song at a key moment is not superstition.

It is a relationship, a way of continued contact that fills you with hope. As a psychologist, I can explain it away, but as a father, I don't need an explanation.

3. Stop crying, you will feel worse, and you look weak.

Wrong. Crying, regardless if you are a man or woman, is a healthy function that purges your body of toxins.

It may seem unsettling to see someone cry but it is their way of dealing with the pain. Let them.

4. No one knows your pain.

Not quite. I feel a bond with others who experienced the loss of a child, as if we are part of a unique club. It feels good to be around them because they know that words are sometimes meaningless and a hug is what I need.

I also have friends who don't even have children, and they also understand. While no one knows exactly what I am feeling, when people try, I feel validated.

5. You need to get right back up on the horse.

Forcing yourself back into a schedule is not always the best thing to do. I tried to return to work but I just wasn't ready so I found other ways to be productive.

Returning to my previous schedule was disastrous for me. I changed and I didn't want to go back to my old world.

6. The world is unfair.

Not really, but the world isn't fair, either. The world just is. And it is up to you to decide what you are going to do about it.

Are you going to drink yourself silly? Are you going to seclude yourself in your house? Or are you going to recognize how short, precious, and meaningful it is?

7. You are selfish if you want to die.

This was a tough one for me. It is not uncommon to want to be with your loved one. You hurt, you want the hurt to end but more importantly, you want to be with them.

Your apathy about life does not always mean you are going to try nor does it mean that you're selfish. Life has just been extremely hurtful, it makes sense that you would not want to be hurt again.

It does mean that you need to talk about it with someone who understands.

8. You shouldn't be angry with God.

Wrong. God was angry when his son died and he was angry when my son died. You can be angry too.

It takes time to work through your anger and recognize that with the freedom God gave us comes the possibility of bad things happening.

9. Praying is pointless because they died anyway.

Wow, I totally get this but it's a lie. I didn't pray for months but when I did, something happened. I started to connect, I started to feel grace. I started to forgive. I started to deal with my anger.

I talked about it, and now I reach out to others. Now I have a story.

10. You are not getting better.

This may be the biggest lie. Look at where you are today compared to yesterday, compared to last week or last year. Small steps. You will have set backs but you are getting better.

And here is one lie I put in a class all by itself: **It's my fault.**"

It's natural to feel responsible. Sometimes it's called survivor guilt. Sometimes it's called being a parent. Often the people who do the most good feel the worst guilt.

It should be the opposite, but the people who are the closest tend to feel the greatest pain. Regardless of the situation, we often feel that somehow if we did something different, the person would be alive today, even if we are not even in the same state.

We do not choose death, it chooses us.

The Truths that you need to remember are these two:

I will never be the same: True. This is not a myth, but it is your choice if you want to be better. And it will take time. Give yourself that time. Yes, you may always have a hole in your heart but seeing new life, and seeing growth in the world around you will give you hope.

I have a purpose: Yes. Yes, yes, yes. You now have a story. And the world needs to hear it

I need to talk about my loss.
I may often need to tell you what happened
or to ask you why it happened.
Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself
face the reality of the death of my loved one.

I need to know that you care about me.
I need to feel your touch, your hugs.
I need you just to be "with" me.
And I need to be with you.
I need to know you believe in me and in my
ability to get through my grief in my own way.
And in my own time.

Please don't judge me now
or think that I'm behaving strangely.
Remember I'm grieving.
I may even be in shock.
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.
I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before.

Don't worry if you think I'm getting better
and then suddenly I seem to slip backward.
Grief makes me behave this way at times.
And please don't tell me you "know how I feel,"
or that it's time for me to get on with my life.
I am probably already saying this to myself.
What I need now is time to grieve and to recover.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend.
Thank you for your patience.
Thank you for caring.
Thank you for helping, for understanding.
Thank you for praying for me.
And remember, in the days or years ahead,
when you may have a loss – when you need me
as I have needed you – I will understand.



And then I will come and be with you. ~ Barbara Hills LesStrang (*The Far Side of the Rainbow*)
"Friendship Trees Reuniting" painting by Sharon Lee Samyn

After the Loss of a Sibling - Ruth-Ann Johnson

I was wondering if I could ask a question to those of you who have lost a child, and have other children. Will I ever get my parents back? I cannot imagine their loss, and I do not want to disrespect their loss at all, I just wonder if I have lost my brother and my parents forever. I know nothing will ever be the same, I just feel like I need my mom and dad. Not only are they not emotionally available, they have put my brother on a pedestal of greatness. He had been in trouble with the law since he was young, had been so deep in drugs we had discussed an intervention, and had lost everything the last few years and was back living with our parents. They constantly talked about the trouble he gave them and the strain he put on their lives. They wanted to kick him out but felt like they couldn't. They were always fighting with him and at times were afraid of him. Now he is gone and they do not think about any of the struggles. They don't remember the bad things or the hard times. Whenever they talk about him, he was a great person with everything to live for, and all these other people are at fault for him choosing to end his life. They have even started confusing memories of him with actual events that didn't include him. Telling me things he did that I know he didn't. I could never be good enough when he was alive, and now he is gone and he will forever be the perfect child that they lost. Will it always be like this? Is this the 'new normal'? It has only been 8 months, so maybe I'm complaining way too soon, I just feel so alone and forgotten. If any of you who are parents could maybe give me your perspective, help me see from their point of view, I would really appreciate it. Sorry if I rambled, I tried to keep it concise and understandable.

Loss of a Child - Marilyn A. Mendoza Ph.D. The pain that never ends

There was a picture online that showed a young child in excruciating pain. The father, a photographer, took the picture of his daughter who was within weeks of dying from a neuroblastoma. It was a raw picture capturing her intense pain. It was taken to raise awareness of pediatric cancer. Comments about the article were diverse. Some readers expressed their compassion for the family, while others were angry and condemning the father for having taken the picture. Everyone suffers grief in their own way. In part, this was the father's way of grieving as well as letting others know how painful children's cancer can be. He also hoped that the picture might further the movement to find a cure for childhood cancer.

The worst thing that can happen to any parent is the loss of a child, regardless of the age of the child. People are uneasy and reluctant to talk about death and certainly not about the death of a child. Many people will pull away from a family that has suffered the death of a child as though somehow having a child die is contagious. Families who have lost children will say that others "Just don't get it." They are expected to move on and get over it when that will never happen. The pain will wax and wane but it is always there. With time, the pain will lessen enough to allow the parent to return to the living but their child is never far from their mind. Compassionate Friends, a national organization, is a place that parents can go and be understood, as everyone there has lost a child.

Grief can vary depending on how the child died. Some children will die from violence, some from cancer or other medical diseases. There are also miscarriages and stillbirths. These tend to be the less visible losses but can be just as painful. I have older adults who will talk about the loss of a child to stillbirth 40 years prior and how old the child would currently be if he had lived. The disappearance of a child has its own special torment. The parents never give up hope that their child will return someday. These parents live with intense anxiety and fear. The uncertainty can be unbearable at times.

For parents who have lost a child, the pain is indescribable. They suffer depression, anger, guilt, despair and loneliness. Even years later, I have moms say they cannot wait until they die so they can see their child again. They are not suicidal but long for that reconnection. Of the many parents I have worked with, the vast majority have a strong belief that they will be reunited with their child on death.

The death of a child can also lead to marital stress. If there have been unresolved issues in the relationship, they can remerge often with greater intensity. Different grieving styles of husband and wife can also cause hurt and misunderstanding, exacerbating the pain they already feel. While not all of these marriages end in divorce, a large number of them do. I frequently ask parents who have lost a child not to make any major life changing decisions for at least the first year.

All parts of the parents' lives are impacted by the loss. In addition to the emotional aspects of grief, there are also the physical and spiritual components. As with most grief, some will be angry at God while others will find strength in their religious beliefs. Physically, the effects of stress can wreak havoc with sleep, appetite and concentration, lowering our immune system and making us more vulnerable to illness.

I believe that people tend to avoid grieving parents, in part because they do not know what to say or do and do not want to upset them further. Below are some of the comments parents have told me they would find helpful from others:

"Please use my child's name when you speak to me."

"Share stories with me about my child that I may not know."

"I am doing the best I can, so please don't judge or criticize me."

"Just listen to me. Let me talk and show my feelings. I can't take care of you by pretending I am fine."

"It really upsets me when you say you know how I feel. If you have never lost a child, you don't have a clue."

"Let me do things in my own way and time."

"Please don't avoid me; I am in enough pain without feeling abandoned."

"I am never going to get over this so stop telling me I have to."

When talking to grieving parents, what we say can often make them feel worse. We cannot take away their pain, but by following these guidelines we can offer them some comfort and support.

Donations

We are very grateful for all the donations, love gifts and page sponsors we receive. Please note that if you would like them to go into a specific Newsletter they need to be received by the office before the 20th of the month you would like them mentioned as the newsletter is usually completed by then and ready to go out and we don't always recognise that the donation is to go into that specific Newsletter.

We humans like things to stay the same. Even if we are open to change, change can be very difficult. There is nothing more disruptive than the death of someone you love, someone whose existence is part and parcel to your own. When those people die, we are left floundering. That person may be your child, your husband or wife, your companion, your friend, your sister, or your brother. The depth and breadth of your grief depends on the connectedness you feel to the person who has died—you're spiritual, emotional, or physical connectedness, and often, your perception of your very *existence*. The more intertwined your life with a person, the more affected you are by your experience of grief when that person dies.

When someone you love dies, you experience deep, soul-wrenching pain. Your life changes. You change. Everything changes. Things are very different than you thought they would be. Yes, it hurts terribly. But there is nothing wrong with you. Grief is not pathological. Grief is normal. It totally sucks, but it *is* normal. Grief is a part of life—a very painful, difficult part of life. And it flat out just sometimes sucks, but it is normal. There are things you can do to help grief along its way; one thing I believe can be the most helpful is to engage in ritual.

What Is a Ritual?

Rituals are actions done in purposeful ways that symbolize something much more than the acts themselves. Rituals are made up of actions that represent ideas, thoughts, myths, or beliefs about a particular thing. Rituals give purpose to action and always serve to connect us to something else, generally something greater than our own solitary selves. We may engage in ritual as we seek peace, clarity of mind, or to become more grounded. We may seek connectedness to family, a particular person, our culture, society, traditions, ancestors, or even to our own selves.

We perform mini-rituals daily. Most of us have a specific routine associated with preparing for bed each night; we may wear a particular piece of jewellery or clothing for specific occasions; or we may make our beds each morning. We might repeat a particular phrase when we make a toast, or perhaps we close our texts or emails in a certain way. Whether small or elaborate, the rituals we engage in tell stories about who we are, who we want to be, and what is important to us in our lives. Your own rituals may be derived from your family, culture, ethnicity, or a particular religious or spiritual tradition. No matter what stories they tell, rituals always provide structure, meaning, and connectedness.

Perhaps the most significant thing that rituals provide is a certain order to an existence that otherwise might be full of confusion and chaos. Human life is full of confusion and uncertainty and, undoubtedly, the most chaotic times in our lives are the times when we are grieving. Grief is chaos. Times of grief are when we need ritual most. Unfortunately, in our society, there are few rituals that are specifically designed for grieving people, aside from the funeral or memorial service. These are necessary and helpful, but grieving people need more than a couple of rituals to help quell the deep chaos the death of a loved one can bring.

Create Your Own Rituals

Creating your own personal rituals to remember your loved ones allows you to access and work through your grief in a safe and constructive way. Some people plan rituals in honour of a loved one's birthday or an anniversary. Others choose to express their grief through small daily or weekly rituals. A ritual can be as elaborate as a public memorial service or as small as a quiet moment alone with your loved one's picture. Some examples of small rituals include:

Lighting a candle at certain, special times of the day or week to remind you of your loved one (for example, at dinnertime to represent sharing meals with him or her): Creating a memory scrapbook and filling it with photographs, letters, postcards, notes, or other significant memorabilia from your life together: Spending time listening to your loved one's favourite music or creating a special mix of music that reminds you of that person: Watching his or her favourite movie: Planting a tree or flowers in your loved one's memory: Making a donation to a charity that your loved one supported: Visiting your loved one's burial site: Carrying something special that reminds you of your loved one that you can take out and hold when you feel the need: Creating a work of art in your loved one's memory: Preparing and eating a special meal in honour of your loved one: Developing a memorial ritual for your loved one on special days or whenever you wish

Some people engage in the smaller, spontaneous rituals listed above on a regular basis. You may do something similar, or you might choose to create a more structured ritual. You may decide to create a special ritual only one time, or you might decide to hold your ritual (or some version of it) on a regular basis—daily, weekly, monthly, or on special days like birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, or other special occasions.

When selecting activities for a more structured grief ritual, choose specific things to mark the opening and the closing of your ritual: Light a special candle used only for your ritual purposes: Light some incense: Read or say aloud an inspirational verse, poem, or prayer: Sing a song: Chant: Play a particular selection of music: Ring a chime or a bell.

Clearly marking the beginning and the end of the ritual will help you transition into a different frame of mind at the opening, and it will signal that it is time to shift consciousness back to the mundane at the closing.

Remain Open: Do What Feels Comfortable to You

Before starting the ceremony, take a few deep breaths to centre yourself. Remember that it is okay if you cry. This is your space and time to express your grief in whatever ways you need to do so. If all you can do is cry during your planned ritual time, most likely, that is what you need to do. Whatever happens in between the opening and closing of the ritual is completely up to you. You can have an activity planned, or you may be the sort of person who feels more comfortable planning nothing at all. Perhaps you'll choose to do whatever you are moved to do once you are in the ritual space—you might wish to simply sit quietly for as long as you need to, listen to music, spend time crying, look through photos of your loved one, meditate, pray, or read some healing literature or a sacred text. It is okay to remain open and do whatever comes to you in the moment.

Sometimes you may feel the need to communicate something to your loved one. The sacred, safe space of a ritual is an ideal place to do this. When you need to communicate, you may choose to speak aloud, meditate on your thoughts silently, or write your thoughts in a letter. Consider incorporating the burning, burying, or floating of the letter that you write in a future ritual. You may simply feel the need to release energy in your ritual space. Yell, scream, or cry as much as you need to. If you're working through feelings of anger in your grief, keep pillows nearby that you can hit, punch, or throw. Tearing and ripping paper or stomping cardboard boxes can also help release anger. You may wish to include some movement, dance, or vocal expression such as singing, chanting, or yelling. You might want to beat on a drum or play some other instrument to release energy and emotion through sound.

Consider Inviting Others

You can conduct your grief rituals alone or with others. Your ritual could be an ideal time to share your grief with friends and family members grieving the same loss. If you invite others to join your ritual, you may wish to ask each person to share something about your lost loved one—a memory, story, or thought. Ask guests to bring something to read or share as part of the ritual, and invite them to participate in any ritual activity you develop, such as chanting, drumming, or letter-writing.

Continue Your Ritual as Needed

Conduct your grief rituals for as long and as often as you need to. As you heal, you may find that your need to engage in ritual for your grief will wane. Continuing to maintain some of your small rituals, such as continuing to carry your loved one's photograph or wearing a particular sentimental piece of jewellery may serve you. You're more elaborate rituals may change over time, or you may feel the need to hold them only on special occasions, such as birthdays or anniversaries. If you have created a shrine or altar that you have used in your rituals or kept in your home, you may find that you wish to make changes to it over time. This is okay, too. The changes mean that your personal process through grief is progressing, and your rituals have helped you move from chaos and pain to wholeness and stability.

I hope that this has helped you think about ritual and how you might use it as you move through your own grief process. Please feel free to comment about how ritual has helped you, what kinds of ritual activity has helped you—large or small—and what your thoughts are on engaging in ritual to help us move toward healing.

Thank you Mildred and Clarence

The Dreyer family, Trustees and friends held the 12th Memorial Golf Day in Memory of Malcolm Anthony Dreyer on the 28 January 2018 at the Roodepoort Country Club. Funds raised at this golf day are used to financially support and develop junior golfers as part of the Malcolm Dreyer Golf Development Trust – a Trust we established after Malcolm's death.

Golf was a game that Malcolm was very passionate about from a very young age. He was a professional golfer at the time of his untimely death on the 8 January 2006 at the age of 23 years old (a week before his 24th birthday).

Each year we have a raffle at the golf day and the proceeds are donated to Compassionate Friends. Therefore, it is my pleasure to inform you that we raised R5000 again this year which we would like to donate to your organisation – an organisation that saved our lives 12 years ago when we thought there was no hope after our beloved son was taken from us so suddenly and tragically. And so it is with deep gratitude that we can contribute to the GREAT work you are doing with families after the loss of their children.

Once again, thank you for the messages each year on Malcolm's anniversary and his birthday – it means so much to our family that he is remembered with so much love and compassion.

Take care

Clarence and Mildred Dreyer

[**Donate** !\[\]\(95b425611cbd2b8716a140cf67c81822_img.jpg\)](#)

Thank you..... Thank you to the people who pay their subs –

Thank you..... Thank you to the people who pay a monthly debit order to TCF

Thank you..... Thank you to the people who bring cakes and eats to the meetings

Thank you..... Thank you to the people who have paid donations and love gifts

Thank you..... Thank you to all our "MY SCHOOL/My Village card holders Do you have a "my village/my school" card? Please apply for one. If you complete the form we will send it in on your behalf

Love Gifts received with our grateful thanks.

Given in loving memory of Bradley Horak by Debbie and Andre Horak

Given in loving memory of Brandon Bennie by Jack, Pattie, Leigh and Jonty Bennie – February

Given in loving memory of Byron Bailie by Maggie Bailie – February

Given in loving memory of Sally Roberts by Carol and Peter Roberts

Given in loving memory of Rebecca Suttner by Nadine and Marc Suttner

Given in loving memory of Ricky Fine by his sister Julie Godfrey

The Compassionate Friends Johannesburg Chapter
Support Groups, Meetings and Events, for Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents
March 2018

March 3rd 2018 10h00 – 12h00	Coffee and Sharing Meeting at 11 Andre Street, President Ridge, Randburg (above The Brightwater Commons)	Facilitator: Gladys Gagliardi 011-787-7876 or 084-500-5440
March 10th at 14h00 for 14h30	Monthly Meeting at TCF 122 Athol Street, Highlands North.	Speaker Sue Sogot – Trauma
March 10th 14h00	Lenasia Coffee and Sharing Meeting please contact Roseline for address. 084-556-4616	Facilitator: Roseline Ananmalay 084-556-4616
March 25th th 15h00	Eldorado Coffee and Sharing Meeting – 1 Boundary Road Eldorado Park	Facilitator – Debbie James – 011 440 6322
March – no group	SOSL Group. TCF 122 Athol Street, Highlands North. 21 st April	Facilitators: Elise Barnes/ Mariska Nel
Support – Maureen Conway: Elise Barnes: Debbie James: Mariska Nel: Jabu Mpungose: Kate Shand Roseline Ananmalay: Gladys Gagliardi		

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

We are a Charity Organization and our aim is to help bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents cope with their loss. Our services are free of charge for the first year. (Starting from the first time you made contact with us at TCF). Thereafter if you would like to continue participating in our activities, we ask for a fee (Subscription) of R250 per annum (if you cannot afford this please call us)

You can also sponsor a page in our Newsletter at R100 per page or R50 per half page.


A LOVE GIFT can be any amount of money you would like to donate in memory of your child.

We are looking forward to your participation in putting together our Newsletters by writing your own story. Send your story to TCF at the beginning of the month and we will do our best to publish it. We would like to support you in your grief journey. Writing brings healing.

Contact the office to set up an appointment with any of our Counsellors for one-to-one sessions.

If you know of any organization (schools, hospitals, work places) that would benefit from our services at TCF, please inform them about our work. Often people do not know what to say or do or how they can help someone who has lost a child or a sibling. Our contact details are in the Newsletter.

**BANKING DETAILS: The Compassionate Friends, First National Bank – Balfour Park,
Branch Code: 212217; Account No: 50360007395**

You can now donate to The Compassionate Friends via this link. Please remember all donations to TCF are tax deductible. Please let us know if you require a tax certificate. We are now also BEE Compliant. 

NB: Please remember to put your name (and what you are paying for) as a reference when you deposit money into TCF's account