



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Offering friendship and understanding to Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents

Johannesburg Chapter

November 2016

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In This Issue:	My Dear Friends Writing our grief
Editorial	<i>"In grief or trauma it is important to externalize emotions. Feelings can get trapped in our bodies as our mind cycles through the same story over and over again"</i>
Birthdays	
Walk of Love	Writing after grief, loss or trauma is one way to get the story out of the mind and into a safe container. It can be very healing. Writing one's grief can be a way to get the repetitious story out of our bodies. Writing can be a powerful tool of transformation. Writing our grief can mean we no longer have to carry the story – the mind and body no longer have to carry the story. It can be liberating and release the writer from the responsibility of carrying the story. Journaling can be one of the many paths to healing. And if journaling is too onerous, a simple letter can be just as powerful. All you need is paper and pen or pencil, and a quiet place to sit and write to your child. Letter writing is a way to connect you to your child. It can also help you process your loss.
Anniversaries	
National Gathering	
8 Months After Losing My Child	Letter one – from me to you Take a few deep breaths and imagine your child before he or she died. Calm yourself. Breathe them into your heart and imagine them in your mind. Date the letter and address it to your child. And start writing. You may want to write a letter asking for forgiveness, or to share how much you love and miss them, you may want to share an important event or milestone in your life or the lives of those close to you and your child, you may have unfinished business that you want to set down on paper, or maybe you are angry and need to express that.
10 Healing Rights For Grieving Children	
Suicide – Changing the Language	Letter two – from you to me You could use your non-dominant hand to write this letter. Again sit quietly and take a few deep breaths. Calm yourself. Breathe your child into your heart and mind. Locate them in a place using your imagination. They could be anywhere – sitting next to a mountain stream, on a yacht on the calm Mediterranean ocean – wherever you imagine they are or would love them to be. Now imagine what they would write to you. And then date your letter and address it yourself. And then start writing the letter from your child. Writing with your non-dominant hand should allow you to access your unconscious mind more readily. Open up your heart and mind and let the words flow as if they are coming from another place.
Exhausted By Grief	
Loss and Anger	
Notices- Meetings	You could create some ritual around them. You could go to a place that was meaningful to your child to release your letters in various ways. You could make paper boats and release at a dam or the sea or a river. You could fold your letters up really small and put them into a balloon and blow up the balloon and let them be carried off in the wind. You can of course keep your letters to be read at a later stage. However, writing the letters could be all that's needed. If you find the letter writing useful, you can keep writing letters to and from your child. Or you could just write a letter when you are missing your child very much. Or when something significant has happened. This way you are able to maintain your relationship.
Contacts	
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We apologise most sincerely should there be any errors or omissions. Please let us know.

BIRTHDAYS

Ernes De Cillia 6.11.1976 - Beloved son of Debbie and Ercole De Cillia and brother of Flavia: Suicide

Brandon Greeff 6.11.2000 - Beloved grandson of Anton and Danny Greeff: Motor Vehicle Accident

Neil Moore 8.11.1982 - Beloved son of Keith and Barbara Moore and brother of Shaun: Motor Vehicle Accident

Niloshni Reddy 8.11.1972 - Beloved daughter of Rajis Reddy and sister of Kripen and Nicholas: Septicaemia

Reboane Nkuyagae 9.11.2005 - Beloved son of Lerato Abigail Nkuyagae: Aplastic Anaemia

Mpho Molekwa 10.11.1991 - Beloved son of Sanah Molekwa and Ronald Mabala and brother of James, Bangile, Boitumelo, Lesedi, Keleagile: Mini Bus Accident

Kyle Hards 11.11.1983 - Beloved son of Clare & Gavin Hards and brother of Nicci Hards: Suicide

Mark Armitage 12.11.1967 - Beloved son of Minou and Trevor and brother of Patrick and Sylei: Suicide

Jodie Furman 13.11.1993 - Beloved daughter of Ivor and Helen Furman: Motor Vehicle Accident

Luresha Govender 14.11.1977 - Beloved daughter of Nad and Rani Govender and sister of Nuren and Navan: Homicide

Eli Grobber 14.11.2013 - Beloved son of Sadiyah and Marcus Grobber: Cot Death

Muhamed Thaakir Grant 14.11.1993 - Beloved son of Rahima Bala and brother of Aakafah, Atiyyah and Taqiya: Motor Vehicle Accident

Jarren Koppel 15.11.1979 - Beloved son of Gavin and Pam Koppel and brother of Danny and Janna: Helicopter Accident

Gerbrand De Wet 16.11.1990 - Beloved son of Phillis and Jannie De Wet and brother of Herman: Motor Vehicle Accident

Robin Freeman 17.11.1981 - Beloved son of Merry and Bob Freeman and brother of Carla and Michael: Suicide

Devon Michael Cannell 19.11.1985 - Beloved son of Hilton and Lorraine Cannell and brother of Clinton and Maxine: Homicide

Brian Christie 20.11.1972 - Beloved son of Arthur Christie and brother of Megan: Motor Vehicle Accident

Lenny Marx 21.11.1966 - Beloved son of Joe and Irene Marx and brother of Ellana, Karen, Martin and Charles: Suicide

Michael Bruce Karlsen 22.11.1985 - Beloved brother of Katherine Karlsen: Car Accident

Wikus Havenga 23.11.1983 - Beloved son of Salome and Wikus and brother of Mariette, Marelize, Mariaan and Karla: Motor Bike Accident

Mac (Maqhawe) Fakudze 24.11.1984 - Beloved son of Dudu Fakudze and brother of Thulani: Road Accident

Dimitri Mallis 24.11.1985 - Beloved son of Helen and John Mallis and brother of Chris: Acute Pulmonary Oedema

Stephan Van Zyl 27.11.1991 - Beloved son of Alida Van Zyl and brother of Hannes: Motor Bike

Joshua John Pereira De Vlieg 27.11.2013 Beloved grandson of Gille De Vlieg: Accident

Shane Louw 29.11.1982 - Beloved son of Kathy Heapy: Bronchial Pneumonia

Christopher Bates 30.11.1956 - Beloved son of Kathy Cooles: Motor Bike Accident

Our walk was wonderful! Over 100 people attended.... we will be posting photos on our face book page and in the next newsletter. We hope to make this an annual event. If you attended please give us your feedback. If you weren't there we hope to see you next year.

Anniversaries

Jaco Pretorius 1.11.2012 - Beloved son of Louise Lubbe: Motor Vehicle Accident

Bruce Smith 1.11.2015 - Beloved son of Benita Smith: Suffocation

Tiveshen Mari 1.11.2002 - Beloved brother of Tineesha Mari: Suicide

Jan Mphela 2.11.2014 - Beloved son of Elizabeth Mphela: Motor Vehicle Accident

Lara Mary Egan 2.11.2008 - Beloved grandchild of Neville Egan and sister of Luke: Medical Complications

Devon Michael Cannell 2.11.2008 - Beloved son of Hilton and Lorraine Cannell and brother of Clinton and Maxine: Homicide

James Norman Young 2.11.2015 - Beloved son of Liz and Dave Young and brother of Kevin: Suicide

Narisha Naidoo 4.11.2015 - Beloved daughter of Desmond Naidoo and sister of Kiran: Suicide

Lorraine Mayulu 5.11.2013 - Beloved daughter of Hemmy Mayoli and Nelson Muzinga and sister of Emmanuel: Accident

Shawn Antwone 5.11.2014 - Beloved son of Sharleen Teu: Miscarriage

Dylan Casey 5.11.2015 - Beloved son of June Casey De Jager and brother of Taryn: Drowned/Heart Arrhythmia

Declynn Mark Harwood 5.11.2014 - Beloved son of Mellow and Mark Harwood and brother of Lynsay, Jaydean, Nicolas: Homicide

Andrew Bryington 6.11.2007 - Beloved son of Dez and Lorna Bryington and brother of Warren: Homicide

Lauren Kotze 8.11.1992 - Beloved daughter of Leon and Dawn Kotze and sister of Cielle: Illness

Ricky Fine 14.11.2003 - Beloved brother of Julie Godfrey, Raymond Fine and Uncle of Melvyn and Graeme: Homicide

Blayne Hulleff 14.11.2002 - Beloved son of Ed and Carren Emary and brother of Kyle and Rourke: Motor Vehicle Accident

Jason Olivier 16.11.2012 - Beloved son of Gavin and Sonja Olivier and brother of Jonty: Motor Vehicle

Zachary David Turner 18.11.2015 - Beloved son of Chantell and Patrick Turner and brother of Cayla Sue-Anne Cagnacei: Drowning

Tamplin-Rowe Ferreira 18.11.2014 - Beloved son of Cathy Scott and brother of Claryn Ferreira: Heart Attack

Jude Jacobs 20.11.2015 - Beloved son of Jade and Leroy Jacobs and brother of Jordan, Jamee, Joshua: Diabetis Insipuduro

Komo and Kemogelo Sihlali 20.11.2015 - Beloved Daughters of Nokuthula Sihlau and sisters of Keibelo: Natural causes

Lenia Fotsios 20.11.2010 - Beloved daughter of Maria Fotsios and sister of Anthony and Kiki: Motor Vehicle Accident

Matthew Vorster Martins 25.11.2015 - Beloved son of Brenda Vorster: Leukaemia

Boikanyo Motsepe - Beloved son of Rhoda and Sydney and brother of Mpho: MVA

Andre Farouk Naidoo 25.11.2009 - Beloved son of Sheila Ryan and brother of Amanda and Uncle to Gabriela and Kevin: Aneurysm

Guy Richard Carreira 28.11.2013 Beloved son of Richard and Shelley-Anne Carreira and brother of Belinda, Joanne, Benjamin and Richard Tanner: Suicide

Sean van Niekerk 28.11.2015 - Beloved son of Estelle and Dave Elliott and Stepbrother to Wesley and Bradley Elliott: Poisoning

Clinton Olivier 28.11.2014 - Beloved brother of Simone Visser: Heart Failure

Matthew (Matty) Pedder 30.11.2014 - Beloved son of Alison and Murray Pedder and brother of Ross: Asthma attack

Katleho Ntsoseng 30.11.2014 - Beloved grandson of Doreen Mbana and sister of Lebohang: Brain Tumour

2016 NATIONAL ANNUAL GATHERING – The Compassionate Friends, South Africa

Friday the 7th October 2016. Debbie and I landed up being on the same flight from Lanseria. The cooler weather in Cape Town, welcomed us from the heat in Johannesburg. We were met at the airport by the lovely, bubbly Rita who had volunteered to pick us up. We had a chatty 20 minute drive to Alta du Toit School in Kuilsrivier. On arrival I was pleasantly introduced to Suzette and Ina as well as other members from TCF from all over the country. Debbie was well known to all, lots of hugs and happy to see one another. Ina showed us to our room walking down the long corridor, which I imagined many boys had walked.

There were six beds in a room Debbie and I chose the ones near the windows. We settled and came back to the hall, we were served tea and coffee and sandwiches and introduced to more friends. Later we were asked to bring our Beloved children's photo's and place it on the front table amongst all the Beloved children who had passed and light a candle in their memory. I felt very relaxed and a warm fuzzy feeling of belonging.

Suzette Venter as well as TCF Chairperson Myrtle Fleming welcomed us all and opened our weekend with a prayer and brief breakdown of how our weekend would be running. We were given little butterfly notes to write a message to our Beloved children, which we could either burn in the fire which was made outside – which would go up into the heavens or stick it on a leaf and place it on the memory tree, which was decorated with little lights standing in the corner. After supper Suzette introduced us using crafts for healing. We were taught about Adult colouring-in as well as how to make our own Mandalas.

While we got to know one another around the tables, we chatted in general and some of us shared our grief with each other and told of our Beloved children; how and when they passed. There were tears, sadness and then there were brief intervals of laughter and fun.

Saturday 8th coffee was prepared, so we could go and get an early cuppa while waiting for breakfast. As we entered the hall, we re-lit our candles for our Beloved Children. Our programme started at 9h00, I opted to sit with Debbie at her table as she sold books and bangles. All our speakers have lost a Beloved Child.

Then was fun time: The raffle ticket draws, Lots of prizes – the best one - The Leather handmade Handbag – which Maggie Baillie - being Me! - won.

After dinner we had Free Time - a couple of us sat watching The Movie of all times "Dirty Dancing" eating Popcorn which Suzette had managed to obtain for us. During this time I needed TEDDY which I eventually took to bed with me.

9th October 2016: Byron my Beloved Son who passed on 9th May 2016 – 5 Month Anniversary today.

Coffee was a bit slower this morning. Then breakfast. Suzette explained the order of the day to us.

We listened to a message about HOPE, during this time we could write a note to our Beloved Children which we could burn in the fire before we left. I had just begun to write when my emotional feelings came pouring out for my Beloved boy Byron, overwhelmed by the immense comradeship of friends who had come together to share with others their Beloved children's lives who are still within us today or just the emotional turmoil that burns inside my body. Which at times is unstoppable like a fish on Byron's line that won't stop running and the alarm is buzzing continually. Debbie sat beside me and consoled me; Suzette brought TEDDY back to me until I had managed to calm down.

The immense compassion for one another during this weekend was for me such an understanding of not standing alone, grieving or feeling alone. Just the thought of knowing there are other parents feel and go through what I'm going through, no concerns of how long ago our Beloved Children had passed, not how they had passed. But just accepting each parent as one of my friends on my Journey, coming to some sort of healing and understanding of where and who I am today at this part of my life's journey.

Then all our children's pictures were shown on the screen. Where we must then fetch our Beloved's Child's picture and bring it to the front and light a candle.

Some spoke dearly and shared part of their Beloved Children to us.....Others preferred not to share.

I managed to get hold of Leeroy a friend of Byron's from school in Johannesburg, who was working in Cape Town. At the time of Byron's passing we could not reach Leeroy, when he found out he was beside himself. I asked TCF permission if he could share part of Byron's life with us today, as he was not able to attend Byron's Memorial. He spoke about Byron and also wrote a note and burned it in the fire. He said he felt a peace surrounded him. I'm pleased that he could share with TCF and get some sort of closure.

My experience of this wonderful gathering of grieving parents, was very welcoming to my Soul, I know it is still early days for me to do so much. But I know Byron would want me to move on, he knew too well that it would be painful without him in my life. But he didn't know how painful!! ! Everything I do towards my

healing no matter how soon. I believe that the pain will never heal, but I can try and heal my broken life until the time comes when I can look back and be glad I did all I could do to move forward.

We all said our Goodbye's with lots of hugs, I was almost sad that the weekend had come to an end.

I look forward to next year – when we as grieving parents will all meet again. – Margaret Bailie – Johannesburg TCF in loving Memory of Byron Bailie.

An explanation of TEDDY – Two large Teddy Bears were present at the National Gathering and were available to hug and drown in tears.

Next year's National Gathering will be held in Durban in August – Each National Gathering is very differently so we look forward to seeing what the Durban Chapter has in store for us.

8 MONTHS AFTER LOSING MY CHILD: 5 THINGS THAT HELP; 4 THAT DON'T By Suzanne Leigh

What helps:

1. When I hear her name. My daughter's name is Natasha; I love hearing people say her name; I wish they'd say it more often. I love seeing her name on her possessions, including (inexplicably) her medications that we continue to hoard. I even like seeing new spam sneak into her inbox, or junk mail addressed to her in our mailbox. Recently a former classmate recognized me at the pool where my younger daughter was taking classes. "Are you Natasha's mother?" Those words made my soul sing. Her name: Thank you! Reference to me as her mother: Thank you! Use of present tense: Yes, I am Natasha's mother – always will be. Thank you.

2. When people acknowledge her life. A Christmas gift and birthday card for Natasha that were sent after her passing gave us a brief burst of joy; they validated our drive as grieving parents to keep at least part of her alive. But both senders were almost apoplectic with regret: they were so sorry, it had been a ghastly mistake! Why is it that people think that if they act like our daughter is still with us, we will be terribly insulted? Did they think that we'd forgotten that we'd had a daughter who had died and that the card and gift would be unpleasant reminders?

3. Hearing "You'll never get over it," from my bereaved aunt who lost her teen son in an auto accident many years ago. That assertion rings true to us and it gives us peace. Conversely, non-bereaved parents seem to cling to the conviction that we *will* get over it.

4. Other parents who have lost a child to cancer. We speak the same language: CT scans, MRIs, chemo, radiation, neutropenia, tumour "progression," artificial nutrition ... It takes a cancer parent to know the turmoil invoked with each of those words. Bereaved parents don't respond with panic when they see us cry – something that shocks many people, especially if a father is crying. We know that tears don't mean we're having an unusually rough day, any more than laughter means we're having a good day. Crying is just something bereaved parents do – possibly every day and possibly copiously. Bereaved parents get it. Tissues over here, please.

5. Hearing from people who read my blog. Thank you to everyone who has shared their own stories with me, either privately or on this blog. Writing about Natasha is my therapy; thank you for reading it.

What doesn't help:

1. Anti-depressants. Disclosure: I've never taken them. Would I be open to taking them? Perhaps and I certainly see their benefit for some types of mental illness. But child loss is not an illness. I think I feel exactly the way any bereaved mother who loves her child should feel: desperate grief. Prozac et al are off the table, at least for now.

2. Therapy. I haven't closed the door to it (yet) but I've never met a bereaved parent who claims to have been helped by it. I'm open to hearing other opinions.

3. Celebrations, vacations, barbecues, "girls nights out," your child's graduation, bridal showers, baby showers. I can't do any of them. Sorry. Thank you for inviting me, though.

4. Playing "at least she wasn't." My daughter wasn't abducted and strangled at knifepoint by a psychopath; she didn't die suddenly in a head on collision caused by a drunk driver; or on a ventilator after months in the ICU. She died at home in the arms of her family. She knew that she was loved and that we had tried to protect her every day of her life. This I don't doubt. I've played the "at least she wasn't ..." game with myself and other bereaved parents and it doesn't work. The truth is that there is no good way for a 12-year-old to die. And if I'd have gotten the chance to pick, I wouldn't have picked the cancer card: the operations when her surgeon drilled through her skull to get to that vicious tumour, the fruitless cycles of chemo and futile irradiation of her entire brain and spine. There is no "at least she wasn't." Its dreadfulness is insurmountable.

Memory can only tell us what we were, in the company of those we loved; it cannot help us find what each of us, alone, must now become. Yet no person is really alone; those who live no more echo still within our thoughts and words, and what they did has become woven into what we are.
~ Jewish prayer

Our misconception is in imagining that our suffering or how intensely or how long we grieve is a measure of how much we loved. In truth, none of us would want another's grief as a testimonial of their love for us. More likely we would want our loved ones to live healthy, fulfilled lives without us.
~ Judy Tatelbaum, [The Courage to Grieve](#)

Grieving is not a short-term process; it's not even a long-term process; it's a lifelong process. 'Having a future' now means that although your life will flow again, it will flow differently as a result of the loss. Your grief will become incorporated into your life history, become a part of your identity. And you will continue now, and forever, to redefine your relationship with your deceased loved one. Death doesn't end the relationship; it simply forges a new type of relationship - one based not on physical presence but on memory, spirit, and love.
~ [Transcending Loss](#) by Ashley Davis Bush

Ten Healing Rights for Grieving Children – by Alan D Wolfelt PhD. Fort Collins. Colorado

Someone you love has died. You are probably having many hurtful scary thoughts and feelings right now. Together those thoughts and feelings are called grief, which is a normal (though really difficult) thing everyone goes through after someone they love has died. The following ten rights will help you understand your grief and eventually feel better about life again. Use the ideas that make sense to you. Post this list on your refrigerator or on your bedroom door or wall. Re-reading it often will help you stay on track as you move towards healing from your loss. You might also ask the grown-ups in your life to read this list so they will remember to help you in the best way they can.

1. I have the right to have my own unique feelings about the death. I may feel mad, sad or lonely. I may feel scared or relieved. I may feel numb or sometimes not anything at all. No-one will feel exactly like I do.
2. I have the right to talk about my grief whenever I feel like talking. When I need to talk, I will find someone who will listen to me and love me. When I don't want to talk about it, that's ok too.
3. I have the right to show my feelings of grief in my own way. When they are hurting, some kids play so they'll feel better for awhile. I can play or laugh too. I might also get mad and scream. This does not mean I am bad, it just means I have scary feelings that I need help with.
4. I have the right to need other people to help me with my grief, especially grown-ups who care about me. Mostly I need them to pay attention to what I am feeling and saying and to love me no matter what.
5. I have the right to get upset about normal, everyday problems. I might feel grumpy and have problems getting along with others sometimes.
6. I have the right to have "griefbursts". Griefbursts are sudden unexpected feelings of sadness that just hit me sometimes – even long after the death. These feelings can be very strong and even scary. When this happens I might feel afraid to be alone.
7. I have the right to use my beliefs about my God to help me deal with my feelings of grief. Praying might help make me feel better and somehow closer to the person who died.
8. I have the right to try to figure out why the person I loved died. But it's ok if I don't find an answer. "Why" questions about life and death are the hardest questions in the world.
9. I have the right to think and talk about my memories of the person who died. Sometimes those memories will be happy and sometimes they might be sad. Either way, these memories help keep alive my love for the person who dies.
10. I have the right to move towards and feel my grief and over time to heal. I'll go on to live a happy life, but the life and death of the person who died will always be a part of me. "I'll always miss this special person".

Suicide: Changing the Language by Cathy Seehuetter The Compassionate Friends St. Paul, MN Chapter

Police Officer Christopher Seehuetter 10/6/1972 – 6/02/2012

Once in a while I write a post regarding the language of suicide. I really hope that people will read it because it is very important for us to spread the word on how we speak of suicide. I've been thinking about it a lot again lately, especially since the two-year anniversary of my stepson's suicide was just on June 2nd, and wanted to share my thoughts in the hope that someone will read it and that that someone will also educate someone, when given the chance, to help us with the mission to change how we say it:

SUICIDE: It is a death that has so many layers and agendas that it adds another whole level of difficulty to an already terrible loss. Using the word "committed" before suicide is like fingernails down a chalkboard to someone who has lost a loved one to suicide. We are trying to change the language around suicide and no longer say "committed"...and I don't care for "completed" suicide myself (we wouldn't say that someone "completed" cancer or "completed" a car accident.

The reason that "committed" is a difficult term for the survivors left behind after a suicide has occurred is that "committed" generally indicates that what happened was a crime...from back in the Dark Ages when families were even imprisoned when a family member died of suicide (the stigma that still remains following a death by suicide is difficult enough and I pray one day there will be more understanding and education surrounding that as well).

Death by suicide occurs usually by a person who is in so much pain emotionally and sometimes physically that they see that as the only option left to end that unbearable pain. They truly believe in their heart that they are helping their families by leaving this world...that their loved ones are better off without them. It is not the "coward's way out"...it is a pain that those of us without that level of hopelessness and darkness cannot begin to comprehend. Died "by" suicide. Died "of" suicide. Died "as a result of" suicide. Died "from" suicide. "Lost to" suicide; and even "took their own life" (because that is a reality)...but, please, never "committed". Help those who have suffered this unthinkable loss by changing the way you and others say it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading this.

Exhausted by Grief? Ideas & Tips to Help You Sleep by Karyn Arnold

While there are many signs and symptoms of grieving there is one that seems every griever has in common - difficulty sleeping. This can mean having trouble falling asleep, or being able to fall asleep but then waking up in the middle of the night and being unable to go back to sleep. It's an especially frustrating symptom as a lack of sleep only serves to contribute to the weariness a griever is already feeling.

Grief is an exhausting process. A person who has lost a loved one will find their every waking moment filled with thoughts about their loss.

It can be in the form of questions....could I have done more? Or tried harder? Or saw a different doctor or sought treatment sooner? Or, what if I never let him leave the house that night? Should I have tried harder to get her to stop smoking? Or take better care of herself? Should I have seen the signs that he was doing so poorly?

Mixed in with the questions from the past, are the future worries. What comes next? Where will I go from here? How am I supposed to go on? How can I go to work and take care of the rest of my family now? Who is going to take care of me?

And finally, sleep can elude the griever as they find themselves consumed with the sights and sounds encountered leading up to their loved one's death. Reliving what their loved one looked like in their final days, the sounds of their breathing or of their suffering. If the loss wasn't following a long illness, the trauma can come from remembering the phone call that came, or the atmosphere of the hospital when they were told the news.

While these thoughts and worries exhaust the griever all day long, the night brings no respite. In fact, the quiet and lack of other distractions can mean that many people find themselves staring at a dark ceiling each night, as their body begs for sleep but their thoughts won't allow it.

Problem is, a good night's sleep is a crucial part of our well being, and as the mind and body try to heal from grief it is even more important. And yet, it is often overlooked as an important part of what it takes to help a griever begin to feel themselves again and move forward.

While so often after the loss of a loved one we can feel helpless, getting a good night sleep is actually within reach and something we can control (with patience and practice).

Some tangible tips and help for sleeping below:

Set a night time routine. Our bodies crave routine, and nothing can throw us off balance and out of sync like a traumatic life event. Making a plan for sleep that starts well before we head into the bedroom can be an important part of getting back on track. Eat light and healthy dinners that are less likely to cause upset stomach or indigestion. Make time for a relaxing activity - reading if you can find the focus for it, taking a walk with a pet or a friend, or watching an old movie or show that is relaxing and enjoyable (avoiding sad and stressful news channels if possible). Dim the lights and change into comfortable clothes. Try a bath or drink a cup of tea. You may find that now you need lights on and/or music or "noise" as you go to sleep. If it's a change from your sleep routine before, don't fight it. Do whatever it is you need to do to feel comfortable right now.

Try breathing exercises. So let's say you've done all the above, you're finally in bed and you still can't sleep. What your brain needs at this point in the day is a distraction from the circulating thoughts and emotion. Start by reminding yourself that you can always return to the thoughts and the worries in the morning, but right now, what you need is sleep. Try a yoga or meditation class to learn more about breathing for relaxation, or research the following techniques online: 4 - 7 - 8 breathing, Complete Breathing, Ujjayi, or Alternate Nostril Breathing (that last one is a personal favourite). You can also look into Guided Meditation or Guided Imagery. While not breathing exercise, exactly, it is a relaxation technique that should allow for quiet and controlled breathing. The internet is filled with guided imagery exercises, most of them including relaxing music and peaceful images. A quick search on you tube yields almost 45,000 results, and they're all free to use. Try a few and see what, if any, works for you. Bottom line, there is one thing that each of these techniques has in common: they offer a distraction. Because what your mind needs to be able to find restful sleep at sad and stressful times is a vacation from its own thoughts. Whatever technique you try, remember that it is serving simply to distract you from these circle of thoughts long enough to allow you to fall asleep.

Recognize when more help is needed. There may be times where a shift in routine or attempt at a relaxation exercise simply isn't enough. If that's the case? It's okay, and you're certainly not alone. Talk to your family doctor for ideas of what may help. Look into individual counselling. Perhaps one who incorporates relaxation techniques as a way of helping you cope. For many, the "sights and sounds of grief" can leave behind a trauma similar to PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Look for a counsellor who specializes in helping a person heal post-trauma. Some techniques to research include EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) and Prolonged Exposure Therapy. Recognize that some of the repetition of these sights and sounds is simply your brain's way of trying to come to grips with what's happened as it's still trying to process all that it's seen.

In the end it comes down to being patient with yourself (and your thoughts). If you say you're someone that can't do it - that you've tried this before and it's never worked - keep trying. Quieting and calming the noise in our own mind is more challenging and takes more practice than preparing to run a marathon. Don't expect to be able to run 26 miles the first time out. And don't expect to be able to still your racing thoughts with ease. Know that the images and the worries will try to make their way in, and that you will need to work to put them aside as you attempt to relax and fall asleep. Like so many other parts of the grieving process it takes work and it takes practice, but it is something that can be achieved. Time is not a healer on its own, but time does serve to help move us further away from the traumatic event. And with time, we may find the solace and respite of sleep can return to us once again.

This half page is sponsored by Joe, Irene, Ellona, Karen, Martin and Charles Marx in loving memory of Lenny Marx.

Loss and Anger

Anger can be unattractive, there's no question about it. It's messy and unpredictable, sometimes loud and violent. And in a world where we like things to make sense, it's often unacceptable. But never more than when you're grieving. There's a long list of people we can be angry with:

The person who died: why didn't they take better care of themselves? Why didn't they ask for help? Why did they take such a stupid chance? What were they thinking?

The medical community: why didn't the doctors notice something was wrong? Why didn't the paramedics get there sooner? Why hasn't someone discovered a cure for cancer, etc.?

God: why did you make a good person suffer? Why did you leave those parents without a child? Why did you leave those children without a parent? Why them? Why now? Why not someone else? Why not me?

The family: why didn't they make him go to the doctor? Why did they let her live alone?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Death is, after all, the great unknown. Despite stories of white lights and visions of deceased relatives, no one's come back from any extended time in the afterlife. We don't know what awaits us.

And we REALLY don't know why people die when they do. We say "it was just their time," and obviously, it was.

When the person we lose is a friend, that sense of helplessness can create even deeper anger.

Many times when I've grieved I've been angry, although I rarely shared those feelings. Despite being one of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' famous stages of grief, it's probably the least acknowledged.

Anger can be useful, but when turned inward, is more likely referred to as depression. That's not what I'm talking about here. I'm talking about white-hot, body-shaking, screaming-at-the-top-of-your-lungs anger.

You've already realized that the grief you feel for your friend is being devalued because you're not family. And that can add to the anger you already feel.

Even those who are also grieving are unlikely to accept your anger. Think of Sally Field melting down in the cemetery in *Steel Magnolias*, and the shock on her friends' faces. The minister in *The Big Chill* – "I'm angry, and I don't know what to do with my anger" – is much calmer about it, but the look in his eyes is anything but.

The problem with suppressing the absolutely justified anger we feel when our child dies is that it will bubble up eventually. It will present itself suddenly and loudly and often in a completely unrelated situation. And that presents its own complications. Screaming at a barista who doesn't know you won't bring back your child/sibling.

So, if you're angry that cancer treatments and cures came too late for your loved one...

If you're angry that your family dismissed the threats of suicide...

If you're angry that your loved one drove drunk...

If you're angry that an evil person chose your loved one at random to kill...

Embrace that anger: accept it and embrace it. You're angry because of the pain that your loved one's death has caused. That's, dare I say it, *normal*. Frankly, it would be strange if you weren't angry. You're angry because you loved them and wanted them to stay close to you always. Selfish maybe, but normal and human.

So, as long as you don't hurt yourself or anyone else, you have permission to be angry. Then you can work on channelling your anger into positive action, to keep your loved one's memory alive every day of your life.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,
In the opening of the buds and in the warmth of summer,
In the rustling of leaves and the beauty of autumn,
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,
When we are weary and in need of strength,
When we are lost and sick of heart,
When we have joys we yearn to share,
So long as we live, they too shall live,
For they are now a part of us, as
We remember them.
~Gates of Prayer, Reform Judaism Prayer Book



Dear Friends

I am a TCF member living in the UK and I am the author of two books about coping with child bereavement which I wrote from my experience of losing my daughter, Lisa.

'One Step at a Time/Mourning a Child' and 'A Mother's Grief/Thirty Years On'.

The first one is now available for eBook Readers and as a paperback as a print-on-demand, in any language, it can also be downloaded from Ingram Spark/Lightning Source.

You might also like to check out my blog at www.blue7butterfly54.com where you can find links to other bereaved parent support networks, leave a comment and add your own.

Thank you, Betty

TCF contact for northern Scotland

Please apply for your My School/Village/Planet Cards before you start your Christmas Shopping –...THANK YOU. Please apply for your card today.

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...

Walk of Love.....<http://www.rietvleilifestylecentre.co.za/web/index.asp>

Silicone Bangles - These are available from the office with "The Compassionate Friends – In Loving Memory" printed on them for R25.



DONATIONSTHANKYOU

We are setting up a pay pal account to make giving so much easier – watch this space.....



Love Gifts.....

Given in Loving memory of Ermes De Cillia by Debbie and Ercole De Cillia

Given in Loving memory of Mac (Maqhawe) Fakudze by Dudu Fakudze

We are looking for sponsors for the program, candles and flowers for the Candle Lighting Service to be held on the 16th November. If you would like to sponsor any of the above please call the office. Thank You

The Candle Lighting will be held at St. Columba's Presbyterian Church

Address: 45 Lurgan Rd, Johannesburg, 2193

Please remember to bring a photo of your beloved child/sibling to the service.

We look forward to seeing you there.

A single person is missing for you, and the whole world is empty,
~ Philippe Aries,

The Compassionate Friends Johannesburg Chapter
Support Groups, Meetings and Events, for Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents
November 2016

Saturday 29 th October 14h00 – 16h00	Suicide Support Group at 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Facilitators: Kate Shand; Marcel Hatzis-Hugli 082 884 4085/082 724 5670
Saturday 5 th November at 10:00 – 12.00	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
Wednesday 16 th November 18h30	Candle Lighting Ceremony – St Columba's Church 45 Lurgan Rd, Johannesburg, 2193 Eats most welcome – as we have tea after the service.	011 440 6322
Saturday 12 th November at 14:00	Lenasia Coffee and Sharing Meeting please contact Roseline for address.	Facilitator: Roseline Ananmalay 084-556-4616
Every Friday 10.30 -12.30	Coffee At TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Facilitator: Ntuthu Radebe 076 975 5840

Support

Isabel Ferreira: 082-335-8593

Maureen Conway: 011-802-2805 or 082-452-4490 (Siblings)

Jabu Mpungose: 063 077 2331

Ntuthu Radebe 082-741-5761

Marcel Hugli 082 724 5670 (Mr)

Elise Barnes 083 267 9465

Roseline Ananmalay: 084-556-4616

Coralie Deas 083-524-7016

Kate Shand 082 884 4085

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

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**

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