



The Simple do's and Don'ts of Compassion

By Marian Lambeth TCF Tallahassee, FL



I received an email one day that caused me to think about how challenged we are when it comes to communicating condolences to a grieving parent, grandparent or sibling. It doesn't take much to figure out that many of us (having lost a child or not) are often challenged by how to really comfort or assist a grieving person. I have lost my son yet I often feel I can't find the right thing to say or do to comfort another grieving parent.

The email read that people shouldn't say, 'How are you?' but rather to ask about a specific area: 'Is your health better?' or 'Are you getting out more?' something particular rather than an open-ended question." I couldn't agree more...I'm of the philosophy, if they asked, they must want to know. The advice continued to say, don't just offer empty words

of encouragement, find out what is really going on in another person's life, and keep track of how he or she is progressing through the struggle; That is some serious advice!

After our son died and during his struggle to live, our friends and family showered us with love and support. There are things though that I will never forget, our friends and Wyatt's friends driving to Shands Hospital to sit with us, paying for hotel rooms, bringing us food, truly supporting us daily. I will never forget, after Wyatt died, a friend came over and said not one word, he walked in the door and held me in a tight hug and wept with me, he hurt for me, for us, for Wyatt. The mother of one of Wyatt's friends, whom I'd never met, stopped by a few weeks after Wyatt's death just to give me a hug, to say she was thinking about us

and that she was sorry for all that was lost. Dear friends of ours came to our home for six weeks every night and sat in the dark, loneliness of our childless home. They held us up when we could not stand alone.

Another friend calls every week still, to chat, catch up, check on me to tell me she cares. The things I remember are not so complicated, but what I know is they were actions more than words. I often feel very alone in this journey, but I will never forget that their actions held me up when all I wanted was close the door to life. There are some things about the death of a child that even compassion will not heal. The absence will always remain, but there are things that may bring a healing balm, if only briefly. So, with this I began to think, what do our Compassionate

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Our Quarterly News



We had a wonderful pig pickin this year. Thank you to everyone who came and all they helped out. Again my brother in law did a great job cooking. The food was wonderful. Also a special thanks to Joy who got her church for us to use. We had so many items for the raffle, and Joy's son won the TV.

We do need you to offer names of someone that you would like to take over as chapter leader.

Names need to be submitted to the board and then the group can vote. The votes will be private. I have agreed to stay on if someone will become co leader, again I think it should be someone that the group feels they would like to see in leadership. I also will continue to be the newsletter editor.

This has not been an easy decision for me but due to my health I will need to step down or either have a co leader who

can be at meeting if I can not attend. Everyone of you are so special to me.

Thank you all again for the help you have given me, and in return I hope that I have helped you in some small way.

The next event will be our candle lighting service in December. Joy is checking to see if we will be able to use her church for this event.

Hugs, Sharon

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Friends think, what did they experience that was supportive and helpful, what was painful or even hurtful. What can we share with the people of our community on how to better communicate, better share their heartfelt sympathies, and better help us as we traverse this life without our child or our children. So we asked, and here are some suggestions and the rationale of course:

Don't tell me to call you if I need something, because I will not.

- Make specific offers to help: I am going to the store, what can I pick up for you? Can I take the kids to the park on Saturday afternoon? I will be bringing dinner on Monday for the family does everyone like Spaghetti? May I take Tommy to his skating lessons on Wednesday? Will you be home on Sunday afternoon? I'd like to come over and mow the lawn for you. It's a nice day outside, let's go for a walk.

Don't think time is a miracle.

- Stay in touch with the grieving parents just to let them know you haven't forgotten their loss and that you have them in your prayers. No one wants to feel their tragedy can be so easily "put to the side" and forgotten when it is (was) such a dominating presence in their own lives.

Don't let the child's death be the only topic of discussion.

- It's ok and helpful to be uplifting and to include other topics that are happy, and still make it known that you care.

Don't talk "around the hurt" as if it never happened.

- This loss is a part of the parent's life, it's ok to discuss it in a plain and thoughtful way.

Don't discuss the details of a child's death in front of the parent as if they are not there.

- The parent is fully aware of their child's death, include them in the conversation, parents can often offer insight.

Don't use clichés that minimize the nature of a child's death.

- Avoid comments such as, "he shot himself in the head with that dumb answer" when in the presence of a parent who lost a child to a gunshot wound.

Don't say, "You can try again for another baby" or "you're young, why don't you have another baby."

- Parents are grieving the death of a unique, wonderful and loved child, it is that child they miss and long for. Grieve the loss of their child with them and leave the future to them.

Don't say "at least" about anything, ever, as in:

- At least they didn't suffer (maybe, but my child is dead), At least you have your memories (yes, but I want my child), At least you have other children (yes, but I want the child I lost), It was just her time to go or "It was meant to be" (While some believe there is a purpose to every action or maybe a universal plan others do not.)

What seemed to be most compelling of the responses received was the, to do list, it's short, but concise:

Do act normal, don't try so hard not to talk about the child (as if he or she had never existed). In describing a visit from a person who brought food and visited quite a while, one Compassionate Friend recalled that they never once mentioned her child. She expressed how this made her feel by saying her daughter, "was and is a real person, just because she changed addresses doesn't mean we can't talk about her."

Do share your favorite memory. Parents often enjoy hearing people share their favorite memory. When those memories are memorialized in writing and the person shares what they loved or appreciated about the child, things that made them laugh or smile, it can be read again later and cherished as memories shared by others.

Do show you care and spend time in fellowship. Grieving parents become very lonely or feel alone in their grieving and the company of others can be comforting or soothing, so don't just bring dinner, but share dinner, or visit and eat leftovers or encourage them to go outside for a walk.

Do offer to clean their house, mow their lawn, take the kids somewhere, babysit or bring dinner. Many of the things people do on autopilot are unimportant or incomprehensible to a parent who is trying to plan a funeral or is in the depths of grieving.

Do Give Hugs, Real hugs. They are powerful. Here is what one mom said about "real hugs" that people gave her, "it was like I could draw strength from them and I would feel a moment or two of peacefulness or connection that they might not understand my pain but they understood I needed them."



About the author: Marian Lambeth is the co-leader of the Tallahassee, Florida Chapter of the Compassionate Friends. On January 1, 2010, Marian and Jim Lambeth's only child, Wyatt, died following an industrial accident that left 80% of his body with 3rd degree burns. Wyatt fought for his life for 23 days before dying from his injuries. Since Wyatt's death, Marian has found comfort and support through the friendships and bonds of her compassionate friends. She is most grateful for their heartfelt contributions to this article.

In Memory of my son, Wyatt

Our Credo

We need not walk alone.
 We are The Compassionate Friends.
 We reach out to each other with love,
 With understanding, and with hope.
 The children we mourn have died at
 all ages and from many different
 causes,
 But our love for them unites us.
 Your pain becomes my pain
 Just as your hope becomes my hope.
 We come together from all walks of
 life, From many different circumstanc-
 es.
 We are a unique family because
 We represent many races and
 creeds.
 We are young, and we are old.
 Some of us are far along in our grief,
 But others still feel a grief so fresh
 And so intensely painful
 That we feel helpless and see no
 hope.
 Some of us have found our faith
 To be a source of strength;
 While some of us are struggling to
 find answers.
 Some of us are angry,
 Filled with guilt or in deep depression;
 Others radiate an inner peace.
 But whatever pain we bring
 To this gathering of
 The Compassionate Friends,
 It is pain we will share
 Just as we share with each other
 Our love for the children who have
 died.
 We are all seeking and struggling
 To build a future for ourselves,
 But we are committed to
 Building that future together.
 We reach out to each other in love
 To share the pain as well as the joy,
 Share the anger as well as the peace,
 Share the faith as well as the doubts
 And help each other to grieve
 As well as to grow.
 We need not walk alone....
 We are The Compassionate Friends.

Do I Have To?
 By: Jackie Rosen
 TCF N.Dade/S. Broward, FL

Mom, do I have to stop loving my brother because he is not here?
 Will I forget all about him because he's not near?
 I remember all the things we did together, even though we were very
 young.
 I laugh and feel warm each time I think of a particularly funny one.
 Sometimes I get so angry that he's no longer here to share,
 But I know he knows it's only because of how much I still care.
 I miss him, so even though at times we didn't agree,
 Just knowing he was there made things feel safe for me.
 He always felt he had to be my strong, protective big brother,
 And that's a bond we'll always share forever with each other.
 He tried to protect me even when he, too, was just scared.
 No, I won't stop loving that big brother of mine,
 Not now, not ever, not till the end of time.
 He will always be a part of what makes me be me.
 And that's the part of our love that will live eternally.

THE CHILD THAT'S NOT THERE

By: Tricia Palmer
 In memory of my son, Gabriel Boyer
 TCF, Tidewater, VA

The child that's not there
 Takes up every piece of me
 The child that's not there
 Consumes my every thought
 The child that's not there
 Makes me feel like I failed
 The child that's not there
 Took away a main reason for being
 But
 The children that are there
 Still somehow bring me joy
 The children that are there
 Still need my love
 The children that are there
 Don't need any more grief
 The children that are
 there
 Force me to go on.



Treasured

By: Scott Newport
 Royal Oak, MI

What I love most is
 Waking to the dew of
 The grass upon my boots
 What I love most is
 Smelling the end of
 The day upon
 My shirt, holding
 My child
 What I love most is
 Something I don't see
 Everyday or smell or
 Touch
 What I do love most is
 The memories of those
 Moments if only buried in
 My dreams



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Love Gifts

A Love Gift is a donation of money or time to honor a child who has died, or as a memorial for a relative or friend. We thank the following for their kind generosity, love and sharing.

Frances Jackson in memory of her son Joey Jackson and husband Joe Jackson
Ramona and Robert Jackson in memory of their brother Joey Jackson and father Joe Jackson

Jeff and Joy Haddock in memory of their daughter

Wayne and Angie Eggleston in memory of their son Chris Eggleston

Vickie Bowles in memory of her son Bryan Bowles

Ben and Christine Traylor in memory of their son Benny Michael Traylor

**Sandra Hollers in memory of her grandson Thomas Payne and sister
 Carolyn Kapperman**

Angela Livingston in memory of her son RaMael DeJon McArthur

Mickey and Hazel Smith in memory of their son James "Randy" Smith

John and Jennifer German in memory of their daughter Amy Elizabeth German

**Jody and Jenniffer Hall in memory of their daughter Amber Marie Hall
 Shaun Hall in memory of his sister Amber Marie Hall**

Terry and Rebecka Shea in memory of their son Pat Shea

Phil, Sarah Morales, Shelia Hare in memory of their niece Crystal Dawn Jackson

Jessica and Wesley Long in memory of their cousin Crystal Dawn Jackson

Lisa Sasser in memory of her son Baby Sasser and cousin Crystal Dawn Jackson

Sharon Jackson-Davis in memory of her daughter Crystal Dawn Jackson

Donald & Effie McPhail in memory of their daughter Erica Graham

If you wish to make a donation or a love gift, please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends Fayetteville Chapter, and mail to 703 Rosebud Court, Vass, NC 28394. Please include the name of the child, love one, or friend that you wish the donation to be made in memory or honor of.

To Our Members Who are Further Down the 'Grief Road'



We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK— what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

A Time for Renewal

Spring has wrapped us in the glory of floral bounty with flowers, blooming bushes and trees and wild bluebonnets hinting at a renewal. In the gentle rains we have received a sweet cleansing of the spirit. It is spring that gives us hope for the future. As the season changes, we sense the cloak of our grief lifting in tiny increments. Yes, it is uplifting. For those of us who are newly bereaved parents or siblings, discovering a bit of lightness in our grief mantle is so very welcome.

And that is how our grief will be for the rest of our lives. No epiphanies, no giant steps, just a slight lifting each day, a microscopic rebirth of ourselves and a step further into our lives after the death of our child. There are setbacks, of course. The pain is agony in the first year.....brain pain, soul searing pain, physical pain, anxiety and much more seem to rule our days. But each day is a tiny step forward into hope.

To enhance our grief journey, we must do grief work. Just as the gardener tends to the soil, fertilizes, gently stimulates tender roots and removes weeds from the flower bed, we must tend to our grief on a daily basis. Throwing out the negative...the guilt, the anger, the anxiety and adding the positive by seeking our solace in our journals, reading, movie choices, spirituality, friendships kept and friendships left behind. In the garden of our psyche, our grief must be tended as if everyday is the first day of spring.

And so it is that with springtime comes a reminder of renewal and the grief work we must do to obtain that renewal of spring. Day by day we change; month by month we make note of that change. One day we are able to see the blossoming of our renewal as we move forward in life with our precious children in our hearts.



Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX

In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

The Gift of Someone who Listens

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief

Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.

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

Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk

And hugged away our tears.
We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

Nancy Myerholtz
TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH

The National Office of The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522—3696
Web Site www.compassionatefriends.org

The Sibling Credo

We are the surviving children of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the death of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us. Sometimes we need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we feel we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our deceased brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us. When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet, we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving children of The Compassionate Friends.



Our Children & Siblings Remembered

Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, and siblings of the following children's:



July

Melissa Dawn McCoy July 5,
Daughter of William & Dianne McCoy

Dan Arrowood July 6,
Son of Brenda Nightingale

Edwin "Lamar" Beard July 7,
Son of Wanda Beard

Johnathan "JD" McKenzie July 11,
Son of Ron McKenzie

Jeremy Scott Melvin, July 12,
Son of Donald & Brenda Melvin

Carla Parker July 14
Daughter-in-law of Rex & Cheryl Parker

Mark Heil II July 16
Son of Mark Heil

Justin Tyler Seifert July 17
Son of Shely Seifert

Glenda Hudson July 18
Daughter of Pat Arnette

August

Brian Eddie Colletti August 2
Son of John & Lynda Simmons

Randy Lee Dalton August 3
Son of Jesse & Sharon Dalton

Amber Gardner August 4
Daughter of Sandra Williams

Samuel Greathouse August 7
Son of Jim & Leisa Greathouse

Archi Kagy August 7
Son of Mike & Petra Syfrett

Birthday's



Ronald Hamilton Jr. August 15
Son of Gwendolyn M. Carroll

Melba Ross August 19
Daughter of Frances Harris

Valencia Fredrick August 24
Daughter of George & Shirley Fredrick

Matthew Scott Fields, August 27
Son of Jerry & Debbie Fields

September

Emily Haddock September 5
Daughter of Jeff & Joy Haddock

Drew Howell September 10
Son of Debra Howell

Cody McLendon, September 11
Son of Paula McLendon

Laura Winstead September 15
Daughter of Jeanne Winstead

Jon Wayne Tyner Jr. September 21
Son of Jon & Mary Tyner
Brother of Monica Tyner & Kathy Phillips

Stephen Dew September 23
Son of Jimmy & Elsie Dew

Duane Alan May September 29
Son of Earl and Shelba May

Alex F. Tumbaco September 29
Son of Fabian & Mabel Tumbaco

Meagan Bradley September 30
Daughter of Tony & Stephanie Bradley

Craig McArthur September 30
Son of William & Abbie McArthur



Our Children & Siblings Remembered

Each month some of our members face special but very painful days. We ask that you keep in your thoughts the parents, grandparents, and siblings of the following children's:

July

Darryl Peckinpaugh July 7
Son of Marianne Browning

Karen Simmons Allee July 7
Sister of John & Lynda Simmons

Justin Tyler Seifert July 11
Son of Shely Seifert

Benny Michael July 11
Son of Ben & Christine Traylor

Ranei Mae Edington July 12
Daughter of Sarah Edington

Kayla Shea Hughes July 14
Daughter of Jodi Aguiar-Turlington

Johnny Cole, July 14
Son of David & Kathryn Cole

Donald Zemke July 15
Son of Jim & Faye Lecompte

Christopher Vargas-Herrera July 17
Son of Linda Vargas-Herrera

Anthony "Brian" Smith July 18
Son of Daryle & Debbie Nobles

Tim Alt July 23
Son of Jan Alt

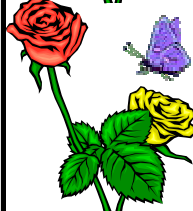
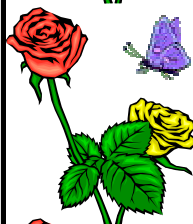
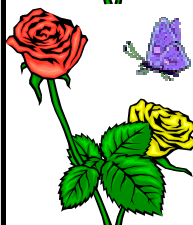
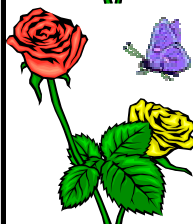
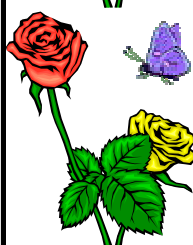
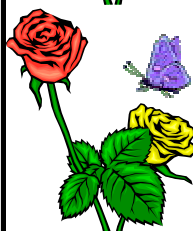
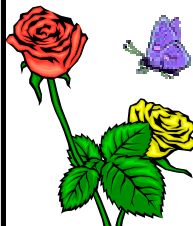
Brian Eddie Colletti July 25
Son of John & Lynda Simmons

Elijah Caddick July 26
Son of David & Melissa Caddick

Craig McArthur July 27
Son of William & Abbie McArthur

Logan Zimmerman July 30
Son of Chris & Robin Zimmerman

Memorials



August

Alexander Carlson August 3
Son of Victoria Carlson

Amber Gardner August 4,
Daughter of Sandra Williams

Richard Miller III August 4
Son of John & Gina Miller

Daniel "Adam" Clark August 8,
Son of James and Herta Clark

Joe Dan Rumley August 8
Son of Joanne Rumley

Crystal Dawn Jackson August 14
Daughter of Sharon Jackson-Davis

Vernard Whitfield III August 19
Son of Phyllis Whitfield

Jeremy Scott Melvin August 28
Son of Donald & Brenda Melvin

Matthew Scott Fields August 29
Son of Jerry & Debbie Fields

September

Joey Hernandez September 4
Son of Jennifer Hernandez

Eddie Santistevan September 12
Son of Mary Ann Santistevan

Samuel Greathouse September 17
Son of Jim & Leisa Greathouse

Alex F. Tumbaco September 19,
Son of Fabian & Mabel Tumbaco

Emily Haddock September 21
Daughter of Jeff & Joy Haddock

Bobbie Beller September 28
Daughter of Catherine Fix

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We're on the Web
www.tcffayetteville.com

In this Issue: The Do's and Don'ts of Compassion

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Love Gifts

There is no charge for our newsletter, meetings, or lending library, and we depend solely on your contributions. Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, grandchild, or sibling. Your love gift will insure that all who need our newsletter, will receive it.

I wish to make a donation in memory of _____

Date of Birth _____

Date of Death _____

Donated by _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

All love gifts, poems, donations, etc. must be received by August 30, 2012 in order to appear in the next newsletter.
703 Rosebud Court, Vass, NC 28394.

Please send form with check. A donation is not required to submit items for the newsletter.

Meeting Time: 1st Tuesday of Each Month at 7:30 PM
Room 102, Medical Arts Building, 101 Robeson Street, Fayetteville, NC