



Getting On With Life—What Does It Mean?



Of all the statements and spiritual platitudes quoted at me since my son Daniel's death, the phrase that I hear most frequently makes me squirm the most. "You have got to get on with your life." Recently I quit squirming long enough to ponder the meaning behind this phrase that is usually said to the bereaved in the form of a command. Exactly what does this phrase mean? What are people implying when they say it?

I was pregnant when Daniel died, and three months later I gave birth to a baby girl. Wasn't that getting on with life? I nurtured my three children, took them to school, the park and birthday parties. Now wasn't that going on with life? I even cooked dinner at least four times a week!

At first after Daniel's death, I would have liked to literally stop my life and be buried next to my son, but I kept existing. Like a plastic bag

tossed about by the wind, I was fluttering, being carried by the events of life. Seasons came and went. In the spring, I planted marigolds and tomato vines. In the autumn, I jumped in fallen leaves with my children. I continued; I am still continuing to live.

Now I may be bereaved, but I am by no means a fool. As I ponder the meaning behind "getting on with life," I know exactly what those who say this have in mind. "Forget your dead child. Quit grieving. You make me uncomfortable!" Getting on with life means don't acknowledge August 25, Daniel's birthday, anymore. Forget how he slid down the snowy bank in the recycle bin, sang in the van and ate Gummy Bears. Forget he had cancer, suffered and died at only age four. Don't see the empty chair at the dinner table, don't cry, just live!

Some who are more "religious" would like to believe that a bereaved parent can claim, "My child is safe and happy in heaven. Therefore, why should I yearn for him?" Perhaps I pose a threat to certain types because I have let it be known I question God. I weep. I have been angry. I miss my Daniel. Maybe old friends feel if they hang around me too long I might convince them that a few of their illusions about life are just that, illusions. As my cries of anguish are heard, there are those who can only think how to make me be quiet. To stop my heartfelt yearnings, they say quite sternly, "You must get on with your life."

I am living. I do move on with life with Daniel in my mind and in my heart, although he is not physically

here as I continue to live and to love. To sever his memory totally from my life would cause destruction and damage that would ruin me. To push Daniel out of my life and not be able to freely mention his name or write & speak about who he was on earth would only bring more pain to my life. I'd shrivel up. Comfort for me comes in remembering with smiles how he drew with a blue marker on his sister's wall, ran outside naked and picked green tomatoes. For the reality is, getting on with life means continuing to cherish Daniel.

Alice J. Wisler,
Bereavement Magazine, Sept./Oct.
2000, Colorado

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Save the dates.
More information on both will be forthcoming. Follow on <https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA> and <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/>

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 circumstances.
 We are a unique family because
 We represent many races, creeds and
 relationships.
 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;
 While 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.

I WISH

I wish I could feel your hand in
 mine.
 I would give anything to count your
 fingers and toes.
 I wish I could hear your voice
 whether it be laugh or cry.
 I'd do anything to be able to hold
 you just one time.
 I will forever hold you in my mind.
 Although you were only here for a
 short while,
 I thought of how your life would be
 and your smile.
 I couldn't wait to see your brothers
 face,
 The first time he would have seen
 you.
 Such smooth skin, tiny limbs,
 And the most wonderful smell in the
 world.
 The smell of a precious new life,
 In the palm of your hand,
 A smell like nothing else in the
 world.
 To look into your eyes,
 And feel your fingers wrap around
 mine.
 I long for your touch, your sound,
 Or the smell of your hair.
 Everything in me is screaming to
 have you in my arms,
 Every part of me aches to have you
 back with me.
 Christmas seems so dim,
 And the new year has started out so
 gray.
 How do I go on knowing things are
 this way.
 Everyone says, "I'm sorry, is there
 anything I can do?"
 It just makes me want to scream.
 Don't get me wrong, I love life,
 But things aren't always what they
 seem.
 I long for your heartbeat next to
 mine,
 Or your hand to reach up,
 And touch my face for the first time.
 To walk our path hand in hand,

Or see our footsteps in the sand.
 The salty breeze of the ocean seems
 to be my release,
 And apparently the only place I can
 find peace.
 If tears could bring you back,
 You'd be in my arms right now.
 I was given a precious gift,
 Just to have you taken so soon.
 I've never known a pain,
 Like the one I feel inside.
 At first all I did was cry,
 My eyes felt as if on fire.
 Now all I want to do is cry and it
 won't come,
 No matter how hard I try.
 What I wouldn't give to have your
 head on my chest,
 To have you fall asleep in my arms.
 I know it's wrong, but I want you
 back more than anything.
 I know it's not possible, so I will
 treasure your memory.

*Tabitha Berlin
 In memory of her son
 Randall James-Berlin
 Fayetteville Area TCF*

*We are put
 On this earth to
 Love them
 For as
 Long as
 WE live,
 Not for
 As long as
 THEM
 Lived.*



Alan Pedersen

One

It was only 1 second, one thought, one decision, one action in a lifetime of seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions. It was so fast, so permanent, so irreversible, so hopeless. This moment, this thought, this decision, this action do not define him, do not honor him, do not immortalize him. It is the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that define him, that honor him, that immortalize him. I remember my brother in all of the other seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that preceded this one.

I remember him coming home from the hospital, lip syncing in the basement, falling out of the tree, biking across campus, coming home from school, from boot camp, from war... I remember him hiking, and skiing, and running, and laughing, and crying. I remember how safe I always felt when he was around. I knew he would take care, protect, defend.

I don't remember exactly when my brother became an amazing human being—I just looked at him one day and knew he was. I knew that nothing would make him change his mind about me. He was without judgment, without prejudice, without preconception. I knew my brother because we talked and he listened. I respected my brother most for his humanity—for being so sensitive, so vulnerable, so honest. I loved my brother for sharing the load when it was too hard for someone he loved to carry alone. I knew my brother because he left so much of him in me.

I trusted and respected my brother's decisions in the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, I have to trust and respect this one decision the same. I honor my brother by honoring myself. I do not dwell in that one moment, instead I celebrate and cherish all of the others. In that 1 second, one thought, one decision, one action, I found the strength he had given me and I will not let him down. I will not let that one moment be the only one.

Michele Mallory

The Mask

I feel as if I am buried alive
A constituent of my earthly being
Has been violently amputated
Yet I laugh at the mediocre
conversations
A verbal splash in a shallow
puddle
Pretending to be a player of the
words
That no longer have meaning

My heart has been ripped from my
bosom
No benevolence granted
No explanation
No apologies
Only cataclysmic pain
No anesthesia remains, just the
bitter pain
Yet I wear the mask
Day by Day

Pretending I fit in
But really I'm a foreigner to the
new land
An alien language they speak
And as I attempt to translate the
words
Still, they mean nothing to me

Sequestered in the mask
They hear not the music
I dance to
Not the words
I speak
Not the pain
I echo Nor the native language of
my eyes
The will never really know me,
behind the mask

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Sibling Walking Together

(Formerly 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. But have
patience with 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 dead 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.



Love Gifts



A Love Gift is a donation to honor a child who has died, or as a memorial for a relative or friend.

The Compassionate Friends depends entirely on voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations to meet chapter expenses. TCF is a 504(c)(3) non-profit organization: all donations are tax deductible.

100% of every dollar donated goes toward chapter expenses.

We thank the following for their kind generosity, love and sharing. There are no dues. We have already paid the ultimate price to be a member.

Vickie Bowles in memory of her son Bryan Bowles

Bill and Diane Lanier in memory of their son Ralph Mitchell Lanier

Jody & Jenniffer Hall in memory of their daughter Amber Marie Hall

Shelly Sweat in memory of her son Darrell Sweat

Cindy Tart in memory of her brother Dennis Tart

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



The National Office of The Compassionate Friends

2301 NE Savannah Rd. #700
Jensen Beach, FL 34957

Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org Toll free: 877-969-0010
[facebook.com/TCFUSA](https://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)

Regional Coordinator for the Fayetteville Area Chapter of TCF

Donna & Ralph Goodrich
704-822-4503 or iluvu2lauren@gmail.com

TCF Mission Statement: The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.



Gifts of the New Year

Faith that, in spite of the pain of today, I can and will learn to go on, one step at a time, one day at a time, learning to once again truly enjoy the little (and bigger) things that come my way.

Patience when I'm having a bad day, when I seem to take two steps backward and only one forward in learning to cope with the death of my child.

Laughter, which someone said is the best medicine. I believe laughter is a positive source of healing. When I feel good laughing at some silly little thing that comes along, I know another little part of me has healed.

Time: If nothing else, the new year offers the gift of time—time to heal, to learn to cope, to put some wholeness back into lives that seem hopelessly broken.

Won't you join me in opening these gifts? You see, they aren't just mine to receive; they are gifts to be shared by all. You need only reach out and accept them. Each of these gifts can help us go on with our lives.

May the new year bring you all of these gifts and many blessings, but most especially, may you receive the gift of peace.

Audry Cain, TCF Western New York

A Valentine of Love

Author Unknown

As long as I can dream,
As long as I can think,
As long as I can have memory...
I will love you.
As long as I have eyes to see
And ears to hear,
And lips to speak...
I will love you.
As long as I have a heart to feel,
A soul stirring within me,
An imagination to hold you...
I will love you.
As long as there is time,
As long as there is love,
As long as I have breath
To speak your name...
I will love you.

Because I love you more than anything in
the world



“Finish your life with the enthusiasm and zest that you had when we were together. You owe this to me, but more importantly, you owe it to yourself. Life continues for both of us. I am with you because I love you. I am in the Light.”

*“The hurt never goes away.
We never forget.
We never get over it.
We don't want to.
We hurt so much because
we loved so much.
But the focus on death
and the event fades and
the warmth of
good memories
replaces it.”*

—Richard Edler

The Bark and the Tree

My first night at our Compassionate Friends meeting, after the meeting had ended, a few of us sat, talking. It had been only about a month since my daughter's tragic accident and I was that combination of foggily numb, angry, cloudy and very depressed that most of you know so very well from your own journey. In my heart I knew that my life could never be anything but what it was at that moment.

An analogy was shared with me that evening that I absorbed as much as I could absorb anything in that fogginess. My daughter used to call me, not necessarily with great fondness, The Queen of Analogies. I had used them, often to her annoyance, so frequently as she was growing up to illustrate points and teach lessons. They didn't always make sense to her, but being The Analogy Queen, I coveted any good one that I heard and make up scores of others on my own.

Over the course of the following months after that night, I found myself drawn back to the Tree and Bark Analogy when people would ask how I was doing. "Today I only know THE BARK", I might reply, or "There may be a vague sighting of something that could be a tree", I might say at another time. And then I would have to explain what I meant, having turned THE BARK of the Tree into an analogy that spoke to my emotions.

In the very beginning following the death of our loved one, it is as if we are standing in a forest, but with our faces pressed up against THE BARK of a single tree. It is all that we can see. It blocks out the sun and obscures everything else. All we know, all we are, everything that exists for us is that blurred bark of the single tree.

As time passes, we might, some days, notice that there may be a butterfly lit upon that patch of bark, or a bit of life sustaining sap trickling upon the grain. Maybe, on one particularly day, we might notice that the patch of bark is actually part of a tree. And as some time passes, we might begin to notice that the tree has another that stands next to it; and another and another and that there is actually green grass making up their bed and blue sky welcoming their outreaching branches. On a particular day we might notice that THE BARK on The Tree is actually part of a forest and that other life, other animals weave among the trees and fly among the branches. Our ears may hear the babbling of a distant brook or the songs of the birds. We might actually feel the warmth of sun or a cool breeze tickling our skin. And, then, some days, again and again, all we can see is THE BARK.

THE BARK never goes away. It is always part of our picture. Some days, especially in the beginning of what is now our Lifetime Journey, THE BARK is all that we can handle, all we can see, all we know exists. Sometimes, even on that same day, we might get a glimpse of the trees or feel the sun, but then are pulled back to seeing only THE BARK. Yet the forest remains, too, even if some times it is out of our ability to comprehend its existence.

Mostly, in the first year of the past 495 days, I've had my face pressed up against THE BARK and was often aware of little else. Occasionally I would surprise myself, when someone asked, to admit that there were times, when I might believe in the possibility that I could see other trees someday. And once in a rare while, now, I do catch a blurred glimpse of The Entire Forest. Yet some days, especially the days that Robyn's Void screams so loudly that I can hear nothing but how deeply I miss her and grieve for the absence of our daily teasing, talking and friendship, that there exists only the fogged coarseness of THE BARK.

It was more than a year after my first meeting that I discovered who had presented the analogy to the women who had shared it so kindly with me that first night. She is Toni Wood, Barry's mom, and had long been a Compassionate Friend to the members of This Ugly Club that we all, so deeply against our will, were forced to become part of. I was able to talk with Toni about the origin of The Trees and she shared this with me:

"... To tell you the truth I have no clue where I got that from—but I used it because it worked for me. I can see the tree now more clearly and the memories don't always make me cry now—most of the time, but not all. When I first thought about this analogy all I could see was the ugly knot of Barry's death. I could not see the good memories, the wonderful things he did and said. I had to step back and get my nose away from the knot in the tree so I could see more of the tree—his life. The roots of the tree—the family. The branches—his son and wife and friends. The leaves and flowers are the good and the bad things he did in his life. Even bad things are good memories now." —Toni Wood, Barry's mom

.....continued on page 7

.....The Bark and the Tree
Continued from page 6

What I do know now to be true, is that THE BARK will never completely go away for me, though, someday, it might become 'the bark.' And I have found that sometimes I might be having a "Forest Moment;" like the day I officiated my son and my daughter-in-law's outdoor Vermont winter wedding. Their vows were shared next to a gorge, a shivering waterfall and among the birds and trees. I was in "The Forest" when all of the sudden a painful spasm of Robyn's Absence, hurled me back toward THE BARK. I know that even at a time when I might feel the sun, that I can suddenly crash right back into THE BARK of the Tree. That is The Reality of Missing My Child.

Perhaps the irony is that, as a family, we bought 30 acres of forest that we built our family home on together. We used to play among the trees and go "tree hunting" for games of hide and seek and scrap wood for our cozy fire circles. Trees always used to make me smile and feel comforted. Perhaps, some day, again, I will see them and appreciate their beauty. For right now, I am still all too well aware of THE BARK.

Bettie-Jeanne Rivard-Darby, TCF
Ellington, CT (Robyn April's
mom)



What is New about the New Year?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hoorahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

Dory Rooker ~ TCF, Upper Valley, VT

MEETINGS

First Tuesday of each month
At 7:00pm;

Meetings will be held in the General Class Building
at Fayetteville Technical
Community College, 2817 Ft. Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303
(Unless otherwise stated on our website)

www.tcffayetteville.org

If you have questions contact Jennifer German
jojegerman@outlook.com or (910) 245-3177

Our Children & Siblings Remembered on Their Birthday's

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

January

Michelle Andrews January 1
Demetrius Jordan January 2
Randall James-Berlin January 6
R. Davis Turner January 7
Jeremiah Davis-Kraut January 9
Joseph Barnes January 9
Erica Graham January 10
Eddie Santistevan January 10
George Lee Perry January 14
Benny Michael Traylor January 15
James "Jack" South January 16
Ronald Hamilton Jr. January 23
Deborah Atkinson January 23
Wendy Hair January 25
Sherry McCordle January 25
Manzonian Hall January 25
Christine Bailey January 28
Graylin Jackson January 29

February

Patrick Shea February 2
Richard Miller III February 3
James Campbell February 5
Juliana Wilkins February 6
Chad Arnette February 12
Amber Marie Hall February 13
Darrell Sweatt February 14
Miranda Butler February 14
Dustin Hunt February 14
Mary Beth Snyder February 15
Pierce Brantley Matthews February 16
Erik Tornblum February 16



Jackson Vogel February 19

Tyler Clark February 21

Daniel "Adam" Clark February 22

Ian Redshaw February 23

Stephen Carroll February 27

Dillon Reed King February 27

Leslie King February 28

March

Cory Fullwood March 1

Joe Dan Rumley March 3

Robert Stevens March 4

Kyle Harris March 7

Mikayla Brielle Watkins March 7

Bobby Beller March 8

Dennis Tart March 9

Stephen Bruno March 10

Sharon Washington-McBrydy March 12

David Warlick March 13

Christopher "Chris" Hondros March 14

John Konen, Jr March 15

Daniel McDonough March 15

Malachi Matthews March 18

R. Davis Turner March 18

Logan Zimmerman March 18

Jonathon Casey March 19

Talisha Morris March 22

Michael Hurt March 25

Akiana Lopez-Sellos March 25

Joshua Huggins March 26

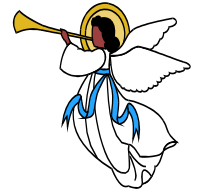
Sean Thomas March 28

George Lee Perry March 31



Children & Siblings Remembered On Their Angel Date's

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



January

RáMael McArthur January 1
 Melissa McCoy January 2
 Britany Solewin January 2
 Randall James-Berlin January 6
 Rodney Dietrich January 8
 Jeremiah Davis-Kraut January 9
 James "Randy" Smith January 12
 Duane May January 12
 Sean Thomas January 15
 Charles Cook January 17
 Dallas Locklear January 20
 Michelle Andrews January 21
 Kevin Harlan January 21
 Erica Graham January 24
 Amy Zinsser January 24
 Shermicka Grant January 25
 Zach Grullon January 28
 Joshua Huggins January 28
 Andrew Williams January 28
 Karlie Williams January 28
 Laura Williams January 28
 Karissa Williams January 28

February

Evelyn Copeland February 5
 Dennis Tart February 5
 Juliana Wilkins February 6



Omar Sharaf February 8

Gregory Lovings February 10

Chad Allen Arnette February 14

Mark Draughon February 14

Nicholas "Nick" Simmons February 14

Judith Bowman February 19

Cory Fullwood February 21

Lamar Beard February 23

Michael Pizzarella February 24

Shawn Leigh Watkins February 24

Wendy Hair February 26

March

Cody Mclendon March 2

Tammy Owens March 2

Melissa Thornton March 3

Elizabeth "Allison" Thomas March 3

Dylan Mckelvey March 5

Matthew Guin March 7

Sharnale Thompson March 13

Leon Matthews March 15

Elizabeth Akins March 16

R. Davis Turner March 16

Cody Phillips March 17

Stephen Bruno March 18

Bryan Bowles March 26

Stephen Carroll March 27

Michael Heart March 30

John Klemenko March 30

The Compassionate Friends
Fayetteville Area Chapter
703 Rosebud Court,
Vass NC 28394
Secretary/Treasurer



The Compassionate Friends
Fayetteville Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Chapter Leader
Cindy Tart Bowers.....(910)-391-0779

Newsletter Editor
Jennifer German.....(910) 245-3177

Printing of the newsletter
John German.....(910) 245-3177

Webmaster
John German.....(910) 245-3177

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We're on the Web
www.tcffayetteville.org
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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 _____

If you would like to make a donation please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends, and mail to TCF Fayetteville Area Chapter, 703 Rosebud Court, Vass, NC 28394
Please send form with check. **A donation is not required to submit items for the newsletter.**