



The Compassionate Friends

Greater Omaha Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

www.tcfomaha.org
Facebook.com/TCF Omaha
mail@tcfomaha.org
402-571-4011
P.O. Box 540852
Omaha NE 68154

**July-Aug
2016**

Mission Statement: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

SAVE THE DATE!

August 4—Spirituality and Grief...Guest speaker panel

What happened when your child died? Was your faith rocked? Did you find comfort in your faith? Many of us have many questions, now that we have experienced the worst – the death of our child. And what about hope... what role does God play in this? Our August meeting promises to explore these issues and more. Local spiritual leaders have generously offered their time to present perspectives on death, rituals of death, hope and healing. In the dictionary faith is described as a firm belief in something in something for which there is no proof. So while we will probably leave the meeting with unanswered questions, perhaps we will have ideas to ponder and thoughts that bring us comfort. Consider this meeting your opportunity to bring additional peace to your healing hearts!

September 1—Seasons of Grief

September 18 @ 2 pm —Brick Dedication, Boys Town

December 11 @ 3 pm—Worldwide Candle Lighting

St Robert Bellarmine Mainelli Center, 11900 Pacific Street

SUPPORT MEETING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

For parents, grandparents and siblings over 18

Omaha

1st Thursday 7-9 pm

New Cassel Retirement Center,
900 N 90th Street, Auditorium Level 2

Fremont

2nd Thursday 7-9 pm

Fremont Health 450 E 23rd Street

Lincoln

3rd Thursday 7-9 pm

The Space 5900 S 58th Street Suite, Suite H

What Might Have Been ... What Is

I want what might have been...

And I want what is.

I want the child I do not have,

And I want the child that has come after.

I cannot choose

One or the other,

My heart wants both.

What might have been,

A sturdy lad,

Baseball bats,

Football helmets,

Squiggly worms on hooks

Dirt and mud and

Burps and booms.

What is now,

A charming girl,

Raggedy Anne,

Stuffed bears,

Curls and ribbons on hair

Tea and cookies and Squeals and giggles.

How can I choose

From two blessings,

One gone too soon,

One here by a miracle?

I cannot ...

But if I could...

I would want both ...

What might have been ...

And what is.

~ Lisa Sculley

In memory of Joey Sculley

And with love to Leslie Sculley

Teamwork—One of the gifts of serving in TCF is that it presents us with the opportunity to help our own healing by helping others. Another gift is that TCF gives us the opportunity to be part of a team. Everywhere I look across the TCF spectrum I see a beautiful collaboration of individuals brought together by loss, working in harmony with each other to provide hope. TCF is more than a support group, it is proof positive that collectively hurting people can accomplish amazing things.

Most of us came to TCF feeling hopeless and helpless in our grief. Today, as leaders of our organization, we can look back and measure the progress we have made because an opportunity was given to serve TCF. TCF works because it teaches us that the load of grief is too heavy to carry all by ourselves, it allows us to share that load with another. TCF leadership is also a heavy load. TCF leaders can experience burnout if they begin carrying too much of the load by themselves. If you are tiring under the weight of your leadership load, give a gift to another by asking them to help you.

Alan Pedersen, Executive Director
The Compassionate Friends Inc.

The Omaha Chapter Leadership needs your help!

Please consider assisting with chapter leadership, at the meetings, and in between.

Steering committee members must attend monthly support group meetings and chapter events. We follow the guidelines of the national organization.

Seasoned grieverers are so important at meetings to reach out to our new members, to provide listening ears, friendship and understanding. Please commit to 1-2 meetings a year to be a greeter, bring a plate of goodies, and give back the compassion you found when you needed it so much. It would be a wonderful way to honor your child at a special time each year and tell your story of healing.

We have some very special members who have kept in touch with this group for over 35 years! It wouldn't be what it is without them.

TCF in the community

July —TCF Omaha has been invited to host a breakout session at the National Leukodystrophy Conference in Omaha.

August—TCF Omaha has been invited to be a vendor at an Open House at Forest Lawn.

Closed Facebook Groups

The Compassionate Friends (National) offers a variety of closed Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator.

TCF - Loss of a Child

TCF – Loss of a Stepchild

TCF – Loss of a Grandchild

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings)

TCF - Men in Grief

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

TCF - Loss to Suicide

TCF - Loss to Homicide

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver

TCF - Loss to Cancer

TCF - Loss of a Child with Special Needs

TCF - Loss to Long-term Illness

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss

TCF - Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children

TCF – Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth

TCF – Loss to Mental Illness

TCF – Crafty Corner

The Compassionate Friends Chapter Leadership

“The gift you give, the love you feel, the memory you cherish -
These are the things by which your life endures and shines.”

Love Gifts received April 1—May 31

To protect the privacy of our members, this information has been removed from the public version of the newsletter. Please register for a complete copy.

<http://www.tcfomaha.org/subscribeauthorizations.html>

Love Gifts · Address Change · Authorizations

Mail to: The Compassionate Friends , PO Box 540852, Omaha, NE 68154

Your Name _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Date _____ Gift of \$ _____

DIRECT MY GIFT TOWARD:

- Outreach -printing, postage, phone, web Angel of Hope Memorial Programs

In Memory of _____

Message: _____

2016 AUTHORIZATION—initial each selection

Publish my child's name/dates in the newsletter as long as I am on the mailing list _____

Use my child's photo in the 2016 Worldwide Candle Lighting Slide Show _____

Newsletters and notices will be sent electronically unless paper is requested

_____paper _____Unsubscribe

Child's Name _____

Birth Date _____ Death Date _____ Your Relationship _____

SIGNATURE REQUIRED _____ DATE _____

May the beauty
of summer
surround
you,
be a source
of comfort
and healing.
May these
affirmations
remind you
of the joy
that your
loved one
brought into
your life —
a gift that
is yours forever.



Capacity to Love

By Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Director
Center for Loss and Life Transition,
Fort. Collins, CO

“Every time we make the decision to love someone, we open ourselves to great suffering, because those we most love cause us not only great joy but also great pain. The greatest pain comes from leaving, and the pain of the leaving can tear us apart. Still, if we want to avoid the suffering of leaving, we will never experience the joy of loving. And love is stronger than fear, life stronger than death, hope stronger than despair. We have to trust that the risk of loving is always worth taking.” — Henri Nouwen

“All you need is love,” famously sang the Beatles. I couldn’t agree more. We come into the world yearning to give and receive love. Authentic love is God’s greatest gift to us as human beings. Love is the one human experience that invites us to feel beautifully connected and forces us to acknowledge that meaning and purpose are anchored not in isolation and aloneness, but in union and togetherness.

What higher purpose is there in life but to give and receive love? Love is the essence of a life of abundance and joy. No matter what life brings our way, love is our highest goal, our most passionate quest. Yes, we have a tremendous need for love—love that captures our hearts and nourishes our spirits. In fact, our capacity to give and receive love is what ultimately defines us. Nothing we have “accomplished” in our lifetimes matters as much as the way we have loved one another.

Yet love inevitably leads to grief. You see, love and grief are two sides of the same precious coin. One does not—and cannot—exist without the other. They are the yin and yang of our lives. People sometimes say that grief is the price we pay for the joy of having loved. This also means, of course, that grief is not a universal experience. While I wish it were, sadly it is not. Grief is predicated on our capacity to give and receive love. Some people choose not to love and so never grieve. If we allow ourselves the grace that comes with love, however, we must allow ourselves the grace that is required to mourn.

The experience of grief is only felt when someone of great value, purpose and meaning has been a part of your life. To mourn your loss is required if you are to befriend the love you have been granted. To honor your grief is not self-destructive or harmful, it is life-giving and life-sustaining, and it ultimately leads you back to love again. In this way, love is both the cause and the antidote.

Yes, it is a given that there is no love without loss. Likewise, there is no integration of loss without the experience of mourning. To deny the significance of mourning would be to believe that there is something wrong about loving. Just as our greatest gift from God is our capacity to give and receive love, it is a great gift that we can openly mourn our life losses.

It is important, however, that you understand that grief and mourning are not the same thing. Grief is the constellation of thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies. We can think of it as the container. It holds our thoughts, feelings and images of our experience when someone we love dies. In other words, grief is the internal meaning given to the experience of loss. Mourning is when we take the grief we have on the inside and express it outside of ourselves.

Making the choice to not just grieve but authentically mourn, provides us the courage to live through the pain of loss and be transformed by it. How ironic that to ultimately go on to live well and love well we must allow ourselves to mourn well. Somewhere is the collision between the heart (which searches for permanency and connection) and the brain (which acknowledges separation and loss) there is a need for all of us to authentically mourn. You have loved from the outside in, and now you must learn to mourn from the inside out.

“We are all mirrors unto one another. Look into me and you will find something of yourself as I will of you.” ~ Walter Rinder

Love is a sacred partnership of communion with another human being. You take each other in, and even when you are apart, you are together. Wherever you go, you carry the person inside you.

Communion means the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially on a spiritual level. When two people love one another, they are connected. They are entwined.

The word “communion” comes from the Old French *comuner*, which means “to hold in common.” Note that this is different than “to have in common.” You may have very little in common with another person yet you can love them wholeheartedly. Instead, you hold things in common—that is, you consciously choose to share one another’s lives, hopes and dreams. You hold her heart, and she holds yours.

This experience of taking another person inside your heart is beyond definition and defies analysis. It is part of the mystery of love. Love has its own way with us. It knocks on our hearts and invites itself in. It cannot be seen, but we realize it has happened. It cannot be touched, yet we feel it.

When someone we love dies, we feel a gaping hole inside us. I have companioned hundreds of mourners who have said to me, “When she died, I felt like part of me died, too.” In what can feel like a very physical sense, something that was inside us now seems missing. We don’t mourn those who die from the outside in; we mourn them from the inside out.

The absence of the person you love wounds your spirit, creates downward movement in your psyche, and transforms your heart. Yet, even though you feel there is now a hole inside you,” you will also come to learn (if you haven’t already) that those you love live on in your heart. You remain in communion with those you love forever and are inextricably connected to them for eternity.

Yes, you will grieve the person’s absence and need to express your feelings of grief. You must mourn. You must commune with your grief and take it into your heart, embracing your many thoughts and feelings. When you allow yourself to fully mourn, over time and with the support of others who care about you, you will come to find that the person you lost does indeed still live inside you.

Love abides in communion—during life and after death. And mourning is communion with your grief. With communion, comes understanding, meaning and a life of richness.

Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

“Accept the things to which fate binds you, and love the people with whom fate brings you together, but do so with all your heart.”

~ Marcus Aurelius

When you love another person, it can feel like one plus one equals three. I’m sure you’ve heard the saying, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Love is like that. Two people can come together and form a partnership that enables each person to be “more” in so many ways.

Here’s another way to think about this idea: Love is like an orchestra. You may be a clarinet—a strong, fine wind instrument all by yourself. But when you surround yourself with other instruments, each of whom do the work of carrying their own parts and practicing their own music, together, as a group, you can blow the doors off the place.

I much prefer this expansive concept of love over the long-held reductionist belief that “two become one.” If two become one, both participants in the relationship are diminished. Conversely, what truly feeds the soul of a loving relationship is expansion, mutual-nurturance and growth.

Without doubt, being part of a synergistic, two-makes-three relationship requires a conscious commitment. Did your relationship with the person who died feel enhancing or diminishing? In synergistic relationships, there has to

be space and encouragement to be real and authentic. Were you empowered to be your true self or disempowered to be something you were not? Did your two make three, or did your two make you less than one? If so, perhaps you are now faced with mourning what you never had but wished you did. How human is that?

If, on the other hand, your relationship with the person who died made you greater than the sum of your parts, what happens now that one of you is gone? You may feel diminished. You may feel empty. You may feel “less than.” Your self-identity may even seem to shrink as you struggle with your changing roles. If you are no longer a wife (or a mother or a sister or a daughter), what are you?

Also, the experience of mourning can feel piecemeal—a cry here, a burst of anger there; a deep sadness today, a crush of guilt tomorrow. You might feel a sense of disorientation from the scattered and ever-changing nature of your grief.

But when you trust in the process of grief and you surrender to the mystery, you will find that mourning, like love, is also greater than the sum of its parts. Leaning into your grief and always erring on the side of expressing rather than inhibiting or ignoring your thoughts and feelings—no matter how random and disjointed they might seem some days—will bring you to a place of transformation. You will not just be different from the person you were before the death. You will be greater. Your experience of love and grief will create a changed you who has not only survived but who has learned to thrive again in a new form and in a new way.

And just as love connects you to others, so should grief. You need the listening ears and open hearts of others as you express your thoughts and feelings about the death. You need the support of others as you mourn.

Yes, love and grief are both greater than the sum of their parts. The lesson I take from this is that whenever you engage fully and openly in life, experiencing both the joys and the sorrows head on, you are living the life you were meant to live.

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About Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him. Perhaps best known for his model of “companioning” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well. Learn more at www.centerforloss.com

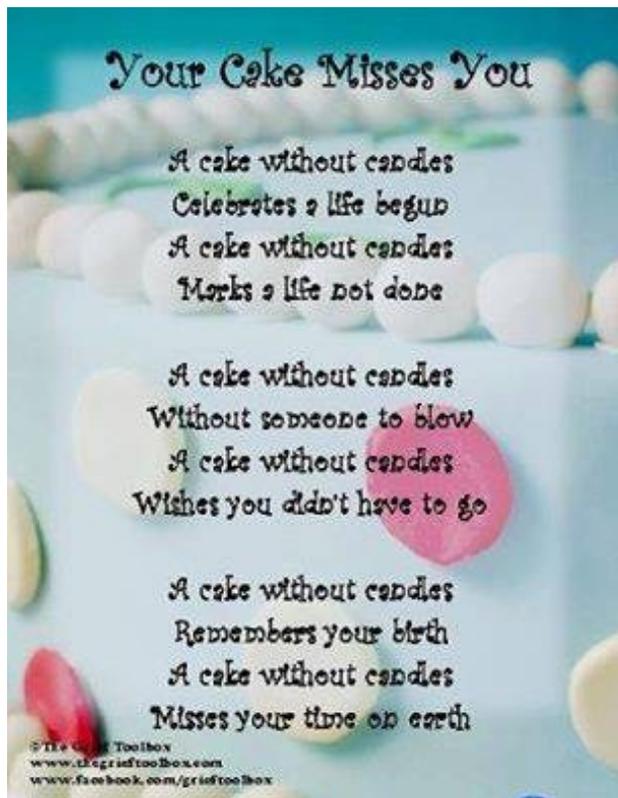
Remembering Our Children...Always

Birthdays

Anniversaries

To protect the privacy of our members, this information has been removed from the public version of the newsletter. Please register for a complete copy.

<http://www.tcfomaha.org/subscribeauthorizations.html>



**You are not lost.
You continue in every hearty laugh,
In every nice surprise,
And in every reassuring moment
of my life.**

**—Molly Fumia
Safe Passage**

In the days ahead, please remember these children and their families.

To have your child listed here, please send your authorization annually with the form on Page 3 or on our website <http://www.tcfomaha.org/subscribeauthorizations.html>

If you are moving, please send us an address update to avoid the extra cost for each returned or forwarded newsletter.

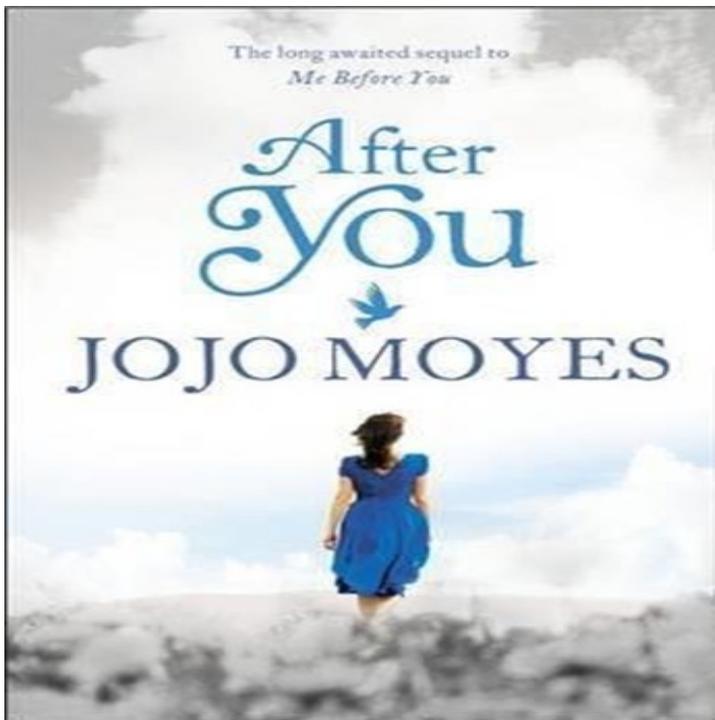
ANNUAL BRICK DEDICATION
BOYS TOWN, NE
SEPTEMBER 18TH, 2016 AT 2 PM



*Bring A White Flower
No seating provided,
bring a chair or blanket.*

Bricks ordered by August 26 will be dedicated.

Excerpt taken from the book, *After You* by Jojo Moyes



“Okay. Well. Here’s a real question. How long do you think it takes to get over someone dying? Someone you really loved, I mean.”

I’m not sure why I asked him. It was almost cruelly blunt, given his circumstances.

... Sam’s eyes widened a little. “Woah. Well . . .”, he peered down at his mug, and then out at the shadowy fields “. . . “I’m not sure you ever do.”

“That’s cheery.”

“No. Really. I’ve thought about it a lot. You learn to live with it, with them. Because they do stay with you, even if they’re not living, breathing people any more. It’s not the same crushing grief you felt at first, the kind that swamps you, and makes you want to cry in the wrong places, and get irrationally angry with all the idiots who are still alive when the person you love is dead. It’s just something you learn to accommodate. Like adapting around a hole. I don’t know. It’s like you become ... a doughnut instead of a bun.”



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"Heaven"

by David Baker

All afternoon the sprinkler ticks and sprays, ticks and sprays in lazy rounds,
trailing a feather of mist. When I turn it off, the cicadas keep up their own dry rain,
passing on high from limb to limb.

I don't know what has shocked me more, that you are gone, that I am still here,
and that there is music after the end.

