



The Compassionate Friends of Tallahassee

http://www.tcftallahassee.com
V. 2 No. 1 Jan.-Mar. 2008

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Co-Leader	Sheila Ryan
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Newsletter	Janice Mazza
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	Juliacarol Love

Monthly Meetings

2nd Monday; 7:00 P.M.
St. Stephen Lutheran Church 2198
N. Meridian Rd. Tallahassee, FL
32303 850-422-8404

It takes courage to come to the first meeting. Bring a friend or relative if you wish. You will find it is all right to laugh or cry, to share exactly how you feel or say nothing at all. You are not alone and we understand.

Wish List

Small T.V. and VCR

Donations

In memory of Dr. W. Hugh Mathews
Margaret Rooks
Mrs. William Fleharty
Anne & John Atkins
Bible Study Group /Elaine Baker
Felton-Lester Sunday School
Methodist Church
Phillip A Webb, III
Ruth and Robert Howell
Trinity United Methodist Choir

Tom and J. Leigh Brooks in memory of
Jonathan Barch

Joyce & Lee Stillwell in honor of Judy
and Lee Young

Don & Juliacarole in memory of Stephen
Love

TCF is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.



What does time have to do with grief?

Everything!

Just consider how, in "normal life," our lives are run by the clock and the calendar. Some of us have a clock in every room so we can keep close track of the time. Few of us have the courage to live without wearing a watch because we're afraid we might be late for something. Time is precious to us. We live in a society that reminds us that every moment counts, and some of us are masters at cramming as much activity as possible into every moment.

And when we are grieving our experience still has much to do about time.

Time stands still.

When we are grieving we may feel like the rest of the world is going on as usual while our life has stopped. Just last week, after my friend died, I passed a neighbor watering his lawn. He seemed totally unaffected by, and most likely unaware of Sarah's death. How could that be? He only lives a block away. Didn't he feel the same shift in the universe that I felt when she died? Doesn't he realize someone really special is missing?

Time's up.

Most people will allow us about a one month grace period where we are permitted to talk about our loss and even to cry openly. During this time our friends will probably seem to be attentive to our needs. But when the month is up they may be thinking, if not actually telling us, that it's time to move on, and that we need to get over "it". They want us to get back to normal. We may be surprised how many of our friends (and relatives too) will become uncomfortable with our need to dwell on our sorrow. They may not appreciate that it takes time to readjust our life to the loss. Maybe what they are really saying is, "Time's up for me to be able to be present to you in your grieving time." Because of this we may need to redefine what is normal for us, and choosing some new best friends—friends who are willing and able to walk along side us on our personal journey of grief, and who will allow us to determine when our "time's up".
(continued pg.2)

Doing Time.

Grief may make us feel imprisoned in our own version of hell. We won't like who we are. We won't like it that our loved one has gone. We won't like it that our friends can't make us feel better. We just want out of here, and we're not sure we want to do the work that grief requires in order to be set free from this bondage. Some of us will remain in this uncomfortable place for a short time while others of us may feel like we have been given a longer sentence.



Wasting time.

Though in real life I pride myself in being a master at multitasking, in the land of grief I'm much less sure of myself. I find it hard to make decisions because, in my new situation, I don't trust myself to make the right choice. I want someone else to be responsible if something goes wrong. Sometimes my wasting time is about not having the energy to get started. I am physically exhausted and my body refuses to make an effort to reclaim my former self. And I admit, quite frankly, that I'm not sure I even care enough about anything to make the effort. What's the use, since it seems like everything I love sooner or later gets taken away from me.

Looking back in time.

When we grieve we spend most of our time, at least at first, looking back. It seems safer that way. That's where our missing loved ones are. If we were to look forward, that would mean we would have to imagine our lives without those we have lost. And that's what we aren't ready to accept--not yet. So we spend a lot of time thinking how we should have been able to prevent their dying, or wondering if we used our time with them well, as we remember the good times, bad times, silly and sad times. We think we have to keep those memories in front of us, or surely we will forget those whom we have lost.

First times.

It is natural for us to gauge our life after a loss as we anticipate and then go through the first times - -first day, the first week, the first month, the first time we venture out in public, the first time we went back to school, or church, or work, the first summer, the first Christmas, the first vacation, the first time we laughed. These first times are like benchmarks, notches in our belt that prove we are surviving when you weren't sure we wanted to, or didn't know we could.

Dinnertime.

There's an empty chair at the table. There's the conversation that seems to be just noise, having little to do with the absent one about whom we are all thinking but not daring to speak. We still prepare more food than we now need because we haven't yet figured out how to cook for one less person. Sometimes the food seems to have no taste, and is not able to do what we want it to do--to fill that huge hole within us.

Time out.

Sometimes what we need to do is to take a time out from our regular activities to reflect on what has happened to our personal world, as we knew it before our great loss. To do so is not to run away from life but simply to realize that to act as if nothing has happened doesn't work. This loss is too big to allow us to pretend that it hasn't had a big impact on us. It's in the quiet time, when we shut off our thinking, and empty out the chatter in our head that the healing begins. Others will have to be okay with our need to bow out for a while. Remember that during grief our job is to take care of ourselves, not to take care of our friends. When it's time to re-enter a normal routine, it's our choice what we will reinstate and what we decide to lay aside. Loss tends to redefine our priorities. What used to be important may not be as important now. And that's not necessarily a bad thing.

(Continued p.3)

(Time continued)

Time heals what reason cannot.

In the end, time will change things. The intensity we experience when grief is new, where we can see nothing but our loss, and where every moment is filled with thoughts of the one who died will gradually diminish and become softer. Time forces the big picture of life back into our vision whether we like it or not. This happens in our lives all the time. Remember how when we first fell in love with someone, we were totally preoccupied with only that other person, until gradually a more balanced existence was restored. Or when we did (what we thought was) some terrible thing and we were sure everybody would never let us forget it, we came to find out a few months down the road that most people had forgotten the incident.

In the months (maybe years) following a loss, life will eventually start to re-emerge, and life on this planet will once again seem possible. This will not happen because we come to understand the death more clearly but because, with the passage of time, the unanswered questions will become easier to live with.

Time will not remove grief entirely. The scars of our grief will remain and we may find ourselves ambushed by a fresh wave of grief at any time. But needing to know the answers to the "why" questions won't seem quite so important as it once was.

Time is a gift that we have taken for granted.
We've been given our lives one moment at a time.

This is good.

Peace to you.

Pat Schwiebert - Director, Grief Watch
<http://www.griefwatch.com/>



Hope

Hope is the belief
that one hand
reaching to another
can eventually
touch the moon,
allowing the light
to guide us
through the night.

- Nicholas Mazza

Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 26,
257, reprinted with permission of the author.

The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help our selves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a

series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the

power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories....sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

From Tear Soup, a recipe for healing after loss.

Soup Making & Time



Grief work takes time. Much longer than anyone wants it to.

If a child or spouse dies it may be a year before the bereaved begins to gain a sense of stability, because the loss is highlighted by each season, holiday, anniversary or special day. The second year is not so great either.

You may be okay one minute but the next minute you may hit bottom. Nighttime can be particularly difficult. Some people have trouble getting to sleep while others have trouble staying asleep. And then there are those who don't want to wake up.

Most people can tolerate another's loss for about a month before wanting the bereaved person to get back to normal.



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Portland, Oregon USA
www.griefwatch.com



Love Gifts A love gift is a wonderful way to remember your child while helping to fund chapter activities, newsletters, mailings, books for the lending library, information packets sent to newly bereaved families, etc. You may choose to donate a tax deductible love gift at any time; many parents do so on their child's birthday or anniversary of their death.

<i>Our Children Loved, Missed, Remembered</i>		
January		
Child	Birth	Death
Danny Kinsey	January 5	
Brian J Dehner	January 9	
Kenisha Jarelle Preston	January 11	January 11
Edward "Eddie" Wolack	January 15	
Katie Knapp	January 16	
Gabriel Harris	January 16	
Michael Lindberg Hardy, Jr	January 19	
Marie Suzanne Smith	January 20	
Sarah Katherine Thompson	January 21	January 21
Noah Colvin	January 21	
Kari Lee Montford	January 21	
Christopher Michael Davidson	January 21	January 21
Erick Thomas Matthews	January 29	January 29
Michael Sternchak		January 3
David Gritzke II		January 5
Sara A Garretson		January 7
Samuel Maurice Williford		January 22
Rachel Nicole Phillips		January 23
February		
Child	Birth	Death
Hannah Rachel Lippman	February 1	February 1
Lucien Charles Grosmaire	February 1	February 1
Anthony Michael Pizzuto	February 5	
Amanda Marie Dodson	February 7	February 7
Stephen "Stevie" S Dobson IV	February 8	
Luke Rigsby	February 10	
Ivan Larue Richardson	February 14	
Justin Tucker	February 14	
Vernon T Foster	February 16	
Robbie Alexander	February 19	
Danielle N Florida Smith	February 19	
Jeff Godwin	February 20	
Caitlin Grosmaire	February 20	February 20
Cody Glenn Slater	February 22	
Andrew "Drew" Thompson	February 25	
Emily Faglie		February 2

Libby Lowery		February 2
Michael Joseph Watson		February 2
Leslie Ann Knowles		February 7
Lon "Lonnie" Kitzmiller		February 7
Robert L Northrup		February 9
Gabriel Gershom Burke		February 10
Edward "Eddie" Wolack		February 11
Barbara Wilkinson		February 11
Lisa Jane Oltman		February 14
Janna Lynn Songer		February 14
Joel Gray Henry		February 14
Adrian David Carmo		February 16
Gregory Eugene Montford		February 18
Jordan Nicole Mehr		February 18
Tom Peterson		February 24
Virginia Lee Rozier		February 26
Damian Scott Woods		February 27
Andrew "Scott" Matthews		February 28
March		
Child	Birth	Death
Fred Miller	March 10	
Sean O'Brien	March 14	
Infant baby Chambers	March 14	March 14
Milton Johnson	March 15	
Barbara Wilkinson	March 16	
Jordan Nicole Mehr	March 17	
Colby Strickland	March 17	
Sara Kathryn (Kathy) Hau	March 21	
Emily Doan	March 22	March 22
Tiffany Miranda Spikes	March 22	
Eric Lynn Stafford	March 27	
Hunter Mozolic	March 31	
Stephanie Renee Morgan		March 1
Daphne C Godwin		March 12
Justin Tucker		March 14
John Brown		March 18
Alex Rehder		March 19
Cody Glenn Slater		March 22
Patricia Ann Reed		March 26
Christopher Thomas Reed		March 27
Russell Todd Cody		March 27