



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS-CHAPTER 2358

CO-LEADERS: Susan Fletcher, Scott Higgins
& Lesa Hartranft
Sibling Coordinator - Courtney Langdon

NEWSLETTER: Donna Goodrich

PHONE: 704-882-4503

E-MAIL: tcf.clt@gmail.com

WEBSITE: WWW.CHARLOTTETCF.ORG

Facebook Page: *Compassionate Friends of
Charlotte, NC*

MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting place: St. Matthew Catholic Church, 8015 Ballantyne
Commons Parkway, Charlotte, NC - Room 234-235

Meeting Time: 3rd Tuesday of Each Month at 7:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS:

*Card making session usually on the first Monday of each
month at Donna Goodrich's home. E-mails will be sent out.

*TCF Regional Conference in Nashville, TN, October 17-19, 2019

*TCF Charlotte Annual Gathering - October 26- 5:00 - 11:00 pm

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

WELCOME & CHAPTER INFO.....	2
DONATIONS & CLOSED ONLINE PRIVATE PAGES.....	3
WE REMEMBER OUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN AND SIBLINGS.....	4-9
SIBLING CORNER.....	10
TCF CHARLOTTE ANNUAL FALL GATHERING.....	11
WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR.....	12
TCF REGIONAL CONFERENCE.....	13
LEARNING TO LIVE WITH GRIEF BRAIN.....	14-16
NAGGING GUILT IN CHILD LOSS.....	17-18
THE ADVICE I WISH I GOT AFTER MY SON DIED.....	19

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Regional Coordinators for NC: Donna & Ralph Goodrich

Phone Number: 704-882-4503

E-mail: iluvu2lauren@gmail.com

NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends
(877-969-0010)

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

Website:

www.compassionatefriends.org

online private closed facebook pages:

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/>

TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!!

We congratulate you on having the courage to walk through our door for the first time. Please give our meetings at least 3 tries before deciding if they are right for you. We hope, with the resources available through TCF, you will find the right person or the right words to help you. You Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends.

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS:

We need your encouragement and support. TCF continues because of YOU. You give hope to the newly bereaved - hope that they too can eventually find joy in life again. Please attend when you feel you are able to reach out to another bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling.

Did you know that TCF Charlotte has its own Facebook page? Just search in facebook for - Compassionate Friends of Charlotte, NC

LIKE our page and please post any article, quote or personal musings that you feel may help another member. All information for meetings and special events will be listed on our facebook page.

WE HAVE A NEW WEBPAGE!!

PLEASE VISIT US!!

WWW.CHARLOTTETCF.ORG

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF TCF CHARLOTTE STEERING COMMITTEE???

We need your help. Volunteering to be on our Steering Committee is a wonderful way to give back to the organization that helped you when you were starting your grief journey, and what better way to keep your child, grandchild or sibling's memory alive?? Contact any of the leaders at our meetings if you would like more information. We need YOUR help to ensure our Chapter is as successful as possible in helping others. This is YOUR Chapter - help us make it a welcoming and caring place for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings to come to for help.

Our Chapter survives by donations only. Please consider donating to your Chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling on their special days. What better thing to do in their memory than to pay it forward for the help you have received from TCF. Thank you to the following people for recent donations to our Charlotte Chapter:

Please Mail All Donations to Our TCF Charlotte Treasurer
At The Following Address:
Carolyn Patton
5902 Rimerton Drive
Charlotte, NC 28226-8227

Is it your child, grandchild or sibling's birthday or anniversary date? Why not make a contribution to our TCF Charlotte Chapter in their memory. Our chapter exists on your donations only. There are costs associated with the Chapter, i.e., supplies, books, refreshments, entries for our annual BBQ, and our fee for our website. PLEASE help support our Chapter!!!

Do you ever wake up at night and just need someone to talk to that "knows" what you are feeling, what you are thinking, that will just "let you talk about your child"? TCF has over 20 closed facebook pages for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Go to this link and look over the different pages. They really are good:

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/private-facebook-groups/>

TO OUR MEMBERS

If there are any errors in dates or names in our listing of our children's, grandchildren's, or siblings's, please let me know. We are trying to get our database as accurate as possible. Many of our loved ones names do not have a last name listed. In these cases, we assume it is the same as the parent, grandparent or sibling who is listed as a member in our database. If this is incorrect, please let me know. There are many names that do not have a birth date or a death date listed. We know this can be very difficult to list, especially in the early days of grief. If you feel like adding those dates, just email them to me at: iluvu2lauren@gmail.com. We are only human so we do make mistakes but I have tried to be as accurate as I possibly can. Thank you for your understanding.

Remembering these Children and Their Families on Their Birthdays - September 2019

Amanda Barnett

9/26 - 9/11
George Barnett

Michelle H Beebe

9/20 - 6/3
Nanci Beebe

Phillip Jason Bell

9/2 - 3/13
Kristal & Shannon Bell

Andrea Skillman

9/9 - 3/25
Darla Brover

Edward Stephens Brown

9/14 - 1/6
Bunnie Brown

Bobby Dowling

9/20 - 2/28
Dulcie & Jeff Dowling

Michael Wm. Fletcher, Jr.

9/11 - 7/30
Susan & Michael Fletcher, Sr.

Madelynn Charlotte Golbach

9/21 - 11/2
Nicole & Christoph Golbach

David Haney

9/27 - 11/24
Theresa Haney

Charlie Mullis

9/26 - 7/14
Kathy Holder

Jeffrey Michael Hunt

9/26 - 5/20
Janet & Justin Hunt

Ashley Hurte

9/9 - 12/22
Jim & Elisa Hurte

Josh Keziah

9/5 - 9/1
Janice & Jeff Keziah

Sean Patrick Logan

9/26 - 5/26
Theresa & John Logan

Jonathan Mariano

9/22 - 7/31
Julie & Vince Mariano

Hudson Lee
9/14 - 7/24
Francesca Marie

Paul McGrath
9/26 - 1/22
Linda & Jim McGrath

Elizabeth Messer
9/4 - 6/24
James & Michelle Messer

Bobby O'Shea
9/6 - 1/7
Bob & Pauline O'Shea

Andrew Pangle
9/21 - 9/5
Faye Pangle

Maria Elena Petrone
9/13 - 9/2
Eleanor & Frank Petrone

Keeghan Drake McCormack
9/27 - 2/22
Melissa Steele

Darron Stitt
9/19 - 4/1
Pearl Stitt

Christopher Eastman Tilsch
9/20 - 3/21
Susan & Greg Tilsch

Seth Henderson
9/27 - 7/2
Daphney Torres

Remembering these Children and Their Families on Their Anniversaries - September 2019

Kathryn Anderson
5/26 - 9/23
Jeanie & Jim Anderson

Rodney Trent Baldwin
10/21 - 9/3
Alison Baldwin-Dent

Amanda Barnett
9/26 - 9/11
George Barnett

Baby Chambers
7/18 - 9/?
Bryan & Andrea
Chambers

Cliff Golla
3/21 - 9/1
Yvonne Golla

June Keiper
8/21 - 9/14
Roy & Sue Keiper

Josh Keziah
9/5 - 9/1
Janice & Jeff Keziah

Christopher Lloyd
11/22 - 9/25
Cayren Lloyd

Kelsey Morris
12/4 - 9/4
Meghan Morris

Justin Zuk
11/25 - 9/27
Barbara Palmer

Andrew Pangle
9/21 - 9/5
Faye Pangle

Maria Elena Petrone
9/13 - 9/2
Eleanor & Frank Petrone

Breanna Rae Ringersen
5/4 - 9/11
Craig & Loreen Ringersen

Isaac Rowell
3/21 - 9/9
Ed & Ann Rowell

Silje Rowell
12/27 - 9/8
Ed & Ann Rowell

Emily Elizabeth Smith
10/13 - 9/4
Debbie Smith

Chris Turner
8/24 - 9/11
Elise Turner

Danielle Jean Callahan
3/29 - 9/16
Susan Turner

Max Ugarte
7/5 - 9/10
Belinda Ugarte

Laura McDermott
2/10 - 9/23
Meredith Warren

Laura Whittaker
4/21 - 9/11
Dennis & Karen Whittaker

Aubrey Wiger
1/? - 9/?
May Wiger

Remembering these Children and Their Families on Their Birthdays - October 2019

Kyle Bennett Allen
10/25 - 4/18
Janet & Rick Allen

Sam Wallace
10/19 - 2/22
Lisa Wallace
Jackie Anderson

Rodney Trent Baldwin
10/21 - 9/3
Alison Baldwin-Dent

Kai Parks Berry
10/11 - 10/29
Anna Berry

Tess & Sammie Crespi
10/16 - 1/20
Kim Crespi

Emily Lauren Upton
10/4 - 6/1
June English

Christopher Flower
10/10 - 6/16
Bob Flower

Angel Freeman
10/8 - 10/11
Dorothy Freeman

Ryan Hortis
10/29 - 8/14
Heidi & Jimmy Goodwin

Christopher Cullen
10/19 - 2/8
Marsha Gray

Christopher Hall
10/? - 12/25
Jessica Hall

Ashton Sweet
10/7 - 5/31
Carol & Dean Jordan

Scott Aaron Katowitz
10/21 - 3/13
Bev & Mitch Katowitz

Debra Kern
10/17 - 1/25
Sylvia Kern

Bradley Lovell
10/14 - 4/6
Pam Lovell

Mason Crist Heller
10/7 - 1/15
Sandra MacKinnon

John R. Madigan
10/25 - 10/9
Mary Kay Madigan Ledue

Brittany Williams
10/10 - 4/14
Jordan Malveaux & Leslie Williams

Sky Lee
10/25 - 8/14
Francesca Marie

Richard Maxwell
10/26 - 6/21
Geraldine Maxwell

Jasmine D. Thar
10/17 - 12/23
Carleetta "Andrea" McNeil

Denny Miller
10/15 - 10/18
Dennis Miller

Veronica Nicholson
10/14 - 3/4
Elizabeth Nicholson

Blake Carlton
10/1 - 6/16
Patrick & Renee Nolan

Billy Patton
10/1 - 11/11
Carol Patton

Ezra Santiago Perez
10/15 - 7/22
Julia Perez

Jermode Darnell Pharr
10/30 - 7/4
Jacqueline & Roger Pharr

Jason Kendall Ray
10/7 - 3/26
Emmitt & Charlotte Ray

Jenna Ryan
10/10 - 5/8
Bill & Chris Ryan

Amaani Ariana Shah
10/1 - 11/14
Anjali Shah

Emily Lauren Upton
10/4 - 6/1
Samantha Shaver

Emily Elizabeth Smith
10/13 - 9/4
Debbie Smith

Liliana Patricia Solano
Mevdosa
10/23 - 7/24
Henry Solano

Amanda Lee Stanley
10/18 - 1/22
Daris Stanley

Jonathan Troy Swierski
10/1 - 7/6
Scott & Dawn Swierski

Elliot Grayson Thomas
10/2 - 2/13
Kay & Tim Thomas

Sarah Vincent
10/3 - 7/21
Elaine & Bill Vincent

William James Wagner
10/23 - 10/23
Ana & Jim Wagner

Jennifer Hokanson
10/6 - 8/31
Louis & Jodi Reed

Remembering these Children and Their Families on Their Anniversaries - October 2019

Justin Ferdinand Amoroso

11/25 - 10/22
Eulita Amoroso

Debbie Ferrell

7/14 - 10/16
Mike & Kay Arden
Michelle Arden

Michelle DiBernardini

11/19 - 10/12
Carol & Ben Baker

G. Stone Barnett

5/18 - 10/15
George Barnett

Mary-Mattison Barnett

3/1 - 10/3
George Barnett

Kai Parks Berry

10/11 - 10/29
Anna Berry

Brian Yaniszweski

6/23 - 10/19
Emily Burgholzer

Blair M. Crane

7/15 - 10/16
Matthew Crane

Michael Crites

3/31 - 10/28
Mary Ellen Crites

Angel Freeman

10/8 - 10/11
Dorothy Freeman

Josselyn Giebeler

11/4 - 10/24
Adam & Judi Giebeler

Homer Denver Graham III

3/25 - 10/22
Homer & Linda Graham

Jaxson Hill

4/26 - 10/14
Lynn Hill

Luke Hoover

4/20 - 10/17
Angie & Randy Hoover

Cole Kolker-Hicks

7/23 - 10/26
Jenny Kolker & Paul Hicks

John R. Madigan

10/25 - 10/9
Mary Kay Madigan Ledue

Erica Dawn Mesarus

5/15 - 10/28
James Mesarus

Denny Miller

10/15 - 10/18
Dennis Miller

Raymond Pierce

1/13 - 10/13
Wendy Pierce

Joshua Robert Holden

5/4 - 10/7
Donna Ray

Cullen Reiland

8/9 - 10/1
Steve Reiland

Kevin Roddey

7/7 - 10/21
Shelby & Jack Roddey

Alan Bloom

7/8 - 10/9
Sandi Schlager

Joseph Sharp

6/22 - 10/20
Carrie Sharp

Brien Smart
4/15 - 10/8
Connie & Bill Smart

William James Wagner
10/23 - 10/23
Ana & Jim Wagner

Brian Yaniszewski
6/23 - 10/19
Linda Yaniszewski

Jake Ziegler
7/22 - 10/13
Jackie Ziegler

We begin to remember not just
that you died, but that you lived.
And that your life gave us
memories too beautiful to forget



theaven
address

Grief, I've learned, is
really just love. It's all the love you
want to give but cannot. All of that
unspent love gathers up in the corners
of your eyes, the lump in your throat,
and in that hollow part of your chest.
Grief is just love with no place
to go.

-Jamie Anderson



Peace of Mind
Memorials

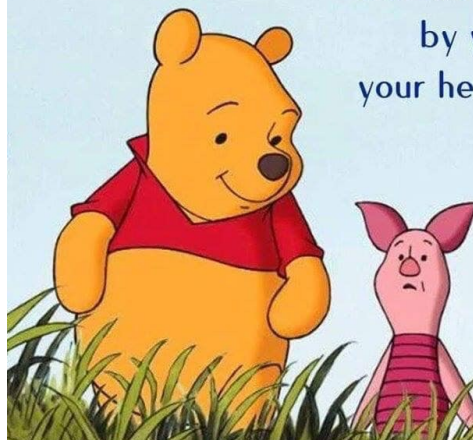
**You
Became my
"Reason"**

Without you now ..

**I wish
I knew what to do
With what's left of
Me**

veepphoto

Anyone can show up when you're happy.
But the ones who stay
by your side when
your heart falls apart,
they are your
true friends.



DEAR MOM & DAD – A NOTE FROM YOUR SURVIVING CHILD

Dear Mom & Dad,

There may be moments when you wonder about me. How I am doing since our precious family member was stolen from us. A few things I wish you would know:

- I am hurting so much, but afraid to share with you just how much, lest I add to the tremendous pain I see you are suffering
- I don't know what to say to you sometimes. I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing. I'm afraid of saying the right thing
- I know you knew my sibling from the day they were born, but I knew them my entire life. We were so close in years and they were older than me and so there is not a day of my life that they did not exist. You have years of memories before they were here. My life without them started the day they died
- I feel unloved sometimes as I watch you fuss over them instead of me who is still here. I understand why and don't begrudge you – but some days it stings
- I feel guilty for not protecting them and don't understand the lion that roars inside of me from all this hurt
- I've become fiercely protective of my other siblings and you. Don't mistake that façade of strength to mean I'm okay
- I don't understand this grief and that makes me question how I could possibly know how to help you and our family with their grief. But somehow feel responsible to do so
- I worry as I watch you fade and diminish from your grief
- I wish you could kiss this and make it all better, like you did when I was little and scraped myself. I know you can't but I still look up to you and the little child in me still wants it with all my heart.
- I don't blame you for their death
- I know I may be hard to handle: angry, sullen, distant. Please know that is just the hurt coming from my deep pain that I sometimes direct at you because I can't get to the one that is responsible
- Under all the ugliness, I still love you very much



JULIE BROWN lost her sister Amy to homicide in 2016 and has spent the past years trying to care for her surviving son and her parents while navigating the stressful path of the justice system. She has learned from having a high profile case associated with the loss of her sister, that finding any small point of gratitude is a powerful way to survive and endure the complexity of grief that comes from sudden and violent loss. She and her husband Jeff reside in Pennsylvania where they are actively involved in their church and helping other families deal with loss to homicide.

ATTENTION!!! TCF CHARLOTTE ANNUAL FALL GATHERING - EVERYONE WELCOME - BRING FAMILY A PERFECT TIME TO GET TO KNOW OTHER TCF MEMBERS IN AN INFORMAL SETTING!!

The Annual Fall Cookout for our TCF Chapter will be Saturday, October 26 from 5 to 11 pm. This event is being hosted by Kay Thomas and Tim Harasek at the Camden Stonecrest Apartments, 8620 Bella Reese Road, Charlotte NC, located just moments from our regular monthly meeting location at St. Matthews. Enter the complex from Rea Road onto Camellia Lane and the Community Room for this event is located next to the Welcome Center at the end of Camellia Lane -- parking is available anywhere on the property. If you need more information, contact either Donna Goodrich at 703/728-7940 or Kay Thomas at 704/589-4794.

The Community Room has a full kitchen, pool table, wide screen TV and if the weather cooperates, there is additional seating outside for guests on the grounds or inside the pool area next to the Community Room.

Our Chapter will provide the entrée, drinks, ice and paper products. Please bring an appetizer, side dish or dessert to share with others. If you want beer or wine, please bring your own.

Please RSVP and let me know how many will be attending in your family in order for us to more accurately purchase meats for the cookout. RSVP - iluvu2lauren@gmail.com

FAMILY WELCOME!!!!

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR

Every time I am in a group of bereaved parents, I hear people say things like, "I wish my child hadn't died" or "I wish I had him back." Those wishes, unfortunately, can never come true. Another wish I hear is "I wish my friends (or church, or neighbors, or relatives) understood what I am going through and were more supportive." This is a wish that has some possibility of coming true if we are able to be honest and assertive with the people around us. What do we wish others understood about the loss of our child? Here is a partial list of such wishes:

1. I wish you would not be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was important and I need to hear his name.
2. If I cry or get emotional if we talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me; the fact that my child died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.
3. I wish you wouldn't "kill" my child again by removing from your home his pictures, artwork, or other remembrances.
4. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good day my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.
5. I wish you knew that the death of a child is different from other losses and must be viewed separately. It is the ultimate tragedy and I wish you wouldn't compare it to your loss of a parent, a spouse, or a pet.
6. Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me.
7. I wish you knew all of the "crazy" grief reactions that I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following the death of a child.
8. I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for us. As with alcoholics, I will never be "cured" or a "former bereaved parent", but will forevermore be a "recovering bereaved parent".
9. I wish you understood the physical reactions to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses and be accident-prone, all of which may be related to my grief.
10. Our child's birthday, the anniversary of his death, and holidays are a terrible times for us. I wish you would tell us that you are thinking about our child on these days, and if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about our child and don't try to coerce us into being cheerful.
11. It is normal and good that most of us re-examine our faith, values, and beliefs after losing a child. We will question things we have been taught all our lives and hopefully come to some new understanding with our God. I wish you would let me tangle with my religion without making me feel guilty.
12. I wish you wouldn't offer me drinks or drugs. These are just temporary crutches, and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can heal.
13. I wish you understood that grief changes people. I am not the same person I was before my child died and I never will be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to "get back to my old self", you will stay frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know the new me -- maybe you'll still like me..

Instead of sitting around and waiting for our wishes to come true, we have an obligation to teach people some of the things we have learned about our grief. We can teach these lessons with great kindness, believing that people have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don't know what to do with us, or we can sit and wait, I believe our children would want us to help the world understand.

Elaine Grier, TCF Atlanta, Ga

If you were unable to make it to our TCF Annual National Conference this year, perhaps you can make it to one of the Regional Conferences. The below Regional Conference is the closest one to us. We will be attending. Go to website for more info and for registration for. You would really need to miss just one week day of work. Conference starts at Noon on Friday and ends Saturday afternoon at 5:30. There will be a Leadership Day on Thursday if you would like to take Leadership Training. There is an additional cost for Leadership Training.

COME JOIN US!!

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE – NASHVILLE TN
OCTOBER 18 @ 12:00 PM - OCTOBER 19 @ 5:30 PM
MEMORIES OF LOVE, MELODIES OF HOPE IN
MUSIC CITY**

**\$95/person includes all speakers and workshops as well as
Dinner and Candle Lighting on Friday and Continental
Breakfast and Lunch on Saturday.**

click below link to register!!

<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Nashville-Regional-Conference-Registration-Form.pdf>

Learning To Live With Grief Brain

Losing my daughter has changed the way I think.

I don't just mean my perspective on life has changed, I mean the actual cognitive process of thinking.

I have grief brain. Grief brain is what happens to your exhausted mind after the loss of a loved one.

I'm not sure how much scientific evidence there is to back it up, but I've read plenty of anecdotal accounts to know that it's a thing. For me, grief brain settled in after the stillbirth of my daughter. At first, I thought my memory lapses and my inattentiveness could be chalked up to the exhaustion of experiencing a stillbirth.

It seemed normal that I would have a tricky time remembering when to take my medications and keep track of appointments. A complicated medical situation was new for me and I had also just delivered a baby. Anyone in my situation would feel confused. But, as my physical condition improved, I noticed that the fog didn't seem to be lifting from my brain.

So, I figured it must be exhaustion.

After three months, and plenty of sleep, I came to wonder if this was something more. This cloudy, scattered brain seemed to be a symptom of my grief.

I began to do some research. If this was a thing that grievers experienced, then surely there were others who could relate. My assumptions were right. There were people out there who wrote about their experience with **grief brain**. They described exactly what I was feeling—a brain so overcome with emotion

that there was little space left to function in the everyday world.

There it was. It wasn't great news, but it was validating. It reminded me of the way I felt when I first read another woman's stillbirth story. I no longer felt broken and damaged. Instead, I felt a sense of comfort from knowing I wasn't alone in this. It's been over two years since my daughter was still-born and my grief brain seems like it's here to stay. Maybe time will help some more of the fog to lift, but in the meantime, I still struggle with my short-term memory.

I have difficulty staying in a conversation without drifting off. I often find myself forgetting the words for everyday items. It's incredibly frustrating. Living with grief brain is not impossible, but it requires some extra thought. (A cruel irony for a brain that is already overworked.) Here are some of the things I do to help me function with my poor, overworked grief brain: Let others know what's going on.

By letting them know you're aware of the changes in your thinking and memory, it can allow them to be open to helping you when they see you struggle.

Write things down. Use your phone, a notebook, or sticky notes. Come up with a system and write down everything that is prone to slipping away. Jot down grocery lists, names of new people you've met, even the words to that song you just can't get out of your head. Writing these things down gives them a place to settle and gives your brain a break.

Avoid multi-tasking. In our world, we've become accustomed to saving time and doing multiple tasks at once. In my exp

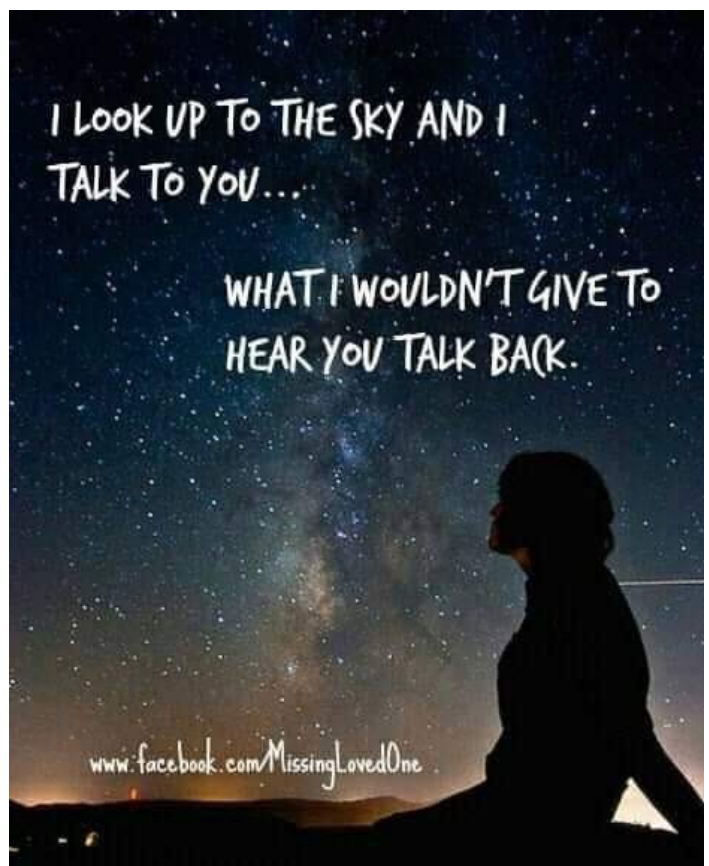
rience with grief brain, I find more consistent success when I focus on one task at a time. If you know a task is going to require greater concentration, try to be mindful of the environment you're working in. Stay hydrated. Drinking more water really helps me when I'm feeling extra foggy. Maybe it's a placebo effect, but being hydrated is never a bad thing.

Slow down. Your brain is tired. Treat it well. Take time to rest and nourish your brain. Find activities like coloring or meditation that give your brain a chance to focus on one thing so it can recuperate. Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself grace. Accept that you will make mistakes. Remember that you are constantly doing the incredibly important work of loving and grieving your child. Sometimes that job leaves little room for anything else. Oddly enough, grief brain makes sense to me.

Losing my daughter sent my heart into overdrive leaving it battered and tired.

Why would my brain fare any differently?

There will always be "those" days when you just can't force a smile, days that you just don't have the energy to "pretend" that everything is fine. Know that there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's a natural, very "normal" part of grief. It truly is okay to not be okay. Be patient with yourself. Give yourself grace. Don't allow yourself to be imposed by the perceived expectations of others.



Nagging Guilt in Child Loss

*I should have known. I should have been there. I should have called, texted, spoken one more warning or given one more hug. **Should. Should? Should!***

I have yet to speak to a bereaved parent who does not harbor guilt of some kind over the death of his or her child.

Not one.

Why didn't I know? What did I miss? Why didn't I say "I love you" one more time?

Hindsight being 20/20 means that there are always threads a heart can pull to guide it back to some moment when it should have been obvious what was about to happen.

We comb through days, months or years of evidence like a crime novel detective, determined to find the clue that unravels all the mystery surrounding our child's death.

Guilt is a relentless hound nipping at tired heels.

I know there are circumstances where a parent may well be responsible in some measure for the death of his or her child. If that's you, then I hope you have a good counselor to help you work through all those feelings. It will take a lot of time and a lot of effort, but it can be done.

But for many of us, the guilt is phantom pain. It has no basis in reality. There was nothing we did or didn't do that contributed to our child leaving this world. Nothing we could have done to prevent it. No way we could have known it was going to happen.

Running from guilt can keep a heart from doing the work grief requires. It can build barriers between us and the people that can help us most. It can lead our minds down a dark path into a bottomless pit.

Guilt is a thief and a liar.

Guilt will steal what I have left if I'm not very careful.

When my heart is overwhelmed by the “what ifs” and “shoulds” and “should-have-knowns”, I scream, “*Shut Up!*”.

I force my thoughts to turn instead to the things I know for sure:

- Dominic was (is!) loved.
- He was (still is!) a beautiful, thoughtful and capable soul.
- His death was an accident and nothing I could have done would have prevented it.
- He is safe, right now, in the arms of Jesus.
- This separation is temporary.


I still have work to do and people to love and I can't do either if I'm obsessed with the past.

It's a costly act of will to stop the guilt soundtrack playing in my head.

But it's worth it.

BUT GRIEF IS A WALK ALONE

Others can be there, and listen. But you will walk alone down your own path, at your own pace, with your sheared-off pain, your raw wounds, your broken heart, your denial, anger and bitter loss. You'll come to your own peace, hopefully... but it will be on your own, IN YOUR OWN TIME, IN YOUR OWN WAY.

Out of ashes.. 



THE GRIEVING DO NOT JUST EXPERIENCE THE LOSS OF THEIR LOVED ONE. THEY IN SOME SENSE LOSE THEMSELVES. THEY LOSE SECURITY, TRUST, AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. A PERSON IS FOREVER CHANGED AFTER EXPERIENCING LOSS.

Psychic Medium
Michelle Russell



Published in the Grief Toolbox: The Advice I Wish I Got After My Son Died

When my son died, I received a lot of advice. I found people do not know what to say. They default to the things they have been conditioned to say during these times. It came from many different sources, most of which had never lost a child. The advice came from good intentions, but it was hollow. Not at all what I needed in that moment. When someone would tell me it would be OK, I was angry. They would say everything happens for a reason and I should trust God. More anger. Then there was, "Give it time. Time heals all wounds." It doesn't. Then there were the people that tried to facilitate a connection. Here, call Jane. She lost her son, too. I was not in a place to talk to other bereaved mothers and hear all about their experience. Everything felt like pressure towards a direction someone else thought was best for me. Someone that had never stood where I was standing.

If you haven't noticed, there is a lot of anger in grief. It is unavoidable so you should just learn to embrace it early. It made me feel like I was going crazy. Everything made me mad. I hated their advice yet I found myself starting to wonder if I should listen. It didn't resonate, but I was desperate. So I started judging my grief. It made me question everything I was doing and feel as if I was doing it all wrong. That made me more angry. Then I had a breakthrough. A grief breakthrough. I don't recall the cause or the source, but I suddenly understood what I needed to do. It all made sense.

My epiphany? My grief is only about me. The journey I walk is my own. No one can tell me how to do it. I simply have to do whatever I feel is right in the moment for me. It is not my job to help make others feel better. I cannot be concerned for how they are doing. I know it sounds harsh and unfeeling. However, there is an "I" in grief. As there should be! It is the only way because MY son died! This was about Cameron and I. No one else. The rest of the world has their own path to follow and they must figure it out on their own. It seemed so simple. Selfish, but simple.

Since my son died, I have changed the way I talk to someone that has experienced loss. I never tell them I am sorry, that is the worst thing to say when someone dies. I am no longer afraid to say, "That really sucks!" It does. Then I tell them I am thinking about them and sending love. I really am. Love is all that matters. If I feel the urge to share advice, I simply tell them their grief is unique to them. They have to do whatever is right for them and not compare themselves to anyone else. Don't worry about what anyone else tells you. Just follow your gut.

This advice would have saved me so much agony.

About the Author

Emily is Mom of 3 (2 girls here & a 7 year old boy in heaven). Her passion is creating community for other bereaved mothers while blogging about grief and life after loss at [Just Playing House](#).