



The Compassionate Friends

Eastern Jackson County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March -April 2025

Chapter Leader: Theresa Phillips

24-Hour Help Line: (816)229-2640

Private Facebook Page: Eastern Jackson County TCF

Website: www.easternjacksoncounty tcf.org

TCF National Headquarters

48660 Pontiac Trail #930808 Wixom, MI 48393

**Website: www.compassionatefriends.org
(877)969-0010**

Upcoming Event:



Discount Registration is now open until April 18. Go to www.compassionatefriends.org for more information.



The Mask I Wear

A. W. Ellis

For as long
As I live
I will keep
Handing the world
Memories of you.
Like handing it a rose
When it starts to forget
The color red.

- Sara Rian

They say I'm strong, they see me smile,
"A beacon of grace," they say for a while.
They nod, they cheer, "You're doing so well,"
But inside, I'm trapped in a private hell.

I wish they knew, I wish they'd see,
This pain that's quietly drowning me.
But to share my truth feels far too stark,
So I wear my mask and sit in the dark.

Strong, they call me, but it's not true,
I'm just surviving, as people do.
One day, perhaps, the mask will fade,
And I'll never find peace in the life that was remade.



I think it's brave that you get up
in the morning even if your soul is weary
and your bones ache for a rest.

I think it's brave that you keep
on living even if you don't know how to
anymore.

I think it's brave that you push
away the waves rolling in every day and
you decide to fight yet again.

I know there are days when you
feel like giving up, but **I think it's brave**
that you never do.

- Lara Rafaela

The world keeps spinning, I play my part,
But grief carves scars deep in my heart.
My laughter rings hollow, my words feel fake,
Each breath I take is a chore to make.

They see the mask I've carefully drawn,
A veil of strength to greet the dawn.
But behind the facade, the truth resides,
A storm of sorrow I cannot hide.

The nights are quiet, my tears run free,
I speak to shadows no one can see.
Their name's a whisper I cannot say,
A weight I carry every day.

Losing a child

Do you want to know what it is like
to lose a child?
Sit down, let's talk, this could take
quite a while.

At first you are in shock, and then
you are in denial.
And pretty soon reality puts your
emotions on trial.
You lose so much, but the first you
lose is your smile.
To others you seem okay, but you
really are not.
The grief that you feel is only the
start
Because your child now lives only in
your heart
You treasure each picture that is all
you have got
You cling to memories that you

thought you forgot
 You know your life will never again
 be the same.
 You pretend things are okay, and
 you hide your pain.
 You just want someone to mention
 his name.
 So you can imagine that he is beside
 you again.
 Sometimes you feel like you are
 going insane
 You still feel all alone, even when in
 a crowd.
 Others can speak of their children of
 whom they are proud,
 But to talk about your child,
 somehow isn't allowed
 So your child's memories are hidden
 under grief's cloud
 You just want to mention his name
 out loud.
 With each day you are reminded of
 all you have lost.
 And how much your loss has
 ultimately cost
 Your child's hopes and dreams have
 been tossed
 So before you judge, keep your
 fingers crossed
 That you never know the pain of a
 child's loss.
 You hold back tears, because they
 would be a stream
 You cry every day, but you really
 want to scream.
 "My child mattered, how can people
 be so mean?"
 You pray for a visit, or vision in the
 form of a dream
 So before you tell me some over
 used silly cliché'
 Like "He is in a better place" or
 "things are better this way"
 Think about what you are about to
 say
 I really mean it when I tell you, that I
 hope and pray
 That you never know how I feel each
 and every day.-Aline Lomastro



Your absence is a weight I never
 imagined I'd have to bear. It's not
 just the loss of you but the shape of
 you in my life, the space you filled,
 your love in my life. This weight isn't
 something I can put down or set
 aside; it's a part of me now, woven
 into every breath and step. It's the
 heaviest thing I've ever carried, not
 because it overwhelms me every
 moment, but because it's
 constant—unchanging in its depth.
 And yet, somehow, I keep moving,
 learning to carry what I cannot leave
 behind.
 - Louise Rees



The most difficult lesson I've faced
 as an adult is the unending need to
 survive, regardless of how broken I
 feel inside.

It doesn't matter if my heart is
 aching, if I'm mourning the loss of
 someone I love, or if I'm too tired to
 even get out of bed. Life doesn't
 wait for me to catch my breath. It
 keeps moving forward, indifferent to
 my pain, and I'm left with no choice
 but to push through, even when
 every part of me is screaming for a
 moment of rest.
 But what's even harder is realizing

that no one truly prepares you for
 this. We grow up believing in the
 comfort of happy endings, only to be
 met with the harsh reality that
 survival often means pretending
 you're okay when you're not. And
 maybe that's the hardest part—not
 just surviving, but doing so quietly,
 without letting the weight of it
 show. Yet, through it all, we find
 strength we never knew we had,
 because despite the heaviness, we
 keep moving.

— LJ Blossoms.
 (Writer's Blossoms)



When you remember me, it means
 that you have carried something of
 who I am with you, that I have left
 some mark of who I am on who you
 are. It means that you can summon
 me back to your mind even though
 countless years and miles may stand
 between us. It means that if we
 meet again, you will know me. It
 means that even after I die, you can
 still see my face and hear my voice
 and speak to me in your heart.
 For as long as you remember me, I
 am never entirely lost.
 ~ Frederick Buechner





I had a date with music
but memories came along.
They never had an invite
but joined in every song.

My tears met my face.
They were here to stay.
So many memories
I was locked away.

They sat down beside me.
They looked me in the eyes.
As I relived the moments.
Laughter drowned my cries.

I had a date with music
but memories came along.
They never had an invite
but we danced to every song.

*Author Joanne Boyle ~ Heartfelt
Art by Steffi Krenzek*



I Will Never Leave You

I will never leave you,
Though I'm gone from your sight.
I live within your heart,
In day's warmth and in night.

My spirit watches over,
I'll try to let you know—
Look for me in moonlight,
And in the sun's soft glow.

A feather that drifts near,
A breeze that seems to touch,

A dream that holds me close—
It's me, loving you so much.

I will never leave you,
I promise to always be,
Right there beside you,
Just talk, and you'll find me.
--Ann Marie



When I am gone, do not fear my
memory.
Do not be afraid to speak my name
or look through old photographs.
Do not be scared to play old videos
so that you might hear my voice and
see me laughing.
Do not be wary of visiting my
favourite places or eating my
favourite foods or singing along to
my favourite songs.
I know it will hurt. Those memories
will remind you that I am gone.
They will stab at you like a knife in
an open, gaping wound. Raw,
excruciating pain.
But after a while the knife will
become less sharp, the wound will
become less open and the pain will
become less raw.
And those memories will remind you
that I was here.
That I lived.

Do not reduce my life to my death.
Speak my name, hear my voice, sing
my favourite songs and visit my
favourite places.
Because that's how I can stay alive a
little.

Right here with you ❤️

Becky Hemsley 2022
My Angel in Heaven Facebook Page
Beautiful image by Thomas Little
Design



I looked for you in the memories,
like I was told to do.
I searched through hazy clouds
and still couldn't find you.
I thought it was due to the rain
so I closed my eyes,
to stop the rain from falling
and to hope the wetness dries.

I went back to the times
we would sit and have a chat.
I couldn't find you there.
I wondered where you were at.

I then closed my eyes less tightly
and felt the rain had eased.
I found the fog cleared,
the less my eyes were squeezed.

I was now in a field of love
and the sun began to shine.
I found a beating heart
and realised it was mine.

I picked it up and held it
but only for a while.
I knew I had to put it back
for me to share a smile.

I felt it was still beating
slightly in my hand.
I looked and saw a rainbow
as I whispered "I understand."

My heart is where you are.
You took it when you went,
but leaving me without you
was never your intent.
Author Joanne Boyle ~ heartfelt

Grief is not a moment. It is not
something that fades simply because
time moves forward. It lingers,
reshapes, and becomes a quiet
companion to those who have lost
someone they love. The world may
expect grief to have an expiration date,
to be something that eventually
disappears, but the truth is, loss does

not just take a person—it takes pieces of the life that once existed, rewriting the very foundation of who you are.

When someone is gone, the world does not stop. Time continues, people carry on, seasons change. But for those left behind, everything shifts. The places once filled with their laughter now echo with absence. The moments once shared now feel incomplete. It is not just their absence that is mourned—it is the loss of what was, the loss of what could have been.

Some may ask, "Are you still grieving?" as if the passage of time should lessen the weight of love that once existed. But grief is not something to be outrun, nor is it something to be measured by a calendar. It is woven into the fabric of the soul, a reflection of the depth of love that was once given and received.

Yet, even in the depths of grief, there is resilience. There is a quiet strength in carrying memories, in learning how to live in a world that feels different. Grief does not mean being stuck—it means honoring what was lost while still moving forward. It is proof that love does not vanish. It transforms.

So let grief be. Let it exist without shame. It is not a weakness; it is love continuing beyond loss. Some may not understand, but those who do know that grief is not a sign of refusing to move on—it is a testament to a love that will never fade.

There's Nothing To Fix

Gary Sturgis

Surviving Grief



There's Nothing To Fix

I've often felt invisible in my grief, because let's be honest, grief makes people very uncomfortable. No one likes to see or acknowledge its presence. Its force and depth

scares people.

They don't want it to happen to them and they don't like the reminder that it could.

I used to feel that I had to be invisible in my grief. I used to feel that if I was honest and open about how very much I missed the one I love, even after so many years, I would be judged or criticized, or even left by those around me.

It's true, I've been judged and criticized, because people thought I should "get over" my grief, and that I was wallowing in it. Each and every time that happens it hurts.

I'm just a person who grieves the person I lost, and I will until the day I leave this earth.

What I wish people knew is that these facts are true and also don't negate the good and joy in my life. I'm capable of living both. This continued grief doesn't make me weak, or unhealthy, or emotionally unstable. It makes me strong.

Here's the thing...it takes courage to love beyond death.

It's hard to live in a world that wants to make my grief invisible.

I wish people understood that while our society runs from grief and death, I don't. I'm not afraid of the hugeness of grief and emotion.

I've withstood a loss that battered the very heart in my chest and yet it still beats, still loves, and still lives.

I wish people knew that the silence and the concern about my lack of letting go doesn't help me or anyone else.

But listening, loving, and accepting me wherever I

happen to be, does help me. My putting on a happy face for them may make them feel more comfortable, but it also damages our relationship and hurts me deeply.

My continued grief doesn't mean I haven't accepted the loss of the one I love. Trust me, I know what I lost. Accepting my loss doesn't mean I no longer want what I had back. I accept my situation. I'll just never forget, or stop feeling sad about what's missing in my life.

What I wish people knew is they can't fix me. No words and no actions can fix my loss.

It can't be fixed...because there's nothing to fix.

Gary Sturgis - Surviving Grief

I Didn't Understand

I didn't understand how much it would hurt to heal.

I thought I'd be further along by now.

A bit more intact.

Some days, I drift and float weightless

atop my grief.

Let it carry me freely wherever.

And others,

I'm pulled into the cold, endless depths of it. Wave after wave of reminders and memories.

I thought by now I'd be stronger.

I'd be able to swim out from the undertow

and breathe again.

I didn't understand how much of me is missing without you.

I feel so lost.

I'm tired of condolences and well wishes.

I want to laugh with you again.

I want to see you walk through the door.

I want to hear your footsteps coming toward me once more.

I didn't understand how quiet life would be without you here.

There's only echoes now.

I call out and wait for a reply I know

isn't coming.
 I didn't understand how much of my
 heart
 was home for you.
 I'm filled with empty spaces
 I'm not sure what to do with now.
 How much can one person lose
 before there's nothing left of
 themselves?
 I didn't understand how much it
 would hurt
 to heal.

Words By: J. Raymond from his book
 - The Kindred Project: Vol. II



I still miss the sound
 of your voice, the
 stories you told, the
 ring of your laugh,
 and your presence that
 glowed. So yes, time
 changes nothing because
 I miss you as much
 today as I did the
 day that you left.

@INSCRIPTURE



BEING A MOTHER WHO HAS LOST A CHILD

There's an order that life is
 supposed to follow.

An order of breaths we are

supposed to take,
 as if we are passing a torch from one
 generation to the next.

And our torch is supposed to go out
 before our child's flame is
 extinguished.

We are supposed to watch them
 take their first breath.
 But not their last.

We are supposed to hear the thud-
 thud of their heart when it starts
 beating.
 But never the silence when it stops.

That heart that we once carried
 inside of us. That breath that we
 gave them. That life that we kept
 safe, protected.

So when the order of life is
 disrupted,
 when their torch goes out before
 yours,
 it is as if you too have been robbed
 of your breath
 and as if your heart has stopped
 beating as well.

There is nothing that can make it
 less painful.
 You would happily blow out your
 flame if it meant theirs could burn.

But you can't. Even though that's
 how it should be.

So all you can do is carry them inside
 you -
 like you did once before.
 Except now they have to stay in your
 heart forever.

And though it hurts,
 just know that they are safe there.
 They are protected.

Because a mother's love is
 unending.
 Because it burns forever with every
 breath you take and
 with every beat your heart makes.

Because a mother's love
 is a flame that can
 never
 be extinguished.

Written by Becky Hemsley Poetry

As the world moved forward,
 I stood in great darkness.
 Frozen, broken, and
 shattered into pieces,
 I knew it was real...
 You were gone. Your
 death changed me.
 It took me with you.
 With you went so much of me.

Unknown



"When you remember me, it
 means that you have carried
 something of who I am with you,
 that I have left some mark of who I
 am on who you are. It means that
 you can summon me back to your
 mind even though countless years
 and miles may stand between us. It
 means that if we meet again, you
 will know me. It means that even
 after I die, you can still see my face
 and hear my voice and speak to me
 in your heart. For as long as you
 remember me, I am never entirely
 lost."

(Frederick Buechner: Whistling in
 the Dark: A Doubter's Dictionary
 - art by Stephen Allen)





The Colours of Grief

How hard it is to fathom,
The sadness in the soul,
How that pain and heartache,
Leave us feeling less than
whole,
If grief it were a colour,
It would like it to be known,
That there are so many facets,
Each emotion is a colour on its
own.
Black would hold the terror,
Gold the love so true,
Red the fiery anger,
Missing you is blue.
Yellow when a memory,
Flies in to make you smile,
Green is for the calmness,
We feel once in a while,
Violet soothes the torment,
Orange the occasional laugh,
We allow ourselves so rarely,
Grief is not an easy path.
Then pink it draws you to me,
Your colour it is so,
Many colours to remind me,
The pain of letting go.
Then purple is the colour,
Of healing I've been told before,
So purple wrap around me,
My heart is truly sore.
So many colours I've
discovered,
Make up the griever's soul,
So many emotions to
encounter,
In an attempt to make us whole.

By: Christine Bevington 2011
Artist Credit: Gillian Rule Art

The Silent Cry of Grief

Grief is a cry the soul can't release,
A breaking of hearts that never finds

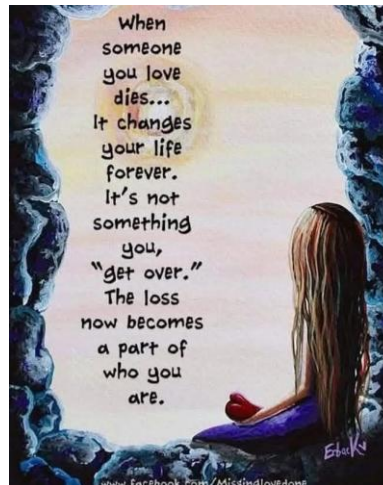
peace.
It trembles in whispers, too heavy to
speak,
In the strength we lose when we feel
most weak.

It hides in the dawn, where shadows
reside,
And walks through the night, forever
beside.
It clings to the past, to moments
once bright,
Now fading to echoes in the still of
the night.

It's the scream trapped deep in a
hollowed chest,
The ache that denies the soul any
rest.
Yet woven in pain, a truth is
revealed—
Grief is the proof that love never
yields.

For though it may linger, relentless
and near,
It holds what was cherished, forever
sincere.
And though silent, its voice is one we
can trust—
Grief is the echo of love's deepest
thrust.

Ann Marie



"A Part of Me Died" ❤️
It didn't kill me, but something
changed,
A piece of me lost, forever
estranged.
I walked away, yet not the same,
A shadowed soul, a quiet flame.
That day took part of who I was,
Left me searching, without cause.

I carry on, but feel the void,
A heart once whole, now destroyed.
It didn't end me, but I'm not whole—
An echo remains, deep in my soul.
I'm here, I breathe, but truth
denied—
A part of me, that day, quietly died.
—Nicole May

Loving you
changed my life.

Losing you
Did the same.

Please help us help others. Make a
LOVE GIFT today. Tax deductible
Love Gifts may be sent to: TCF C/O
Theresa Phillips 6200 Kentucky Ave,
Raytown, MO 64133

Remember when you came to your
first meeting, and someone was
there who was a little farther down
the road and gave you a hug or
shared something that made you
feel like you are not crazy. Well, if
you are a little bit farther down the
road, please feel free to come back
to our meetings and help families
that are just starting their grief
journey.

Please visit our website at ,
www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org
Find us on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1582699755290182>

We have several volunteers who
write remembrance cards to families
on birthdays and death dates. Just a
reminder if you have an address
change, please email
phillipsplace@aol.com or mail a
note to TCF, C/O Theresa Phillips
6200 Kentucky Raytown, MO 64133
so the roster can be updated.
Please remember that you can give
to The Compassionate Friends
through your United Way pledge at
work or as a single gift, but you
MUST WRITE IT IN.

