



The Waterbury, CT Chapter of

The Compassionate Friends

Nov/Dec 2009

The Compassionate Friends is an international self-help group for parents and their families who have experienced the death of a child of any age, including adult children, and from any cause. We offer hope in a network of support, friendship and understanding that only friends who have "been there" can give.



RE-Defining Those Moments

~excerpts



A birth. A graduation. Learning to drive. A new job. A milestone birthday. A move across the country. Going off to college. An illness. An operation. A wedding. A divorce.

These are all defining moments.

But is there any moment in a bereaved parent's or family member's life like the defining moment that came as a result of a knock at the door, the call in the middle of the night, the doctor's eyes that elude theirs, or perhaps there was a military vehicle that pulled up to the curb and a soldier and chaplain started toward the door.

Every other defining moment pales in comparison to hearing the news that a child in our family has died. We know that it does not matter if our child was young or old, a babe not yet born, or a child with grandchildren of their own. They were OUR children, they died, and our life was, is, and will be forever shaped by THAT moment in time.

When we are new in our grief we find that our lives are trapped in THAT day, THAT moment. It is the defining moment by which all time is measured from that point on. For years we talk in terms of whether something happened before or after the death.

We are sad, we are angry, we are traumatized. We're at war with ourselves

and, it seems, everyone around us. We want time to move backward so that our defining moment never happened, or when that isn't possible at least move at warp speed as far from that defining moment as possible. Are we scared? YES. We are scared of forgetting, scared of letting go, and even scared of moving past THE defining moment.

The good part, the part that I've learned from fellow Compassionate Friends, is that yes, it is the most defining moment in our lives, but it doesn't have to be the thing we remember most. We are connected by a love for our children that goes beyond the defining moment. We can reach back and remember wonderful memories and a love so special that it will not let go. EVER!!

I will admit it, I am forever changed by that defining moment when my children were killed in a car accident, but the important

thing I also realize is that my great journey of the heart really began when they graced my life. It wasn't long enough – not nearly long enough. But we shared a love so special, so sweet, so enduring that it will forever be what I choose to remember the most.

I choose not to remember that they died or how they died. I choose to remember they lived and how they lived. They were special. They were beautiful. They were silly. They were loving. And they were wonderful!

It took a lot of time on my journey for me to reach this point and it wasn't without struggles and doubts. There were days when just getting out of bed and facing a day without them took all the courage I could muster. But I did it. Sometimes it was necessary to deal with their deaths on a one day at a time basis, and sometimes one moment at a time. But I continued on my journey because I refused to let a terrible day be what I remembered most about two really terrific kids.

Yes, it is the most defining moment for bereaved parents and family members. We're different people when we walk through the fog of grief. The important thing is we walk through the fog to the other side where sunsets are once again beautiful and we are struck by the brightness of the stars. Is there any better way to honor all our terrific kids than to marvel at the beauty of the world once again?

By Pat Loder, Executive Director, National TCF
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The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting December 13, 2009

