



The Waterbury, CT Chapter of

The Compassionate Friends

January/February 2010

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.



The New Year

~excerpts

It is not unusual for bereaved parents, especially those who have been bereaved for less than two years, to anticipate a new year with trepidation. I dreaded the passage of time. Strangely, I was reluctant to move beyond December that first year.

The turning of the calendar page from 1997 to 1998 only meant that I would be traveling farther and farther away from the time when my son was still alive and still with us.

When January did arrive, it took me most of that month to resume my one day at a time attitude.

Prior to his death, the beginning of a new year was a time for me to take stock, to remember the events of the past year, and to eagerly anticipate what might develop in the coming year. It was a time for resolutions and new beginnings. After Tom died, all I wanted was to go back in time.

Looking ahead to a whole new year was overwhelming and frightening. It took every ounce of energy I had to learn to focus on just one day at a time, and I eventually realized that this was the only way I could cope with the intense grief that accompanies the loss of a child.

After a couple of years on my grief journey, the anticipation of a new calendar year did not have quite the same frightening impact as it had in the beginning. I somehow survived the first two New Years and began to trust that I would continue to survive. This year is a little different for me. On February

8th, 2009, more days will have passed since Tom's death than the number of days he was alive. It does not seem possible to me that in a short while, Tom will have been gone for longer than he lived.

In spite of this realization, I have the impression that the time we spent *with* him seems longer than the time we spent *without* him. My explanation for this is that even though Tom is no longer physically with us, we have continued to carry his spirit with us all these years and we know that he will always be a part of us.

As we begin this New Year, I wish you all the strength to progress through the days of your grief, one at a time. Know that your Compassionate Friends are always willing to help.

By Carmen Pope, Chapter Leader of
TCF Northshore/Boston, Jan 2009



"HOPE FOR THE DAY"

When we're grieving a loss, we often feel like giving up on everything. We're wiped out. Exhausted. We feel like we're empty and nothing at all can begin to fill us back up. It's all we can do to stare at the clock and make it through another hour.

During those first months following a loss, it's so important to take time to

adjust to the new place where we've been forced to live. We're on new turf and nothing looks, feels, or smells familiar. And, it takes time to adjust. Time to get a feel for what life is like minus the one that we loved so much. It's important to know that you're going to feel this way for a while. It's important to give yourself time to work through all of the different emotions of grieving. It's even more important to recognize when it's time to let go a bit. At first that might sound harsh. But, in reality it's not. Letting go is a form of hope. Letting go says that I now understand what has happened, and it's time for me to find a new normal. I'll never, ever forget the one I love so much, but I must begin to live again or I will stay stuck in a very dangerous place called denial.

It's so hard to break loose of those feelings of aloneness, guilt, fear, emptiness, and fatigue. It's hard to look for hope in a place where everything seems so dark and devoid of hope. But we can, and we must. We don't have to look down the long road of years without our loved one. All we have to focus on is today. Right now is what we have. And, with a bit of hope, you can take that one tiny step forward in this journey called grief. Reach out. Touch a life with your smile. Fill your lungs with the fresh air and be thankful. Watch the glory of a new sunrise, and know that this day was made just for you! Hope will carry you through! "Hope is finding the blue in the sky that once looked so black."

By Clara Hinton
Reprinted from

<http://www.tcfnorthshore-boston.org>,
January 2009