

## Once We Pay The Price

I can hardly believe spring is almost here again. Even though I eagerly await its arrival each year, it still has a way of sneaking up on me. I suppose it's because I don't rely on the calendar to mark the beginning of spring. Instead I continue with my daily routines, feeling as if winter will never end, until I am pleasantly surprised by one or the other of spring's early signs (like the gorgeous crocus that are blooming in my front yard.) I then note spring is officially on its way.

From year to year the sign that causes me to notice spring's approach varies. It may be new growth in my garden or the return of birds to my backyard feeders. Sometimes it's the delight I feel when I sense the increase in daylight and the warmth it brings to the air. Spring's early signs are all around us now though not all of us will choose to see them.

I see them because I choose to see them. Early in my grief recovery, though, I chose not to see them. I didn't want to see them. I suppose it was more that I didn't want to see the world bursting with new life when my son had died and a part of me had died with him. It was partly as though I didn't want to celebrate the reawakening, the renewal and the rebirth of spring, when my son, Bobby, had died and wasn't here to see it. But it was more than that. It was also that I felt somehow resentful that the world was returning to life without my son. How could the world (seemingly) be so happy when I felt so sad?

It took some time but I began to realize that there is no other way. The cycle of the seasons continues as they always have with or without my approval. The cycle will be the same whether I celebrate spring or not. The beauty and warmth of spring will flourish with or without me. I doesn't matter whether I chose to notice or not. At first I felt an empty, lonely feeling, but then I began to see things differently.

I realized that for me to feel good about spring again I would have to change how I felt about the coming of spring itself. The change would have to happen within me. We can't change many of the things that happen to us in life, but we can always choose how we react to those things. Early in our grief we may feel we have little control over any of our reactions, but as we begin our recovery we begin to realize we can choose our reactions to anything that happens to us. Grief is a normal reaction to the death of our children and is a necessary step in our recovery. Resenting spring because our child has died (no matter how common the reaction may be) however, does not help in our recovery. It deepens the hurt.

Whatever reaction to the coming spring may be, just remember you choose it. May I suggest you choose a reaction that helps in your recovery? Only you will know for sure what that will be. Maybe you could see the reawakening, the renewal, and the rebirth of spring as hope for you that even when you may be thinking "as if the winter (of your grief) will never end," you will one day be pleasantly surprised by one of spring's early signs

that your recovery is not only possible but is happening as surely as the seasons change.

Somewhere along the way I found a quotation that seems appropriate here: "Once you pay the price of admission, it doesn't cost any more to have a good time." We've already paid the terrible price through the death of our children; we don't have to pay any more. Maybe you don't feel much like being happy about the approach of spring from deep with your grief, but remember you need not pay any more.

From The Southern Oregon TCF Newsletter  
From TCF Atlanta Sharing, [www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)

## The Gift

I have a gift  
I did not want this gift, it meant suffering and pain,  
The pain because of love.  
A love which had manifested itself in a child.  
The child brought it's love to me and asked for my love.  
Sometimes I did not understand this.  
Sometimes I was too busy to listen quietly to this love.  
But the love persisted; it was always there.  
And one day the child died.  
The love remained.  
This time the love came in other forms.  
This time there were memories.  
There was sadness and anguish.  
And unbelievable pain.  
One day a stranger came and stood with me.  
The stranger said, "I understand,"  
And did.  
You see, the stranger had also been this way.  
We talked and cried together.  
The stranger became my friend as no other had.  
My friend said, "I am always here" and was.  
One day I lifted my head  
I noticed another grieving, gray and drawn with pain  
I approached and spoke.  
I touched and comforted.  
I said, "I will walk with you,"  
And I did.  
I also had the gift.

By Joe Lawley  
TCF Co-Founder  
Coventry, England, 1969

