

For Siblings



When a child has died, siblings are often referred to as “the forgotten mourners.” While parents receive much support, siblings usually receive little. TCF is an organization that is not just for bereaved parents. It’s also for bereaved siblings (and grandparents). On the national website, you will find support:

<http://www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/grief-support-for-siblings.aspx> is the support link for siblings.



If I Could Speak To All the Bereaved Siblings Out there, I’d say:

I know you’re frightened and perhaps feeling anger and guilt, for those are normal feelings. I know it isn’t fair, but some of life isn’t. It’s hard to accept that, isn’t it? I know you may even resent having some special time in your life interfered with by your parent’s prolonged grieving. Be patient. There will be better days.

I know you may be sorry you said or did some things that involved your dead sister/brother. Sibling rivalry is a normal and natural thing. All of us say and do things we wish we hadn’t. That’s part of being human and try to remember the good times, too.

If you’re older, you may find it difficult to share the pain you’re feeling with your parents because you can see they’re having a hard time. Your impulse is to protect them, and that includes from seeing your own pain. Sometimes you become the parent and they, the children. Do you realize that if you do too good a job of disguising your grief your parents may misunderstand and think instead that you aren’t grieving at all? Share at least some parts, if you can. It is better for you – and them – to release your feelings rather than to bottle them up and pretend everything is okay.

I know it may be bothersome if you find that your parents are overly concerned for your safety now. They may tend to overprotect, but you need to understand that they now know that bad things do, indeed, happen to good people, and their security is shattered. Just a simple, thoughtful act like calling if you’re going to be later than expected can really help them at this time and make them less anxious. You are one of the major reasons they struggle so to regain some equilibrium in their lives. You are important.

Holidays and birthdays will be more painful than fun in the beginning. Try to understand if old traditions are put aside right now, and don’t demand everything

exactly as it used to be. Given time, you and your family will work out just how you want and need to observe special family occasions, and there will be enjoyable times in your home again. They may just have to be observed in different ways than before.

I know you need to know that your family will survive this tragedy. Your parents may need that same assurance. Those of us who have had the necessary time for our adjustments do offer you and your family that assurance. It will never be the same, but you will come to value each other in ways not previously thought of. Now is the time for your family to be pulling together – not apart. A loving family will survive. Try to share and communicate your feelings. If you can’t talk with your parents, find somebody who cares and who can listen. It can help all your family recover in an emotionally healthy way. It will be better.

By Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta, GA
Reprinted from TCF NorthShore Boston Newsletter, March 1997



My Silent Companion

I see you in my dreams –
Laughing happily, free from sorrow,
And safe from life’s misfortune.
The joy that lights your eyes fills me with comfort,
And I know that every step I make,
You also take.
Guiding me down life’s path, through obstacles in my
way –
You are my silent companion.
When God took you back – it changed our lives
And our perspective.
We now see the vibrant glow
That lives in every one of His creations,
And it reminds us of you.
I hear you laugh in the crashing surf and feel warmed
by your hugs in the soaking sun.
You are everywhere –
You are my silent companion.
Though I want to reach out to you
And hold you tightly in my sorrow,
I know you can feel my tears on your shoulder
As you surround me in your soul.
You sprinkle my life with tokens and treasures,
Reminders and reassurances of how much you love
me.
I know you’ll live inside my heart
And walk with me until I can join you –
Forever as my silent companion.

By Jennifer Forrest, TCF, Orange Coast, CA
Reprinted from *This Healing Journey*