



The Waterbury, CT Chapter of

# The Compassionate Friends

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*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.*

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Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.

By Earl Grollman

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## Thoughts from a Chapter Leader

Those of you who are involved in our support group know that we meet monthly to share our emotions, our experiences, our coping methods, and our ideas with other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. Every meeting is different. There are times when I come away feeling emotionally drained and there are other times when I come away feeling totally uplifted. Last month's meeting was uplifting and inspirational; it reinforced for me that sharing our experiences can be instrumental in our healing process.

In the early years of my grief journey, I rarely left a meeting without having learned something about myself and about my grief. My fears and doubts were allayed; my feelings were usually validated; my suspicions that I was becoming insane were relieved. By continuing to participate in our sharing groups, I gained perspective and recognized that I was beginning to heal.

Now that I am farther down the road, I am filled with hope when I witness our members reaching out to each other during our meetings. I observe a powerful network

of understanding and compassion. Our newer members may not yet sense any hope, but I now know from experience that in time, the pain will soften and the grief will not be as intense.

I thought I would share with you a few of the many snippets of wisdom I heard at our last meeting:

-Our grief will always be there on some level. This is not to say that we will always be consumed by it, as most of us are in the early years, but we will be forever changed and the grief will continue to surface as life moves forward.

-Most of us no longer sweat the insignificant, unimportant "small stuff". Most of us are now more understanding and compassionate. It is OK to be grateful for these "gifts".

-Our grief often gets worse before it gets better. It is important to keep taking care of our physical health and to express our feelings. Eventually, our grief will be more manageable.

-Sometimes it is best not to have expectations, whether these are expectations of how others should treat us, or expectations of our own behavior. We should not attach a time frame to our journey; we should not anticipate feeling better or worse. Our grief evolves and we have to learn how to ride with it. Family members and friends may want to support us, but we often have to be their "teachers".

-In the early years of our grief, we find ourselves mourning the death of our children, siblings and grandchildren. When we are no longer newly bereaved, we find ourselves celebrating their lives.

I am grateful for the collective wisdom of the members of our group. I encourage you all to continue to share.

By Carmen, Chapter Leader  
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