

The Compassionate Friends Victoria, Australia

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Magazine Excerpts - Dec ~ Jan 2008

There Is A Time For Everything

In Ecclesiastes Ch 3, King Solomon reflected on the natural ebb & flow of life and tells us that there is a time for all things: "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven:

- a time to be born and a time to die...
- a time to weep and a time to laugh...
- a time to mourn and a time to dance..."

So too, when we lose a loved one, we find, that for a while, the balance of our lives is weighted towards the time to weep and to mourn. In the case that the one we have lost is a child, it is often harder for us to come to grips with the emotional strain of the loss. I know this from first hand experience, having lost my own son, an only child, due to an accident, several years ago.

As a Funeral Celebrant, I see many instances of people who have lost children, either suddenly or after a period of time. Their grief can be expressed in many ways and to different degrees, from quiet acceptance to outright denial, self recrimination and outpouring of emotions.

Everyone has their own way of handling the situation, either consciously or intuitively. I am never surprised by peoples' reactions, as I have a philosophy in life to always expect the unexpected. It is not for me to judge the behaviour of those who are placed in an extremely emotional situation. Rather, it is my role to give the family the best possible caring advice as to how to have a funeral service which is appropriate to their needs and comfort levels.

In effect: there are no rules governing what can or cannot be done at a funeral service, so there is an immense scope to allow us to conduct services which reflect the wishes of the family and do justice to the memory of their loved one. Whether they wish to have a quiet, private service or celebrate a life by loud music and releasing balloons, that is entirely up to the family, their imagination and also what the venue will allow. In my bag, I keep a small supply of TCF pamphlets and I will often give one of those to a family member to discuss with the others and, perhaps, contact TCF at a time when they feel appropriate, and if they feel the need.

As King Solomon said: "There is a time for everything and a season for everything under Heaven." In my instance, I still think of my son but I celebrate the fact that he left me 2 lovely grand daughters. I also look upon myself as privileged if I can help another person who has lost their child by giving them the best possible service in my profession as a Funeral Celebrant.

The Chinese have a saying: "The brighter the light, the deeper the shadow." Sometimes, we must all come out of the shadow to appreciate the glow of the light which is life.

Written by Peter, TCF Vic. Aust.
Loving father of Euan aged 24 yrs
Died from Road Trauma 1995.



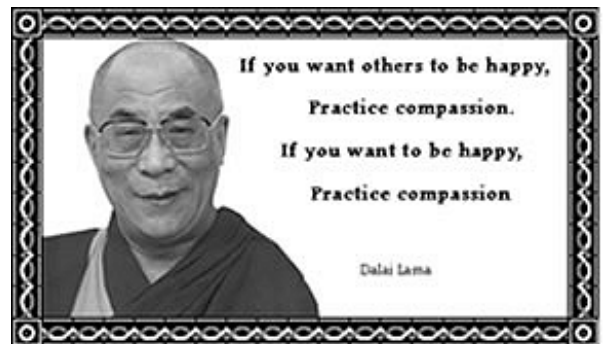
It was a little white cross by the side of the road, resplendent in floral offerings and bearing a beaded necklace on its cross piece. Standing there in mute testimony of a younger life lost and a family's pain.

Leaving that ribbon of highway, to tread softly through the grass, we paused in silent reflection at that little white cross.

We stood there, surrounded by autumn's splendor, the beauty of gold and orange, blue skies and craggy mountain peaks, already capped with snow; they were no colder than a family's grief.

Oh, young girl, beautiful Chris, your memory will not grow cold. Your cross still stands in all the seasons and beauty of your northern home, a reminder to all that life is precious, as you are, silently saying, "take care, take care."

Arleen
TCF/Kamloops, BC



No Vacation There is no vacation from your absence.

Every morning I awake
I am a bereaved parent.

Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.

Every evening my arms are empty.

My life is busy now, but not quite full.
My heart is mended, but not quite healed.

For the rest of my life every moment
Will be lived without you.

There is no vacation from your absence.

Kathy Boyette
TCF, Gulf Coast, MS