

The Compassionate Friends Victoria, Australia

267 Canterbury Rd., P.O. Box 171, Canterbury, Vic. 3216

Telephone: 03 9888 4944 Freecall: 1800 641 091 Fax: 03 9888 4900

www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au Email: support@compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au



Magazine Excerpts - Feb ~ Mar 2008



ANGER

Since my daughter Alison died almost three years ago, aged seven, I have felt many emotions, but one is almost always with me – anger. Sometimes the rage is so strong I just don't know what to do with it. Other times it just simmers, surfacing when someone says something stupid or thoughtless.

Alison died of myocarditis, so essentially there is no-one to blame. So of course my first target was the medical team at the hospital's emergency room – how dare they call themselves competent professionals when they let her die! An autopsy was performed – my second target was the pathologist, who treated her body with such disrespect.

From there my anger grew, taking in God, parents who did it wrong, people whose comments were thoughtless or inappropriate, almost anyone – up to and including the makers of TV ads! Finally after two incidents where I screamed at total strangers in public over minor incidents, I sought help. By this stage I thought I was going crazy.

The therapist I saw was helpful. I realised that my anger was normal, that I was angry with everyone because I didn't have a specific target, and she got me to write (but not to send) hate letters to the pathologist for example. I went to a grief recovery course. I read everything I could find out about death, grief, mourning, loss etc. My boiling anger reduced to a slow simmer.

I don't think I'll ever rid myself of this anger entirely. It only takes one little thing and it bubbles up again. Someone makes the trite comment "They grow up so quickly don't they?" and I feel like snapping "No, not all of them", but instead I put on a smile, remember that I'm dealing with a thoughtless idiot, and let it pass. When a neighbour said, shortly after Alison's death "never mind dear, you're young enough to have another", I didn't punch her in the mouth or scream "How dare you talk about my daughter as if she were a bald tyre to be replaced: but I felt like it.

I think it is normal to be angry when you've been robbed. Bob and I have been robbed of the daughter we thought was ours to love and guide through the years. Peter has been robbed of his sister. But most of all Alison has been robbed of all the years she should have lived, all the experiences life has to offer. All gone because of a stupid virus.

The little everyday things are the most painful for me now. Going shopping and seeing something she would have liked, and not being able to buy it for her. Seeing her friends going to gym, or netball or swimming and knowing that she never will, hearing people complain that their kids fight all the time and thinking I'd give anything for her to be here fighting with Peter. Hundreds of little incidents make me think of her, and along with pain and loss and sadness, there is anger.

The Compassionate Friends has been a huge help. To be able to discuss subjects my family and friends just don't want to hear in a supportive, non-judgemental group has been an enormous relief. I (like everyone else) didn't know what to expect at the first meeting. I didn't want to be part of a group of bereaved parents (who in the world does?) and some things were a shock to me. For example, some people could actually laugh together. What kind of sickos were these people – their child was dead and they were laughing? And they could about unrelated subjects, how did they manage it? I felt like I had no skin I was so raw and wounded. It was a slow process to realise that grief has many faces and normal is only one of them.

So that is why I wanted to write this for the newsletter. I hope it will help those whose grief is newer than mine to feel normal when their anger overwhelms them. This is healthy, not a sign of "lost marbles". And for women in particular it is difficult to deal with – rage is so unladylike! I'm so glad that Compassionate Friends was there when I needed it, I'm grateful to all the wonderful people I've met. I just wish I'd met them for a different reason.

Written by

Ann, TCF, Western Aust.

(In loving memory of her daughter, Alison, who died on 14/9/93 aged 7 years).



Time Rolls On

Whether we see time going by or not, whether we are aware if it is winter or spring, May or June, day or night.....time keeps rolling on.

I remember back to those early days of grief, when time seemed to stand still. I remember looking at the clock, realizing that it was 3.00 am. And being surprised that it was night time. I remember not knowing or caring whether it was a Sunday or a Tuesday.....

But I did know when it was a Wednesday, I knew it was a Wednesday each week because Wednesday was the day our daughter died.

Everything from that moment on was measured by a different standard of time. At first, we marked time by the hours, then the days, then the weeks. All time was measured by how long it had been since she had passed from our world. Days became weeks, weeks became months, and now.....months have been years. For us, the marking of time has evolved.

Our family history will forever be divided into the "before...." and the "after....." but we have gradually become aware of time again. We keep a calendar, we make appointments, and we schedule ourselves into events and commitments.

Once again, time is rolling on.

Jane
TCF/Coquitlam

My Son Craig

It has been almost 2 years since you went
away.

The pain will ease, they say.

Every day is a struggle to do the things.
That this world brings.

I miss your laughter and your smile.
I wish I could be with you awhile.

I know you are in a better place.
But what I would give to see your face.

You are in my heart and thoughts every day.
And that is where you will always stay.

Words can't describe the pain I feel.
But I pray one day that I will heal.

I will always love you Craig

Written by Christine
TCF Vic. Aust.

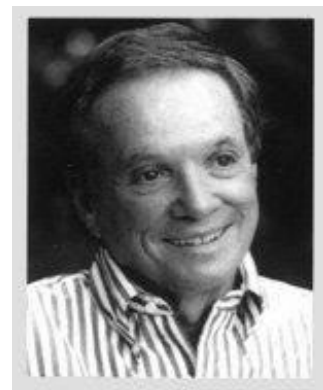
But it hurts.....Differently.

There is no way to predict how you will feel. The reactions of grief are not like recipes with given ingredients and certain results. Each person mourns in a different way.

You may cry hysterically, or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. You may lash out in anger against your family and friends, or you may express your gratitude for their concern and dedication.

You may be calm one moment...in turmoil the next. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Grief is universal.

At the same time it is extremely personal. Heal in your own way.



Earl Grollman
from

"Living when a Loved one had Died."