



Serving Upper Bucks, Southern Lehigh and Montgomery Counties

The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter January 2024

Grief In The New Year: 6 Mindful Tips To Cope

By Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT

Whether your loved one died in 2022 or decades ago, when you are grieving, New Year's does not pass by without your thinking of, and yearning for, the person you love and lost. It is normal to feel strong emotions. It is normal to not know what to do with your feelings of grief.

If you are early in the grief process, you may feel raw and overwhelmed. One of the common grief experiences is to feel anxiety as "special days" approach. While grief over time may shift in its intensity and texture, this type of grief reaction is not unusual - though it is uncomfortable.

Many people find relief by just knowing this is a normal experience. Below I will also share some things you can do to ease your suffering and make the new year a meaningful one.



Coping With Your Feelings About Grief In The New Year

The new year is a marker in time. As we transition from 2023 into 2024, you may be feeling ambivalent. Part of you may be digging in your heels, while another part can't wait for this awful year to end.

However you are feeling, please treat yourself with compassion. Acknowledge your relationship with grief without judgement or shame. This will give you the space to tend to what hurts while loving the memories that remain.

So let's take a collective breath in, and out, to honor all our fellow humans who are missing someone right now. This includes you.



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Our Children Remembered on their January Birthdays

- 1/2 **Stephanie Kissel**, daughter of
Barbara & Bob Krantz
- 1/4 **Marc Landis**, son of Anne & the late
Craig Landis
- 1/9 **James Palatinus**, son of Susan &
Nandor Palatinus
- 1/10 **Peter Graham**, son of Al & Carol
Graham
- 1/11 **Sean Ryer**, son of Pat Ryer
- 1/12 **Christine Inscho**, sister of Diane
Anderson
- 1/13 **Kevin Figanik**, son of Thomas &
Valerie Figanik
- 1/13 **Jason Pini**, brother of Jennifer Pini
- 1/14 **Geneva Doll**, daughter of Keith &
Barbara Doll
- 1/18 **Kyle Smith**, son of David & Maria
Smith
- 1/20 **Dorinne Buda**, daughter of Pamela
Buda
- 1/24 **Austin Jacobs**, son of Penny Jacobs
- 1/24 **Peter Smith**, son of Angela &
Richard Smith
- 1/25 **Allison Reboratti**, daughter of
Barbara & Eduardo Reboratti
- 1/27 **Abbie Zukowski**, daughter of Lisa
Zukowski
- 1/28 **Denise Layton**, daughter of Edward
& Gloria Layton
- 1/28 **Liz Ann Whipple**, daughter of Liz
Sullivan
- 1/29 **Matthew Lincul**, son of Linda & Ed
Lincul
- 1/29 **Kaia DeCesare**, daughter of Kristina
DeCesare Robinson
- 1/30 **Michael Cox**, son of Dianna Cox

WHEN I LOST YOU

I wish I could see you one more time,
Come walking through the door...
But I know that is impossible,
I will hear your voice no more.

I know you can feel my tears
And you don't want me to cry,
Yet my heart is broken because
I can't understand why someone
So precious had to die.

I pray that God will give me strength
And somehow get me through...
As I struggle with the heartache
That came When I Lost You.



*Our Children Remembered on the Anniversary
of Their Death Loved, missed and always in our hearts*

1/1 **Nick Campellone**, son of
Johanna Goodwin
1/2 **Julia Smith**, daughter of
Deborah Heatherington
1/7 **Stephanie Kissel**, daughter of
Barbara & Bob Krantz
1/9 **Jason Heuckeroth**, son of
Debbie & Mark Heuckeroth; brother of
Jaime
1/9 **Stephen Stalheim**, son of
Barbara Mertens; brother of Deborah,
Daniel & Peter
1/10 **Andy Campbell**; son of Beth
Campbell
1/10 **Corbin Christopher Snyder**;
son of Chris Snyder
1/12 **Kiana Alverenga**, daughter of
Tina & Jose Alvarenga
1/12 **Daniel Attilio**, son of Patrick &
Ann Marie Attilio
1/19 **Peter Graham**, son of Albert &
Carol Graham
1/19 **Jacob Burkett**, son of Kathleen
& Jim Hardgrove
1/20 **Clayton Sitko**, son of Henry &
Theresa Sitko
1/21 **Adriana Toro**, daughter of
Israel Toro
1/23 **Michael Macko**, brother of
Mary Anne Macko

1/27 **Justina Sue Daniels
Espinoza**; daughter of
Jacqueline & Bob Campbell
1/26 **Michael Cox**, son of
Dianna Cox
1/29 **Karen Slotter**, daughter
of Dolly Bibic
1/30 **Dan Bardsley**, son of
Emma Bardsley; brother of John
& Anita Bardsley

You have earned the right
to grieve for as long &
however your heart needs
to grieve...

And you are paying for
that right every single
day with the absence of
your loved one.

~John Pete

fb.com/dailygriefquotes



How To Face New Year's Grief

As with other holidays, anniversaries, and days that end in -y, feeling sad, angry, anxious, resistant, confused, detached, or any other difficult emotion is par for the course when you are grieving. Instead of fighting the reality that things are different, let go a little and allow yourself to do things a little differently than before.

Planning how to approach the new year - from what to do on New Year's Eve when you are grieving to navigating milestone dates - can help reduce some anxiety. Even if you toss out those plans, the process of setting them will help. Here are a few ideas to help you cope with grief in the new year.

5 Tips to Cope With Grief in the New Year

1. Focus on self-compassion and self-care instead of self-improvement.

If you are grieving in the new year, you may want to skip the typical New Year's resolutions and instead focus on [self-care for your grieving mind, body, and spirit](#).

Simple things like getting good sleep, eating nourishing food, and exercising a little bit each day will help your body and mind support you during loss. However, do these things with an attitude of self-care instead of self-improvement, which is often implied in our resolutions.

Don't add to your suffering by trying to attain an unrealistic goal. Instead, treat yourself as you would treat a beloved friend in the same position.

You can even start compassionately tending your grief with my free [New Year's Eve Grief Meditation Retreat](#) At Home.

2. Create your own mantra to replace "Happy New Year."

If you are like most grieving people, the idea of being happy is a bridge too far from where you are right now, but since you are going to hear these words again and again, you may as well incorporate them into your self-care practice. Instead of feeling bad for not feeling happy, or angry that someone

would assume you could feel happy, use these three ubiquitous words as a reminder to send yourself compassion.

Try this: Each time you see or hear "Happy New Year," offer yourself words of kindness that resonate with you. For example, "May I treat myself with kindness this year," or "May I have a Compassionate New Year," or simply "This is hard and I am doing my best." This not only puts you back in the driver's seat so you have a modicum of control over your experience, but it is also a great bell of awareness that can remind you to take care of yourself.

3. Know that you are not leaving your loved one behind.

When you cross the threshold of a new year without your special person by your side, it can feel like you are leaving them behind. That isn't the case. Yes, the annual change of the calendar is a marker that time is passing, but you will never forget your special person, no matter how many years go by.

Take some time out early this year to reflect on the ways you carry your special person with you. What habits, likes, dislikes, hobbies, or mannerisms do you share with them? What are your favorite memories of your time together? If they are a blood relative, in what ways do you look like them? They have left their mark on your heart, and that will never go away.

4. Prioritize your grief-work with your new calendar.

Instead of just scheduling things you *have* to do, use your new calendar to plan what you *need* to do to support yourself this year.

While none of us have a crystal ball, most people find holidays and anniversaries especially challenging. Record them on your calendar, and plan how you want to spend those special days. If you are a member of [Awaken](#), you will find a roadmap and worksheet that helps you fill the day with meaning.

And knowing what you are going to do on these special grief-days may help reduce your anxiety. Whether

Special Thanks

A special thank you to Jennifer Pini, Diane Gurecki, Sierra Doyle, DonnaHesse, for the Remembrance cards that you receive. They do this in memory of their children/ siblings: An appreciated Thank You to our members for helping to set up and tear down for chapter meetings. Thank you to Linda Stauffer for supplying the ink and paper and printing our newsletter and creating and maintaining our website. She does this in memory of her daughter Katie. Thank you to Theresa Sitko for managing our memorial garden. She does this in memory of her son Clayton Thank you to Dianna Cox for lovely planters at the garden she donated , and for addressing our monthly newsletters for mailing. She does this in remembrance of her son Michael. Thanks to Barb and Bob Heimerdinger for applying the memorial Plaques to the wall in the memorial garden. They do this in remembrance of their son Ryan.

scheduling coffee over Zoom with a supportive friend on your loved one's birthday, or joining a wider circle of friends and family to reminisce on the anniversary of their death, be sure to connect with others unless you really prefer to spend time alone.

You can also plan ahead to attend [grief support groups](#) and memorial events through your local hospice or grief group, many of which are offered online during the pandemic.

I host the [Awaken Meditation & Journaling for Grief Group](#) online every Tuesday, and can tell you firsthand how beneficial regular group support can be. Members of Awaken also benefit from a library of grief resources, including guided meditations, videos, journaling prompts, and other supportive self-care tools. Prioritize your group by putting it on your calendar *now*, before work and other obligations take over. You can also block off self-care time for self-massage, yoga, meditation, [journaling](#), or just free time to do as you wish.

5. Steady your mind in the present with meditation.

The human brain is rarely fully present, and this is especially true when we are grieving. Part of us wants to fast forward and leave this awful time behind, but an even bigger part wants to turn around and sprint back to the time when our loved one was still alive.

The reality, of course, is that we can't control the passing of time, but we can control what we do with our attention. In the meditation world, we call this bouncing around "monkey mind." Although it is just a side-effect of being human, ruminating rarely reduces our suffering. There are countless ways you can learn to tame your mind with [meditation](#), but I find that in the early days, months, and even years of grief, [focusing meditation](#) practices can be especially helpful.

Try this: with your eyes open or closed, turn your attention toward your breath. As you breathe in, silently say to yourself – "IN". As you breathe out, silently say to yourself "OUT".

Do this over and over each time you breathe, for three to five minutes. When your monkey mind wanders off, find your breath again and start over. It doesn't matter how often you need to begin again. After a few minutes, you may feel calmer and more in control of your own mind.

6. Join a compassionate grief

Please give some thought to volunteering with The Compassionate Friends. Our Chapter is growing and we need helping hands to continue to help others that are new to this path of grief. We need not walk alone.

group or community for compassionate support and practical tools.

Time with people who understand you is one of the most helpful things you can do on your grief journey. In times of grief it is normal to feel alone and not understood by people around you. While not everyone experiences this, if it sounds familiar, you need to find your tribe.

While not all groups will focus on a specific type of loss, the collective grief experience when shared with compassionate friends is very healing. If you can find a group where you can connect with people who are similar - either in the type of loss, relationship, or values - that can be extra helpful.

I run an [online grief group](#) called Awaken that focuses on all types of loss, but pairs people with similar stories in our monthly social hour to talk about specific challenges. Many have created friendships outside of the group. My group also focuses on self-care and self-compassion, so the people in the group have a similar values of wellness and health.



The
Gathering
Place

<https://gatheringplaceevent.com/>

Love Gifts

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of overwhelming grief...and unspeakable love."
Washington Irving

Sending a very special thank you to those who sent in love gifts this month:



Arlene Peters & Family for the Love Gift, in memory of their daughter Sundai Marie Peters: We love you and miss you more each day. LOve Mom, Dad and Adam.

Kathy McMullin for the love gift in memory of her son Ryan McMullen: Miss you every day. Always in my Heart.

Beth Campbell for the love gift in memory of her son Andy Campbell: Be Kind to Everyone.

Steven Tondera in memory of his son Michael Tondera : Many thanks to the Compassionate Friends, God Bless All of You.

Donations made in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling are always welcome,.
Please help us help others. We Need Not Walk Alone.



LOVE GIFTS

A Love Gift is a donation of money in support of our Quakertown Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. Donations can be in memory of a child, sibling, or grandchild on their birthday, angel day or anytime. Your Love Gift will be acknowledged in our newsletter. Love Gifts are our Chapter's main monetary support. Anyone can donate and we thank you for your support of our chapter.

We are a 501(c) 3 nonprofit, chapter #2053. Donations are tax deductible.



In Memory of: _____

Birth Date _____ Death Date _____

Check One: Please use my gift for:

General Operating Expenses Memorial Garden

Your Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Love Gift Message _____

Please make check payable to:
The Compassionate Friends, Quakertown Chapter

Mail to:
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951

Yes or No - include my name / love note in the newsletter.



The Compassionate Friends

Quakertown Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Serving Bucks and Montgomery Counties



About Our Chapter

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Dechant

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Mary Anne Macko

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The Compassionate Friends is a nationally renowned 501 C (3) non-profit organization with 700 chapters in the US. All donations are



**New Chapter
phone number
267-379-0429**

Self-help Program

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. is a mutual assistance, self- help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

To Our New Members

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

To our Members who are further down the "GRIEF ROAD"

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK - what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF"veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

Information Regarding Our Meetings

PLEASE don't stay away from a meeting because the topic scheduled does not interest you. We are here to discuss whatever is on your mind, we don't stay on the topic only. This is YOUR group and we are here for each other. You do not have to talk at meetings. We welcome your participation in our group but it is not a requirement. Coming to listen to the others is Okay too. Re-member also that our meeting is open to adult siblings, grandparents, or adult family members such as aunts or uncles.

Support Group Meetings

We are so sorry for the cause that brings us together. It takes courage to attend a Compassionate Friends support group meet-ing. We understand how it feels to walk into a room of strangers and share personal feelings, especially when you are in so much pain. At your first meeting, we hope you find care, support, understanding and a group of friends to share with. Truly, there are no strangers among compassionate friends.

As a reminder to families that would like to attend a support meeting. Please allow yourself at least 3 or 4 meetings of attendance to determine if they are for you. It may take a few meetings before you're able to talk about your loved one and that is understandable. What you say at our meetings is kept in the meeting, you can cry, hug, talk about how you are feeling freely. Our meetings are for parents, grandparents and siblings in grade 9 or above and adult siblings.

Your Friends at TCF Quakertown Chapter

Library Books

We have a nice library of books for our members to check out and read and return them back to our library. A problem we currently have is that some books have not made their way back to our library and our library is shrinking. If you have checked out a book or magazine from our library and are done reading it won't you PLEASE return it to us at our monthly meetings. If you are not able to make the meeting you may mail it back to us or have someone else return it to us. Also, if you have any books that would help other grieving families through their journey and would like to donate them to our library please give them to our librarians.

Newsletter Errors and Omissions

For any errors or omissions please contact Linda via email at kt4ever@mac.com with the error and the correction for the next month newsletter. Please remember we are all volunteers and grieving

About This Newsletter

This newsletter comes to you courtesy of The Compassionate Friends, Quakertown Chapter with the hope that it will be a helpful resource for you on your grief journey.

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter please contact the newsletter editor by email: newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org

PLEASE NOTE: If you are moving or your email has changed please notify the newsletter editor so that we can update your information and you continue to receive the newsletter. If the newsletter is returned to us either via mail or your email bounces back and you have not notified us you will be removed from the mailing list.

Newsletter submissions:

Submit articles and poetry to the editor by the 15th of the preceding month. Include the author's name & your contact information. You may mail to our PO Box 1013, Quakertown PA 18951 or email as a pdf file or word document to: newsletter@tcfquakertownpa.org



The Compassionate Friends
Quakertown Chapter
PO Box 1013
Quakertown, PA 18951

Support Group Meetings are Jan 9th
At The Gathering Place, Quakertown, PA

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

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