

Courage – A Surprise – An Understanding

Attendance Requirement: Courage

I don't think I am unique. I did NOT want to attend a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. I was coerced by my wife. It was subtle but effective. My son, on the other hand, made 'a Devil's deal;' he agreed to go to the next meeting in exchange for a favor—his debt some weeks away. The thought of discussing death nauseates. We, my son and I, made a bad deal.

The Meeting: A Surprise

I was surprised to find I was not the only man to have lost a child. There was a reality to that recognition. My loss, not unlike yours, is a personal matter. No one can tell me how I feel or how I ought to feel. Yet, the group never made me feel guilty about my selfishness; they understood.

The Result: An Understanding

The Compassionate Friends is not an efficient organization. There are no systems, no quick easy cures. Grief is a catharsis. Most of what you hear here you will dismiss; it will not apply to you. But there are nuggets—small ideas you will want to try or things you want to think about. Some you will try. Many you will discard. Only a few will help the pain. These, you will treasure. Your friends and associates may try to understand your grief and try to help. They can do neither. They don't understand. The people who attend the meetings do understand. And they try to help.

My son felt he had gained little from the meeting. Yet he left feeling he had helped someone else deal with his grief. What a marvelous satisfaction for a 15-year-old.

What's In It For You?

The Compassionate Friends is here to help—to listen, to suggest, to understand. If you handle your grief well, you do not need The Compassionate Friends. But we need you! Your approach or method of dealing with grief could help one or more of us. Please share it.

Bob Watts
TCF Stamford, CT



PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

By Nadine Boyd.....

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I was so grateful to receive this poem and column written by a bereaved dad to share with you this month. Too often in our society men are not encouraged to share their feelings of pain and grief; only expected to "take care" of the other loved ones going through their own journey of grief. Your Compassionate Friends understand dads, brothers and grandparents' pain and grief are just as strong as those of women, and we need to validate those feelings and encourage them to express their grief to help them heal.

Compassionate Friends know it takes a great deal of courage to attend a meeting. If you are able to attend a meeting we welcome you. We want to get to know you and your child. We want to hear your thoughts and feelings and hope it brings you comfort and peace to know you are not alone. We want to learn from you to help us help the other men in our lives: fathers, grandfathers and sons, to give them a safe place of understanding and acceptance that it is OK to grieve. You don't have to be strong all the time. It is OK to be sad, mad, and feel empty and alone in your pain. It is OK to accept help for yourself and you don't have to take care of everyone else. We are so grateful for the men in our group who provide their perspective and mentorship to all of us.

I wish you comfort and healing, and the peace that passes all understanding.

In friendship,

Nadine

