

# The Compassionate Friends

*The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

**Supporting Families After a Child Dies**

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding & hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

February 2026

[tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com)

## MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

Community Hospice  
4368 Spyres Way  
Modesto, CA 95356

*Please join us at our  
next meeting on  
Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>*

*Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.  
We begin promptly  
@ 7:00 p.m.*

## Upcoming Meetings

March 9<sup>th</sup>

April 13<sup>th</sup>

May 11<sup>th</sup>



**Are you taking a vacation?  
Visiting family? Moving?  
Helping someone new to  
TCF to find a chapter?**

*Use the link below to find  
TCF chapters in other  
cities and states*

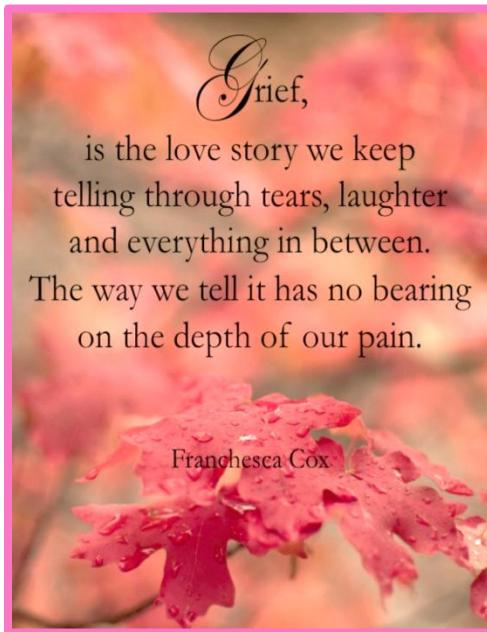
[Chapter Meeting Locator -  
Compassionate Friends](#)



## **Our Mission**

### ***The mission of The Compassionate Friends:***

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.



## MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

*Please leave a message  
and a steering committee  
member will return your  
call.*

## 2026 Steering Committee

Suzanne Casity  
*Chapter Co-Leader*

Kris Leitner  
*Chapter Co-Leader*

Melinda Lansberry  
*Secretary*

Elsie Freeman  
*Treasurer*

Janet Neal  
*Outreach Coordinator*

Michele Mootz  
*Hospitality*

Lorie Boisse  
*Public Relations/Media*

Kris Leitner  
*Newsletter Editor*

**Mike & Suzanne Casity  
Website**





**Click on the photo to register.**

## Grief Webinar: Giving Grief and Healthy Coping a Language

**February 4 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**

Our society, in general, has adopted many constructs for understanding grief that do not adequately reflect the experience of bereaved people. This often leads individuals living with the death of a loved one to retreat from others, internalize their grief, and/or feel as though they are not grieving in the right way. Join us for this webinar as we challenge societal myths about what is "normal" grieving and healthy coping. This presentation will offer a "language" that more accurately defines how grief manifests in our lives and ideas for how we might carry and cope with the devastating, life-altering experience of profound loss.

## Breakfast with the Dads

*Save the date Saturday, Saturday, March 7th  
for breakfast with other bereaved dads in our chapter.  
8 a.m. at Perko's in Salida - 4642 Kiernan Avenue  
Confirm with Mike Casity, (209)539-2206 and he'll save a seat for you.*



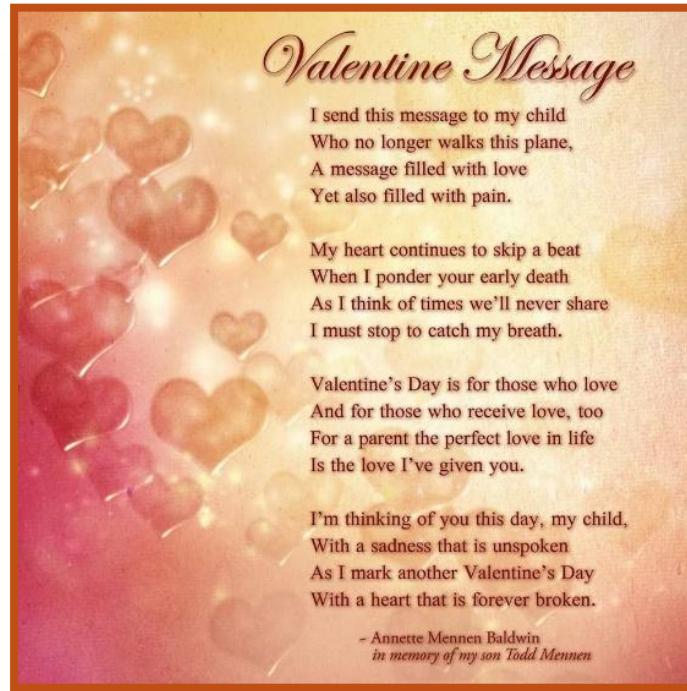
## We Need Not Walk Alone



The national magazine of The Compassionate Friends, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, featuring articles by and for parents, siblings, and grandparents who are grieving the death of a child in their family.

Have you written a story or poem you'd like to have considered for publication in *We Need Not Walk Alone*? You don't have to be a professional writer—just someone who has a story to tell that will touch our readers or in some way help them cope with the natural grief process. Please use the form on this page to submit articles. For more details or questions, email Sara Zeigler at [sara@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:sara@compassionatefriends.org)

We're also looking for story ideas that can be developed into publication quality articles.



## ♥ LOVE GIFTS ♥

Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild in any amount. Donations received are used for our annual Candle Lighting Program each December, for sending our monthly newsletter via US mail and for community outreach. We are here to reach out to other bereaved families who may not be aware we are here to lend our support after the death of a child. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the PO Box below.

**Karen Gates, in loving memory of her beloved son, Tyler.**

**Terry Hayes, in loving memory of her beloved son, Tyler.**

Please fill out the information below and send with a check to:

The Compassionate Friends  
Modesto Area Chapter  
PO Box 578713  
Modesto, CA 95357

Child,  Sibling or  Grandchild \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Passing \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Donation amount \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Your email address \_\_\_\_\_

Your address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like your gift listed in our monthly newsletter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling?  
The amount will remain anonymous Yes  No

The Compassionate Friends is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

# THE BONDS OF SHARED GRIEF



Divisiveness and intolerance for others' views seem prevalent all around us today. We see it in our political beliefs, social justice concerns, and health environment. It is apparent within families, workplaces, and organizations. When we are grieving the painful death of a child, grandchild, or sibling, this divisiveness creates walls that can make our sorrow even deeper.

It's difficult enough when we're grieving to feel connected to the people around us, and these dividing walls can further isolate us.

**The Compassionate Friends credo begins with these words:**

*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.*

Uniting people who share this deep grief was the premise that started The Compassionate Friends. The death of our brother, sister, child, or grandchild permeates all aspects of our being. It's something that can't easily be explained to those who have not experienced it, while those who have, possess a deep and compassionate understanding that requires little explanation. The bonds within our TCF community can bridge these chasms we see around us. Rather than being further isolated in our grief, we can feel surrounded by understanding, community, and shared hope that can be lifesaving during this time.

While none of us would choose to be a part of this community given the reason that brought us, we are connected at a deeply meaningful level. It's hard to see someone across the table with a similar loss and stay in a place of intolerance and anger. When we remember what binds us as a group and honor our shared losses, we focus on supportive and comforting connectedness. When we reach for the love in our hearts that's bolstered by our shared sorrow, we can model a greater energy that's needed in our world. Our child, grandchild, or sibling who died and brought us to TCF is honored each time we choose this path of connection through our differences rather than more division because of them.

**SHARI O'LOUGHLIN**

**THE BONDS OF SHARED GRIEF - COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

## A very special message from our own dear Milan Franco to her darling daughter Elena



Dear Goosie,

*My Elenita preciosa amor de mi vida, I miss you.*

*If you were still here, you would be in preschool. Maybe I'd be helping you make your first valentines and wondering if one day you'd bring one home for me to meet. You're no longer here in the way I long for, but I write your valentines anyway. This one is for you. When I first learned I was having a girl, fear rose before joy. I'd wanted a boy, not because I didn't want you, but because I doubted myself. I had never been shown what a close mother-daughter relationship looked like. My own mother had not been there for me, and I worried I would fail you in the same ways. I didn't imagine tea parties or close talks about life. I imagined all the ways I would get it wrong.*

*And then you were here.*

*The cherry blossoms bloomed bright pink against the sky. My Valentine's Day roses still sat on the kitchen table, like you, just a few days old. Day by day, fear softened into love. An all-encompassing, soul-deep love I had never known. I fell in love with being your mother. I dreamed of the day we would have those talks, of hearing you say, "I love you too, Mama, and yes, of those precious tea parties.*

*I loved dressing you up, doing your hair, and reading to you. Through you, I learned I didn't need to be taught how to be a good mother. Love teaches you. As I stepped fully into being yours, something inside me healed. A wound I had carried from my own childhood slowly closed. For that love, for you, I will always be grateful.*

*When you passed, my world shattered. I lost not only you, but the version of myself I was becoming. Life felt stripped of its color. Losing you devastated me, and every life you touched with your love. And yet, even then, you found ways to reach us. Ladybugs in winter. White feathers at my feet. Rubber duckies in the most unexpected places. The sun, breaking through a stormy sky right above your grave. You showed me that love is not confined to the physical.*

*Through you, I learned that while being your mommy gave me purpose, it was not my only one. Losing you forced me to face a deeper truth. I am here on a spiritual pilgrimage to learn how to love more fully, including myself. I am not only a mother. I am not only surviving. I am learning how to transcend. Life is a journey of learning, and while I have more work to do, you didn't, and so you wait patiently for me on the other side.*

*I found ways to pour love into the world in your name through charity, through kindness, through holding others a little closer. I learned that the price of love is loss, and still, I would choose you every time. Loving you changed the way I see people, faith, and God. It brought me closer to Him. And even though you are not here, I am still a mother, your mother, because love does not disappear with the grave.*

*I feel you near when I sing your songs. When I read to you. When I visit your resting place. Our connection goes beyond flesh and time. A piece of you lives within me forever, and a piece of me is with you in Heaven.*

*Your family will be gathering for you, just a few days after the day of love, to celebrate your heavenly birthday. We'll be having a tea party for you, and with you, in spirit.*

*Happy heavenly birthday, my sweet Elena. You will always be my Valentine.*

*Love,*

*Your Mommy.*

# Is Anger One of the Stages of Grief?

*Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel  
in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.  
~ Mark Twain*



Legend has it that one evening an elderly Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside every one of us. The battle, he said, is between two wolves. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. His grandson thought about this for a moment, then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?" His grandfather simply replied, "The one you feed."

Although anger is commonly identified as one of the so-called Stages of Grief, we now recognize that grief does not occur in easily defined stages, and anger is not always a part of everyone's experience. Better to think of anger as a *state* (the circumstances or condition in which you may find yourself at any given time) rather than a *stage* (one of several sequential phases you may be in, as you work your way toward an end).

What is more, many mourners report not feeling angry at all. Nevertheless, there are times in your grief journey when you're frustrated and hurting, and it's only natural to lash out and look for someone to blame. Being angry is a way of channeling energy, of making some sense of the pain. When you are protesting an unjust loss, you may have every right to be angry. Even if you know your anger isn't logical or justified, you can't always help how you feel. Emotions aren't always rational and logical. Feelings are neither right or wrong, good or bad. They just *are*. And for some of us, being angry may be preferable to feeling the underlying hurt and pain of loss.

*You may find yourself feeling angry at:*

- yourself for what you did or failed to do, whether it is real or imagined.
- your loved one for dying and abandoning you.
- a surviving family member for not being the one who died.
- medical or nursing staff who expressed little or no sympathy during your loved one's illness or death.
- the doctors or the health care system for failing to save your loved one.
- the situation which suddenly rendered you helpless and powerless, when all this time you thought you were in control of your life.
- fate or at God for letting your loved one get sick and die.
- life because it isn't fair.
- the rest of the world because life goes on as if nothing's happened, while all your dreams are shattered and your life's been turned upside down.
- others who have not lost what you have lost, who aren't suffering; who are more fortunate than you and don't even see it or appreciate it; who cannot understand what you are going through; who will go back to their lives as usual.

- others for being happy (part of a couple, part of an intact family) when you are not.

Anger is a powerful emotion that can be frightening. But feeling angry doesn't necessarily imply that you will lose control or take your anger out unfairly on others. Before you can get through it, let go of the intense emotions attached to it and move on, your anger must be admitted, felt and expressed, if only to yourself. When you simply acknowledge feelings of anger to yourself or a trusted other without actually doing anything about them, no harm is done, to you or anyone else. On the other hand, if anger is suppressed and held on to, eventually you may erupt like a volcano, internalize it and take it out on yourself (in the form of depression or anxiety), or misdirect it toward innocent others such as family, friends and colleagues.

### Suggestions for Coping with Anger

Recognize what you were taught about anger as a child and how that may affect the way you experience and deal with anger now.

- Seek to understand what's driving your anger, resentment or disappointment. Examine whatever expectations you had of others that were not met. What did you expect that did not happen? Were your expectations reasonable? Were others capable of doing what you expected?
- Discover ways to discharge the energy of anger in appropriate, non-destructive ways that will bring no harm to yourself, to others or to property. Find a safe place, space, activity and time where you can let your anger out through:
  - \* *physical exercise*: sports, brisk walking, pounding pillows, chopping wood, digging holes, scrubbing floors.
  - \* *hobbies and crafts*: painting, pottery, stitchery, wood working.
  - \* *music*: blowing a horn; pounding drums or a piano.
  - \* *writing*: keeping a journal; writing a letter and tearing it up.
  - \* *talking*: finding someone you can talk to, without feeling judged or being told you're bad because you're angry.
  - \* *reaching out*: asking others for the support you need, rather than expecting them to know.
- If you've decided your anger with another is justified, you can choose to deal with it by:
  - \* *confronting the person* constructively with what happened and how you feel about it.
  - \* *realigning your expectations*, accepting the person's limitations and seeking the support you need elsewhere.
  - \* *leaving the relationship*.
- If you think you're in danger of hurting yourself or someone else, if you're feeling as if your anger is out of control, seek professional help at once.

Check out our closed Facebook page, *The Modesto Area of TCF*. Make a request to join the page and an Administrator will approve your request.

Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at - [modestoriverbankarea\\_tcf.](https://www.instagram.com/modestoriverbankarea_tcf/)

Our Steering Committee wants to provide the best possible support to each of our TCF Chapter members and friends. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee with any concerns you have or any ideas about how our Chapter can be of support to you and others. We're also available if you'd like to talk about your child or some aspect of the challenges of your bereavement journey. You can reach us by email at: [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com) or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.

Please remember to send in your child's photo so that it can be added to the new TCF Modesto-Riverbank website. Send photos to: [scasity@comcast.net](mailto:scasity@comcast.net)

Visit our website for information and to stay up to date on chapter events.

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)



The vision statement of  
**The Compassionate Friends**

is that everyone who needs us will find us and **everyone who finds us will be helped.**

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. Please note, all three questions need to be answered in order to be approved. If you are on a phone or tablet, you will need to scroll down before hitting "submit." If you are still waiting for approval after three days, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

#### PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

[TCF – Loss of a Child](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth](#)  
[TCF – Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Loss of an Infant Grandchild](#)  
[TCF – Infant and Toddler Loss](#)  
[TCF – Loss of a Child 4 -12 Years Old](#)  
[TCF – Loss of a Child 13-19 Years Old](#)  
[TCF – Loss of an Adult Child](#)  
[TCF – Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children](#)  
[TCF – Grieving the Loss of a Child as a Single Parent](#)  
[TCF – Loss of a Stepchild](#)  
[TCF – Loss of a Grandchild](#)  
[TCF – Sibs \(for bereaved siblings\)](#)  
[TCF – Loss of a LGBTQ+ Child](#)  
[TCF – Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child](#)  
[TCF – Multiple Losses](#)  
[TCF – Men in Grief](#)  
[TCF – Daughterless Mothers](#)  
[TCF – Sudden Death](#)  
[TCF – Loss to COVID-19 and Other Infectious Diseases](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)  
[TCF – Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Suicide](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Homicide](#)  
[TCF – Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Cancer](#)  
[TCF – Loss of a Child with Special Needs](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Long-term Illness](#)  
[TCF – Loss after Withdrawing Life Support](#)  
[TCF – Loss to Mental Illness](#)  
[TCF – Finding Hope for Parents through TCF SIBS](#)  
[TCF – Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren](#)  
[TCF – Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues](#)  
[TCF – Inclusion and Diversity](#)  
[TCF – Grieving with Faith and Hope](#)  
[TCF – Secular Support](#)  
[TCF – Reading Your Way through Grief](#)  
[TCF – Crafty Corner](#)