

# 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)

September 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, September 14<sup>th</sup>**

*Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.*

*We begin promptly  
@ 7:00 p.m.*

#### Upcoming Meetings

**October 12<sup>th</sup>**

**November 9<sup>th</sup>**

**December 14<sup>th</sup>**

I am grateful for your life...  
even as I mourn your death.  
I laugh at the memories...  
even as I cry for those not made.  
I recognize the beauty in life...  
even as I experience its ugliness.  
I embrace hope and joy...  
even as my heart breaks.  
I live... even as I grieve. [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**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.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. We can grieve in the arms of others. We can grieve in solitude. We can grieve through tears, laughter, meditation, movement, or prayer. The only rule is that we hold our hearts with the utmost care and allow ourselves the room to feel and the space to heal with no timelines or expectations.

LIZ ARCH  
THE COURAGE TO RISE

#### MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

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

#### 2026 Steering Committee

Kris Leitner  
*Chapter Co-Leader*

Suzanne Casity  
*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*

some days  
i feel as if i'm  
conquering the world  
in your honor;  
and some days  
i feel as if i'm  
lost in the heartache  
of your absence.

*Good to Have You*



## Chapter Potluck & BBQ

September 19<sup>th</sup> 2026

*Join us at The Casity's Home*

1567 Parkview St., Manteca, CA



Appetizers starting at Noon -- Lunch at 1:00 p.m.

*The Compassionate Friends*  
**VIRTUAL FALL RETREAT**  
*Finding Comfort, Building Community, Nurturing Hope*

**OCTOBER 24, 2026**

- 3 Keynote Speakers
- 14 Workshops
- Attend Virtually
- Watch Recorded Sessions for up to 90 days

There is **no charge** to attend.  
Donations are appreciated and help TCF  
continue providing support and hope to grieving families.

compassionatefriends.org

Please join us on October 24, 2026, for The Compassionate Friend's Fall Virtual Retreat. This special gathering will include workshop presentations on a variety of grief topics that have a Q&A opportunity at the end of each plus three keynote sessions. Whether you are newly bereaved or a more seasoned griever, a range of workshops will be offered on grief, loss, coping, and healing and will focus on support for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We invite you to join us for an informative, caring, and supportive day from the comfort of your own home.

There is no registration fee to participate in our Virtual Fall Retreat. We want everyone in the TCF community to have the opportunity to gather, reflect, and find comfort, regardless of their ability to give.

If you are able, we invite you to make a donation to help support this retreat and the ongoing work of The Compassionate Friends. Suggested giving levels of \$25, \$50, \$100 or \$250, but a gift of any amount is deeply appreciated. Every contribution helps us continue creating meaningful opportunities for bereaved families to find connection, understanding, and support.

[More Information](#)

[Register Today](#)

### Event Details

Date: 10/31/2026

Location: Modesto Jr College

West Campus

Modesto, CA

Registration: 9:00 am

Event Time: 10:00 am

### For more information contact:

Contact Name: Jori Martinez

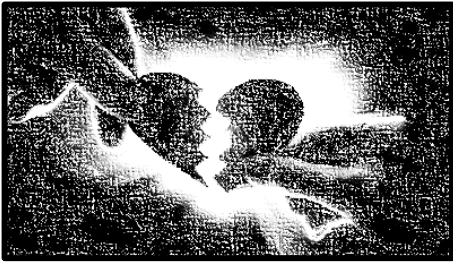
Contact Phone: 209-200-6979

Contact Email: [msjori89@gmail.com](mailto:msjori89@gmail.com)



*Click on the "Out of the Darkness" picture and it will take you directly to the Modesto Walk page.*

# 10 Ways to Handle Hurtful or Insensitive Comments During Grief



At the [Grief Support Center](#), we believe that loss comes in all forms—and so do the reactions people have to it. When you are grieving, you may expect compassion, patience, and understanding. Instead, you might encounter comments that feel dismissive, awkward, minimizing, or even deeply hurtful.

Phrases like “Everything happens for a reason,” “At least they lived a long life,” or “You need to be strong” often come from discomfort rather than cruelty. Still, intention does not erase impact. These moments can leave you feeling misunderstood, invalidated, or emotionally exhausted—on top of the grief you are already carrying. When people make insensitive comments, it can cause you to [disconnect from other friends](#), make you feel [angry](#) and [irritable](#), or cause other emotions and reactions.

Learning how to handle insensitive comments during grief is not about becoming tougher or less sensitive. It is about protecting your emotional well-being, honoring your experience, and choosing responses that serve you—not the comfort of others.

Below are 10 thoughtful, practical ways to navigate these painful interactions while staying grounded in compassion for yourself.

## 1. Remember: Most Hurtful Comments Come From Discomfort, Not Malice

When people don’t know how to sit with pain, they often reach for clichés, platitudes, or advice. Understanding this doesn’t make the comment okay—but it can reduce the additional burden of wondering why someone would say such a thing.

According to the American Psychological Association, grief often makes others uncomfortable because it reminds them of their own vulnerability and loss. Many people speak to reduce their own anxiety, not to harm the bereaved.

This perspective can help you decide whether a comment deserves engagement—or whether it’s best to let it pass.

## 2. Give Yourself Permission to Feel Hurt

One of the most damaging myths around grief is that you are “too sensitive” if comments bother you. In reality, grief lowers emotional defenses and heightens vulnerability. Feeling hurt is not weakness—it is a natural response to loss.

Instead of judging yourself for your reaction, try saying internally:

- “This hurts because I’m grieving.”
- “I don’t have to minimize this to make others comfortable.”

Self-validation is often the first step toward healing.

## 3. Decide When to Respond—and When Not To

You do not owe anyone an explanation, education, or emotional labor. Some comments are worth addressing; others are not.

Ask yourself:

- Do I have the emotional energy right now?
- Will responding help me feel more empowered or more drained?
- Is this person important to my ongoing support system?

Choosing not to respond is not avoidance, it is boundary-setting.

## 4. Prepare Simple, Protective Responses

Many people freeze in the moment and later wish they had said something different. Preparing a few neutral responses in advance can reduce stress.

Examples:

- “That comment is hard for me right now.”
- “Grief doesn’t really work that way for me.”
- “I know you mean well, but this is still very painful.”
- “I’m taking things one day at a time.”

These responses allow you to acknowledge the moment without escalating it.

## 5. Use Boundaries as an Act of Self-Care

Grief often clarifies which relationships feel safe—and which ones don’t. Setting boundaries may feel uncomfortable, especially if you are used to accommodating others, but it is often necessary.

Boundaries can sound like:

- “I’m not ready for advice right now.”
- “I can’t talk about this today.”
- “Please don’t compare my loss to others.”

The Hospice Foundation of America emphasizes that protecting emotional energy is a critical part of grief care, not a sign of withdrawal or failure.

#### 6. Reframe the Comment Without Internalizing It

Insensitive remarks often reflect the speaker's beliefs, fears, or lack of experience—not the truth of your grief.

For example:

- “They wouldn’t want you to be sad” → They are uncomfortable with sadness.
- “At least you can try again” → They don’t understand this loss.

This mental reframe can prevent comments from embedding themselves as self-doubt or shame.

#### 7. Seek Out People Who “Get It”

One of the most powerful antidotes to hurtful comments is connection with people who understand grief from the inside.

Grief support groups, bereavement counselors, and peer communities offer:

- Validation without judgment
- Language that reflects lived experience
- Relief from having to explain yourself

The Association for Death Education and Counseling highlights the importance of grief-informed spaces where loss is normalized rather than minimized.

#### 8. Limit Exposure When Needed

Sometimes the most compassionate choice is distance—temporary or long-term—from people who repeatedly invalidate your grief.

This might mean:

- Skipping certain social gatherings
- Muting conversations that feel harmful
- Spending less time with people who rush your healing

Grief is not the time to force resilience through constant exposure to pain.

#### 9. Express the Impact (When It Feels Safe)

With trusted individuals, it can be healing to share how their words affected you.

You might say:

- “When you said that, I felt unseen.”
- “I know you meant well, but it landed as dismissive.”
- “What helps most is simply listening.”

These conversations can deepen understanding and prevent future harm—but only when you feel emotionally safe to have them.

#### 10. Anchor Yourself in Meaning and Compassion

Insensitive comments can shake your sense of meaning, making you question your reactions or timeline. Returning to what you know to be true about grief can steady you.

Grief is:

- Nonlinear
- Deeply personal
- Shaped by love, attachment, and loss

As Mental Health America notes, grief is not something to “get over,” but something people learn to live with over time, with support and understanding.

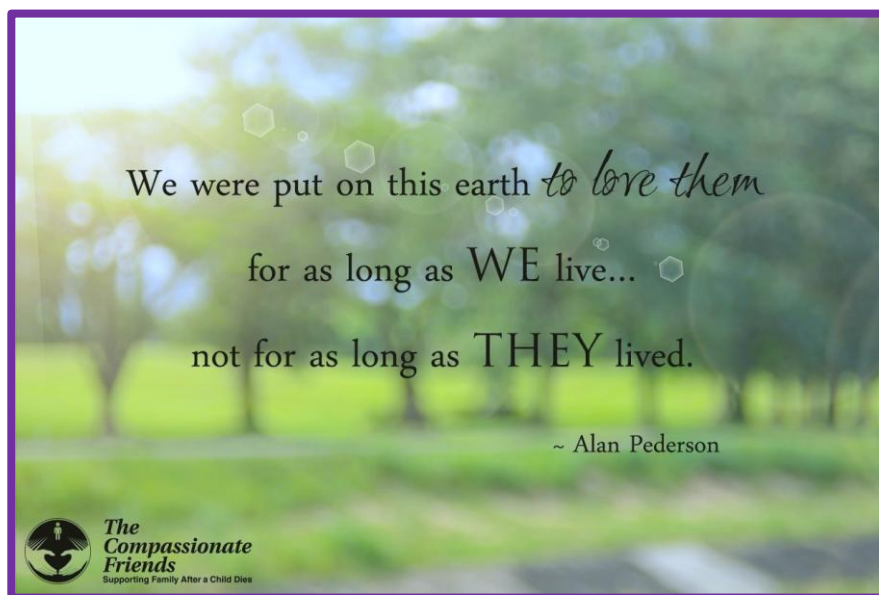
At the Grief Support Center, we see again and again that healing is not about silencing pain—it’s about being supported while carrying it.

#### When Hurtful Comments Add to the Weight of Loss

If you find that insensitive comments are making you withdraw, question yourself, or feel isolated, it may be a sign that you need more grief-informed support. No one should have to manage loss and defend their pain at the same time.

Grief often comes with secondary losses—loss of understanding, loss of safety in relationships, loss of feeling seen. Recognizing this can help you seek care that addresses the full picture.

[10 Ways to Handle Hurtful or Insensitive Comments During Grief](#)



## ♥ 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.

*In loving memory of all our precious children.*

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?

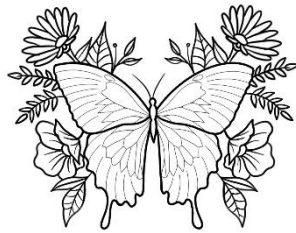
The amount will remain anonymous Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

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

Grieving parents should never have to apologize for speaking honestly about their grief. Conversations, requests and honest statements about what we need should be welcomed and normalized – not avoided because grief makes others uncomfortable. We deserve the space to speak our children's names, express what we are feeling and ask for what we need without hesitation or apology.

Hope's message to her co-workers is a powerful example of that kind of honesty. By sharing her words, we hope to encourage more workplaces and more people to listen, make space and allow these conversations to become the norm.

The beautiful butterfly artwork is an example of Gabby's amazing talent. Thank you Hope for sharing your courage and your wisdom with us.



*I have changed.*

*Today was my first day back to work since Gabrielle passed. My office looked the same but I'm not the same woman I was the last time I was here.*

*In reality, I will never be the same woman I was.*

*I cut my hair shorter and I'm letting the grey come out. I honestly don't care about my hair color anymore.*

*I've lost weight. I don't recommend the grief diet. It sucks.*

*I lose my train of thought and words fail me now.*

*I used to have my life all planned out, now I'm just trying to make it through the day without crumbling to the ground in grief.*

*My heart is permanently broken.*

*To all my family and friends who have continued to reach out and be there for our family, I thank you. Every card, message and gift has touched me.*

*I know a lot of you don't know what to say to me. Let me give you some help.*

*It's okay to say you don't know what to say. I'm not expecting you to ease my pain. This pain is a part of me now and there are no words that will take it away.*

*Speak Gabrielle's name to me. I LOVE to hear her name. I love to hear stories of her. I know she was a handful, that's what we love most about her. So tell me stories about her.*

*It's okay to laugh in front of me. I might even laugh with you if it's funny.*

*Please continue to invite me places. I may or may not go, but don't assume that I want to be alone.*

*I will always welcome a hug and cup of coffee.*

*And here is a quick list of what NOT to say or ask me.*

*Don't ask me how she died. I will NOT answer that question.*

*"Everything happens for a reason" or "She is in a better place". If you say this to me, I will throat punch you.*

*Don't say, "Gabby wouldn't want you to be sad". That's bull.... I'm going to be sad for the rest of my life.*

*I didn't mean for this post to be this long so let me finish by saying one more thing. I will be grieving my baby girl for the rest of my life. From what I've learned, the first two years will be the hardest so please be patient with me.*

*Love, Hope*

# Missing You is Exhausting



Grief is exhausting. Missing someone can be incredibly draining. Everything seems like a solo climb of Mount Everest.

## **From the Grieving Heart:**

*I'm exhausted. I wake up each day and sigh. My body feels heavy. Everything takes so much effort. Brushing my teeth is a workout. Not sleeping well doesn't help. Not eating well doesn't help either. My head feels like it's stuffed with cotton. My eyes hurt.*

*I live in a daze. It's like I'm sleepwalking through life. Missing you is exhausting. My heart is deflated. Part of me seems to have left with you.*

*What's wrong with me? I don't feel like myself at all. I want my old life back. I want you back.*

*I'm so tired I can barely think. I manage to gear up for what I must do and somehow function enough to get through it. Then I crash on the other side. I zone out for minutes at a time. I hope this gets better.*

## **Grief is exhausting**

Grief demands incredible energy. Life in fight-or-flight mode is exhausting. Fatigue is natural and common during times of loss.

If someone was hit by a bus, we wouldn't expect them to jump up and carry on as usual. If they survived the collision, they would be transported to a hospital, preferably to one with a trauma center, for emergency life-saving treatment. Once their life is out of danger, the stabilizing process takes time. Then the healing and recovery process can begin. During this time, all their physical energy is being channeled toward simply staying alive. Fatigue and exhaustion are routine fare for those recovering from life-threatening injuries.

We've been hit by the Grief Bus. It can stun and flatten us. We don't simply shake the collision off and walk away unscathed. Our wounds are invisible but real. The emotional pain can be intense and draining. Pain, in any form, taxes our system and exhausts us.

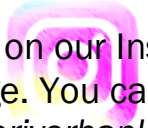
Rest becomes a priority. Fatigue takes a toll over time. We simply can't do as much. Our performance at work might be off. We need more space and margin in life than ever. Taking ourselves and our grief seriously is critical. Being patient with ourselves is important.

Like other grief challenges, the fatigue will change over time. Our hearts, souls, and bodies will adjust and recover. Time doesn't heal all wounds, but healing does take time.

**Author: Gary Roe**

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.

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 Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at – *modestoriverbankarea\_tcf*.

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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.

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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)

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Visit our website for information and to stay up to date on chapter events.  
[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

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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 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](#)