

**For the New Year**

Where there is pain,  
let there be softening.  
  
Where there is bitterness,  
let there be acceptance.  
  
Where there is silence,  
let there be communication.  
  
Where there is loneliness,  
let there be friendships.  
  
Where there is despair,  
let there be hope.  
  
-Ruth Eiseman  
TCF, Louisville, KY

**“You are So Strong”**

Empty words  
That don't touch the reality  
That my life has become.  
Walking through fog  
Incredible pain  
Searching for the beloved face  
I crave to see  
The voice that I strain to hear over the noises  
Of people who have no idea  
Of what the world has lost

***Love Gifts for November***

*Elaine Wilson in memory of Keith M. Wilson*  
*Kathleen and Steve Haupt in memory of Christopher Crawford*  
*Mike and Debbie Buckenmeyer in memory of Mark Buckenmeyer*  
*Harry and Olympia Stathe in memory of David Carafos*

***Welcome New Friends***

At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief.

Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.

***To receive this newsletter via e-mail please contact Steve Haupt at [shaupt1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:shaupt1@rochester.rr.com)***

***TCF Rochester Donations:***  
***If you would like to contribute to our Compassionate Friends Chapter please forward your Love Gifts and Donations to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester at 18 Latium Drive, Pittsford, NY 14534. Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, NY. Sincerest Thanks.***

**Grief and Marriage**

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate. This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I literally realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends—if I had only asked for it—saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help.

I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms. We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments.

Time spent alone or together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

*Pat Retzloff TCF, Oshkosh, WI*



## Upcoming Planned Events— Mark Your Calendars:

Darcie Simms—Special Workshop followed by evening Speaking Engagement - **May 19<sup>th</sup> 2008**

Workshop: 9:00AM-12:00 Noon at Lifetime Care — Speaking Engagement: 7:00-8:30PM at Academy of Medicine

— more information to follow —

Annual Garage Sale—**June 5—June 7, 2008**—information to follow—**HOLD YOUR VALUABLES FOR US !!!**

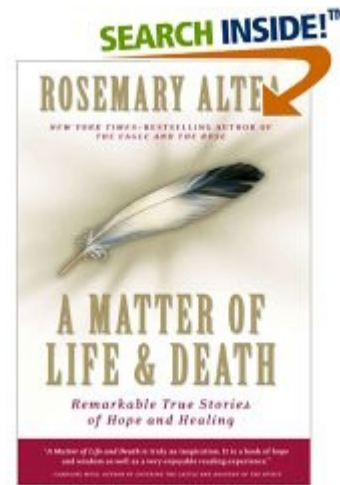
Balloon Release—**June 10<sup>th</sup> 2008**—more information to follow

## Book Review

[A Matter of Life and Death](#)

by Rosemary Altea

Spiritual medium and healer Rosemary Altea touched the lives of millions with her New York Times bestseller *The Eagle and the Rose*. In this classic work, Altea described how she discovered her gift, and recounted the miraculous experiences she had in her early years of connecting the living with the dead. In *The Eagle and the Rose Take Flight*, she shares inspiring new stories of working with her spirit guide, Grey Eagle, to help sick and troubled people heal, to help people recognize their true path in life, or to help people find peace in reuniting with departed loved ones.



## Chapter Information:

### Meeting Location:

Lifetime Care Care  
3111 Winton Road South  
(across from Valley Cadillac)

### Meeting Days for February 2008:

Tuesday the **12<sup>th</sup>** and **26<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social  
7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. - meeting

### Contacts:

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or [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Send news letter inputs or web comments to:  
Mark Simon at: [mas18@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mas18@rochester.rr.com)

## Miscellaneous:



Please contact Mark Simon at [mas18@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mas18@rochester.rr.com) or 585-586-4721 if you are thinking about attending the National Conference in 2008.

***Please bring your old working cell phones to a meeting to support our recycling fund raiser.***

### Rochester Chapter TCF Mission:

***The MISSION of the Rochester Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.***



## The New Year – A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help our selves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories....sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin In memory of my son, Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX

