

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

SUPPORTING FAMILY AFTER A CHILD DIES

A SELF-HELP ORGANIZATION OFFERING FRIENDSHIP, UNDERSTANDING AND HOPE TO BEREAVED FAMILIES
THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

www.modestoriverbanktcf.org

January 2021

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

Bridge Covenant Church
2201 Morrill Road
Riverbank, CA 95367
(Corner of Oakdale Rd and Morrill Rd)

The meeting scheduled for
Monday, January 11th
will be conducted as a
Zoom meeting online

Upcoming Meetings

February 8th

March 8th

April 12th

Visit us on Facebook
The Modesto Area Chapter
of TCF



Find us on Instagram at
Modestoriverbank_tcf



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.



2021 Steering Committee

Tracey Parker
Chapter Leader
Devon Homme
Secretary
Elsie Freeman
Treasurer
Janet Neal
Outreach Coordinator
Lori Leitner
Hospitality & Library
Chad Homme
Public Relations
Kris Leitner
Newsletter Editor
Mike & Suzanne Casity
Website

Dear Friends ~

*Another year has come and gone without our loved ones.
Our beloved child or grandchild or sibling, so dearly missed.*

Another holiday spent without them.

Another empty chair.

Another heartbreak to withstand.

But you know what?

WE SURVIVED!

*Somehow the beautiful memories sustained our hearts to
keep beating, our lungs to take another breath, and our love
to endure.*

WE DID IT!

*Together we supported, lifted, and comforted one another.
Just knowing that there exists others who know what we are
going through helps us to persevere this unimaginable journey.*

WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER!

*As the New Year begins, let us remember that together we
are stronger. Together we are better. Together we will never
walk this path alone.*



OUR CHAPTER PHONE TREE



If you are struggling and need to talk, we are here for you. We have set up a phone tree and someone is available day or night. You can call or text us at (209)622-6786 and one of the Steering Committee will get back to you as soon as possible. You may also reach someone through the email address, tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com, or on our private Facebook page, which you can find by searching for *The Modesto-Riverbank Area Chapter of TCF*.

If you would like to be a part of our phone tree and be available for other members, please contact us through one of the above mentioned methods and we will add your name and number to our list.

♥ 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 memory of all our beloved children, siblings & grandchildren ...

If you wish to make a Love Gift donation, 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

Grief In The New Year: 5 Mindful Tips To Cope



Grief in the New Year is never easy. I have been writing about New Year's Grief for a decade now, and know that on New Year's Eve the *MindfulnessAndGrief.com* website is busier than any other night of the year. I share this because I want you to know that you are not alone.

Whether your loved one died in 2020, or decades ago, New Year's when you are grieving does not pass by without you 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.

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

The New Year is a marker in time. As we transition from 2020 into 2021, some of 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 own it. Acknowledge the spectrum of feelings without judgement or shame.

As with other holidays, anniversaries, and days that end in 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 from before. Here are a few ideas for you to 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, but 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.

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 is 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. Consider joining me every Tuesday night for the Awaken Meditation & Journaling for Grief Group I host online! While none of us have a crystal ball, many people find holidays and anniversaries especially challenging. Record them on your calendar, and plan how you want to spend those special days (I have a worksheet in Awaken that will help you plan ahead).

Whether scheduling coffee with a supportive friend on your loved one’s birthday or gathering a group of survivors together to reminisce on the anniversary of their death, knowing what you are going to do on these special grief-days may help reduce your anxiety.

You can also plan ahead to attend grief support groups and memorial events through your local hospice or grief group, many of which are online during the pandemic. Even if the groups don’t start for a while, get them on your calendar now, before work and social 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 3-5 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.

*Note – the underlined text in the article will take you to links within the *mindfulnessandgrief.com* website.

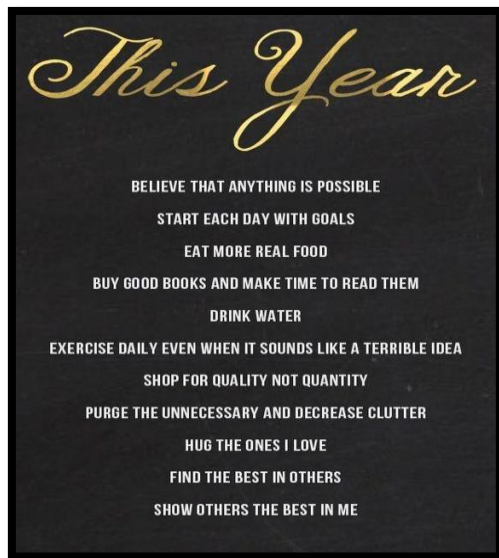
By: Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT

Grief In The New Year: 5 Mindful Tips To Cope With Loss (mindfulnessandgrief.com)

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*.

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 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



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

www.modestoriverbanktcf.org

Support our chapter by using *Amazon Smile*

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