

The Compassionate Friends Victoria, Australia

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Magazine Excerpts - Feb ~ Mar 2006

The Butterfly ~ A symbol of hope, a symbol of new life

The butterfly lays a tiny dewdrop of an egg on a juicy milkweed leaf. Inside the egg is her baby. When the baby hatches, however, she is not a beautiful butterfly like her mother. She is a caterpillar, who eats and chews on the milkweed leaf for two weeks.

The caterpillar's skin doesn't grow with her, so she has to take it off.

She spins a little thread, clings to it, puffs air under her skin until it splits. She stretches and twists until she emerges, dressed in a new and larger skin. She eats, grows and changes her skin three times.

We might be tempted to help release the butterfly from her cocoon. It is human nature to want to assist, but if we do, she will fall to the ground and die; the struggle to free herself strengthens her wings enough to survive and fly.

Grief is certainly like this process. We feel ugly, we change, we hide, we sometimes spin a cocoon around ourselves and we struggle. Like the butterfly, we need to free ourselves. It takes a long time.

There is a difference, however; others may help us as we struggle. We need not do it all alone as the butterfly does, but the ultimate responsibility is ours. We have to grieve, hurt, cry, be angry and struggle to free ourselves from the cocoon of grief. And one day, we do emerge – a beautiful butterfly, a stronger person, a more compassionate person, a more understanding person. Eunice Brown

TCF, Ottawa Valley, Canada

V A L E N T I N E ' S D A Y

A Valentine To All My Compassionate Friends

We who have had our hearts so badly broken know each other.

We have lost a child, grandchild, a sister or a brother.

It matters not if we've seen each other's faces,
we share mending hearts full of achy places.

At first our hearts feel shredded and torn,
we might even wish that we'd never been born.

We don't understand how our lives went so wrong.

Everyone tells us they're so glad that we're strong.

All we know is that we hurt to the core,
because a child dearly loved is with us no more.

With time, patience and understanding we begin to heal.

We begin to accept what is and life starts to seem real.

Each time we tell our tale, each hug we receive,
puts a band-aid on the hurting spots and gives us reason to believe,
that we will feel joy again, that life does go on.

Though we're never quite the same since our child is gone.

Compassionate Friends teach us ways we can cope,
until we can live again and face life with hope.

So to TCF members, whether we've met or not,
thank you for the band-aids on the bruised, healing spot.

I Love You All.

Kathy Hahn
TCF / Lower Bucks, PA