

June Editorial TCF SA 2015

My Dear Friends

What a privilege to be asked to write this editorial for all of you. This has really taken me back in time, reflecting on my period as Chapter Leader; what TCF means to me and how the support offered by this singular organisation steered me through the darkest period of my life. And how the world looks to me now... There is a certain irony in this newsletter being the one in which my June baby is named on what should be his 21st birthday, and correspondingly the anniversary of my brother's death.

As I process my thoughts from the past 20 years, returning to that day my world unequivocally transformed, my overriding thoughts are not of pain, grief and despair, indeed they are of hope. Such an existential, indeed often trite word isn't it, when you are newly bereaved and your realm has shrunk to an unrecognisable version of your previous existence? In my raw grief I remember I used to ponder those consoling me at TCF and wish with every fibre of my being that I could be further down the line like them, somehow less crippled by my pain. Equally I recall, when later working there, feeling the impact of newly bereaved anguish, spitefully striking terror as I was reminded of the reality of the unsafe and unpredictable world that we all regrettably now inhabit.

Because grief can feel like fear, a fluttering in the stomach, a restlessness, a profound anxiety, because the unthinkable has happened, and we can no longer feel secure. We are vulnerable. Sometimes a crippling fear stalks and threatens to engulf me, a fearfulness of the unknown, of what trauma awaits cruelly around the corner. But while I sometimes indulge this foreboding, once validated and acknowledged, I try to refocus on the here and now, on what is in front of me. Indeed I can't know what might lay ahead, but equally I don't want to waste joyous experiences, and be robbed of blissful moments by something that may or may not happen.

And this is what hope is, your human spirit daring to believe that you just might survive. That one day, even if right now you can't imagine how, that you will in some way be able to comprehend a way forward, to claw back a sense of optimism. You will never get over it, because 'it' is your child, sibling, or grandchild, but grief does soften and gradually it becomes almost possible to believe that, as Milton said, from your extreme misery, extreme hopes can also be born. Akin to the TCF logo, today the caterpillar, tomorrow the butterfly – so **Hold On Pain Ends...**

With love,

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