

# *From Grieving to Joyful Living*

## **Helping You Transform Your Tragedies into Great Success & Joyful Living**

### **When Someone You Know is Grieving The 9 No's and 1 Big Yes**

Living this life, it is not if we are going to encounter grief, it is when we or someone we know is going to go through grief. Yet, we typically don't go through school being taught about what to do and say someone we care about or one of our acquaintances is grieving. For many of us, it is an uncomfortable awkward moment when we speak with someone who recently experiences a loss, whether it's a loss of a person, a relationship, a pet, a job, a home... Here are some tips on the Do's and Don'ts for when we interact with a grieving person:

#### **The Nine No's:**

##### **1. Avoiding them or saying nothing about their loss.**

Often we do this because we don't want to make them even sadder or we don't know what to say to them. Unfortunately, it makes many grieverers feel we are afraid they are going to have a "meltdown" or that we simply don't care, and we end up hurting them even more this way. Instead, we might want to say "I am so sorry you for your loss. Please let me know if I can support you in any way. I'm here for you."

##### **2. Asking "How are you?"**

Instead, ask "How are you today?" or "How are you this afternoon?"

Hearing "How are you?" is often confusing to many grieverers as they feel it should be apparent to you that they are grieving. Adding a shorter time frame, such as this afternoon, to the question "How are you?" allow grieverers to focus to the moment they are in and perhaps answer "I am feeling OK despite everything today" or "I am overwhelmed with sadness this afternoon."

##### **3. Giving them unsolicited advice.**

Grief is like a fingerprint. We all different individual and grief differently. Even if we had the same type of loss as our grieving friends, they might or might not feel the exact same way we did. What worked and good for us might not be for them. Also, being told to do something differently often make grieverers feel that we think they don't know what they are doing, which can be offensive. Instead of giving advice, let them know we care about them and listen with love to what they say. If they do ask for our advice, we want to give as objective and focus answers as possible.

##### **4. Saying "I know how you feel."**

Instead, say "I can't even begin to imagine how you feel" or "I can only imagine how you feel."

Since grief is like fingerprint and we all grieve differently, we don't really know how they feel. When my 20 years old cat died, many people said: "I know how you feel, I lost my cat/dog last year too...". No one knows how I felt. He was not just a cat for me; he was my best friend, my only true friend, my boy, my guardian angel. It was more painful for me to lose him than to lose my 15 years of marriage the year before. We don't know how they really feel.

##### **5. Saying "Be grateful, you still have..."**

Yes, we are grateful that other aspects of our life or our 3 other children are fine. Yet, this does not make the loss any less painful or easier. Most grieverers would think, "Yeah I'm grateful, but I want the one who had passed away to be here too." Also, during the early stage of grief, when the wound is still very raw, those with children or pets sometimes feel the loss even more when they look at the surviving siblings, children or pets. This is because the ones who are still here remind the grieverers to the one who has died. Many grieverers find this well-meaning suggestion very offensive and make them feel misunderstood.

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continued

#### The Nine No's:

##### **6. Saying “He/she is in a better place.”**

How do we know the person grieving and the person who had died even believe in life after death? Even if they do, it does not make the loss less painful to the grieving person who is still here.

##### **7. Saying “Don’t feel bad” or “It’ll get easier” or “Be strong.”**

Even though we mean well, for the persons who are grieving, this statement is very dismissive. It is dismissive to their feelings; it does not allow them to feel what they are feeling at the moment. It is also dismissive to the severity of their situation.

##### **8. Saying “Everything happens for a reason” or “God has a plan.”**

Hearing this, most grieverers will think: “I don’t care about the reason, I just don’t want this to happen” or “Then why is God so cruel?” Even if you truly believe that every adversity carries the seed of goods in it, this statement can be very offensive or disheartening to the grieverers.

##### **9. Asking details about the loss when the grieverers look like they don’t want to talk about it.**

Some people are uncomfortable sharing their feelings. Also, some people might have a different perspective and are not grieving much at all, when we think they would be grieving. We want to listen to them if they want to share, but not nudging them to share if we caringly express our sympathy and they give a short close-end answer.

#### The 1 Big Yes when interacting with grieverers:

##### **Be a Heart With Ears**

Grieving or not, we all want to feel heard.

People will feel heard when we:

Listen with love and patience.

Listen with no judgment.

Listen with no expectation.

Listen without trying to give them feedback.

Some grieverers would share their feelings.

Some grieverers would share fun joyful memories.

Some grieverers tell jokes and random stories.

**Just listen with love and be there for them. Be a Heart With Ears.\***



I am very sorry that you have to encounter grief. I hope this article helps you move through and beyond your grief with a little more ease. Please know that I am here for you and I wish you a smooth journey and fast recovery to a joyful life. Please feel welcomed to contact me at any time if I can support you further in any way.

From my heart to yours,  
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