



What to Say and What Not to Say: That is the question

After someone you know loses a loved one, we often want to ease their pain, take it away, and help them heal. No matter how much we try we cannot do that for them. Grief is a process and the only way to move through grief is to face it. However, as friends and companions we still want to know what to say and what not to say. Below you will find some help hints and thoughts:

What to do:

- Send a card
- Call and check-in (continue this for longer than a couple of weeks, it is hardest once everyone goes back to work and they feel forgotten)
- Ask "What can I do for you"
- Be specific if you offer to do something (ie: I can make you dinner, or mow your yard, or watch your children one night; whatever you think you can do)
- Do Not be afraid to talk about the loved one, allow them time to talk about the loved one
- Become comfortable with the different emotions (tears, sadness, anger, guilt, know that happiness and relief are also okay)

What to say:

- "I am sorry" or "I am sorry _____ died"
- "I am sad for your loss"
- "I am here for you"
- "I want to listen"
- "How are you doing today"
- "Tell me about _____"

What not to say:

- "I know just how you feel" (you don't)
- "They are in a better place"
- "You will get over it"
- "It all happened for the best"
- "Now they are in heaven"
- "Put it behind you and move on"
- "Be strong"
- "You are the man or woman of the house now"



Know it is not what you say, but it is your presence. Sometimes it may be that you need to sit in silence, hug them, listen to them, be there for them. Allow them as much time as they need to grieve