

Your friend or co-worker is grieving

What do you say?



What you say to your grieving co-worker or friend matters. So, what do you do?

- 1 First, keep your feelings in check for the moment. When someone confides in you about a loss, the way to help is to listen and show empathy.
- 2 Second, remind yourself your job is not to “fix” their grief. You need to sit in the discomfort that you cannot “make this better.”
- 3 Remember you matter. Your friend or co-worker is sharing this information with you because you matter to them. You do not need to do anything to prove you care about them. You need only to listen.

But what do you say? On the next page are 5 phrases to never say, why they are not good phrases to use and what to say instead. Thanks for wanting to show up for your grieving friend or co-worker. You're off to a good start!

100 *acts of* LOVE

Don't Say This

Why It's Not A Good Phrase to Use

Say This Instead

"Call me if you need anything!"

"Anything" is too big for your friend to wrap their head around. You are asking them to dissect their day and then find a small piece you might be willing to help with. In addition, you are asking them to have the courage to ask for help. That is a lot of asking!

"I will bring you dinner on Thursday. Do you want chicken or lasagna?" "I'd like to come over and mow your lawn. Does Saturday work?" Be specific. The more specific you are, the more likely your grieving friend is to remember your offer and call you when they need it.

"How are you?"

This is usually said with over-caring eyes and a sense of pity. And frankly your grieving friend is sick of responding to the question!

"How are you doing right now?" The "right now" makes all the difference! After you ask, just listen. You may be surprised with how much they share.

"You should try ____!"

"You should" implies what they are doing is wrong and that you know bet-ter. Offering a suggestion without knowing anything about their situation is not helpful! In addition, you have just put the burden of finding out more on them. This statement is the definition of unhelpful.

"I heard about this group that supports widows. I would like to do some research to see if it might be a good fit. Would that be ok?" Or alternatively, you could just send them a link.

"Everything happens for a reason."

Here is a scenario for you: You just lost your job for no good reason. You don't have a lot in savings. Does knowing "it happened for a good reason" help you feel better? No. And don't you just hate the person who said that to you while you're worried about paying your mortgage? Their silver lining is not yours to pick out. The same is true for your grieving friend.

"I can't think of any good reason for any of this to happen to you. I'm so sorry."

"My friend's neighbor's aunt died and her husband is ok, and remarried!"

Comparing your friend's grieving journey to someone else's experience does not inspire! Unless you are willing to connect them so they have someone to talk to, sharing a random person's grief journey isn't helpful. Look at it this way, if you crashed your car, would it be helpful if someone said, "Oh, I have a friend who crashed her car, too!"

"I don't know what to say. I'm just so sorry." This is one of the most powerful phrases you can utter. It shows a deep understanding of the gravity of the situation.

Now you know what to say and your grieving friend or co-worker will appreciate you for being a person who "gets it."

There are many simple, easy, and powerful actions you can take that will truly show your support. Pop on over to 100ActsofLove.com to find out what more you can do. Death at work? Check out WorkPlaceGrief.com to discover ways to support grieving teams. Remember, what you do matters because...

You Matter!

100ActsofLove.com

