

# 21 Ways to Help a Grieving Loved One or Friend<sup>©</sup>

By Lori A. Pederson  
[www.IDidNotKnowWhatToSay.Com](http://www.IDidNotKnowWhatToSay.Com)



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Losing a loved one can be an extremely difficult time in a person's life. When I lost my mother in 1993 to ovarian cancer, the support of my friends and family were the cornerstone to helping me re-establish a sense of well being in my life. Death is not a topic we like to talk about. The unfortunate truth is that at some point we will all be faced with the uncomfortable reality of losing a loved one. Our friends and family play a big part in how we deal with this loss and their love and support can make all the difference. These 21 tips are meant to help you find supportive ways to assist someone you care about through the journey of restoring balance in their life after a loss.

1. **BE A GOOD LISTENER**

Listen, Listen, Listen. One of the most important things you can do is to make yourself available and truly listen.

2. **SEND A HEARTFELT NOTE**

Send a card or letter letting the person know you care. Be sure to write a note in the card. Just signing a sympathy card can be perceived as being impersonal. Your note can be as simple as letting your loved one know that you are thinking about them and you will be there for them through this journey. If you are having difficulty finding the words, visit the *Inspiration* section of our website at [www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/inspiration.html](http://www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/inspiration.html) for suggestions.

3. **REACHOUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE**

Make a phone call or stop by to see how your loved one is doing. Be sure to give them an opportunity to talk about their feelings and to tell their story.

4. **PREPARE A COMFORTING MEAL**

In the early stages of grief the bereaved can forget to eat. Having meals handled by someone else will encourage the family to eat regularly. Be sure to ask if the family has any dietary restrictions, food allergies or favorite foods they would like you to prepare.

If you are part of a neighborhood association, religious organization, community group, a close group of friends or a work related group, be sure to set-up a schedule for people to bring meals to the family. Don't forget to prepare the food in containers that are easy to store that don't need to be returned.

5. **BE THE MESSENGER**

Help the person call family and friends to let them know about the funeral/memorial service. Telling people over and over again about the passing of a loved one can be extremely difficult for the bereaved. Having a few close friends and family members help with this task can lift a heavy burden.

6. **ATTEND THE FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Unless it is a private family funeral, attend the funeral or memorial service. Having friends and family around at this very difficult time can mean a great deal to your love one.

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7. **DO SOME FUND RAISING**  
If the family needs financial assistances with the funeral, help them set-up a fund that family and friends can donate money.
8. **HELP TAKE CARE OF EVERYDAY TASKS**  
Take out their trash, wash their dishes, clean their house, go grocery shopping, take their dog for a walk, wash their car, mow their lawn, take the kids to school, wash their clothes, etc. Taking care of everyday tasks can allow the family time to grieve and handle the many responsibilities of planning a funeral and readjusting their lives. Be sure to always ask their permission before you perform any of these tasks.
9. **SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE**  
If you have a special expertise (lawyer, insurance agent, financial planner, funeral planner, banker, etc.) or if you have already been through the loss of a spouse or relative, assist them with the paperwork that they will need to manage (i.e. making sure life insurance claims are filed, obtaining a death certificate, cancelling all credit cards and bank accounts, understanding their will, and going through all the accounts to be sure that they are aware of all the deceases' finances.) Having someone assist with the paperwork that is familiar with the process can remove a great deal of stress from the bereaved.
10. **ALLOW THE PERSON THE OPPORTUNITY TO GRIEVE**  
The grieving process does not end at the funeral. It takes time and allowing your friend the space to go through the normal stages of grief can help with their overall recovery.
11. **GET THEM MOVING**  
Exercise can be a great energy booster. Walking, bike riding, yoga, golf, running, swimming, playing tennis, or whatever brings them joy. Make a regular date with them to get a little exercise; this will help them get the endorphins going as well as encourage them to get out of the house.
12. **BE UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENT**  
Your friend or family member may not know what they need right now. Your willingness to be ready, willing and able to assist when they need support will be a cherished gift.
13. **TAKE THEM ON AN INSPIRATIONAL ADVENTURE**  
What do they love to do? What have they always wanted to do? Help them reconnect with life and joy through the simple pleasures in life. Do they love going to the movies? Going to the beach? Walking through the park? Going to Disneyland? Did they always want to learn how to dance? Help them understand that they are allowed to have fun, even though they are grieving.
14. **HELP THEM FIND THE SUPPORT THEY NEED**  
If they are experiencing deep emotional grief, assist them in finding a grief support group or a professional grief counselor that can assist them. You may want to offer to attend a grief support group with them to give them emotional support. See our website for resources on Grief Support Groups [www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/grief\\_support\\_groups.html](http://www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/grief_support_groups.html).
15. **HELP CREATE A MEMORIAL WEBSITE**  
Help create a memorial website in honor of the person that has passed away. There are many memorial websites that are easy to set-up and many of them are free or inexpensive to maintain. Facebook has also become a way for friends and family to share memories of a loved through a memorial Facebook page.

16. **VISIT THE GRAVESITE WITH YOUR GRIEVING FRIEND**  
Offer to visit the grave site with the bereaved on the anniversary of the person's death or on a special occasion. Be sure to allow them to talk about their feelings of loss as well as their cherished memories.
17. **LEAVE A NOTE OF INSPIRATION**  
Leave them special notes and inspirational messages throughout their home so they find them throughout the day. This will remind them that they are loved.
18. **REMEMBER THE FIRST YEAR CAN BE DIFFICULT**  
Remember that holidays, birthdays, Father's Day, Mother's Day, and the anniversary of the person's death can be difficult, particularly the first year. Sending a card or making a phone call during these special times let's your loved one know they are not alone.
19. **HELP CREATE A MEMORY BOOK**  
Help them put together a memory book of pictures and mementos of the person that has passed away. This will give them a chance to connect with the special times they spent with their loved one and will encourage them to talk about their feelings.
20. **HAVE FAITH THAT TIME WILL HEAL**  
Watching a love one go through the grieving process can be very difficult. It is important to have faith that they will recover from the deep feelings they are going through, and with the love and support of friends and family they will find joy again.
21. **REMIND THEM HOW MUCH THEY ARE LOVED**  
Pamper them, hug them, love them, and take special care of them. Remind them that although they have lost a loved one, they still have family and friends that love them.

*The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love.*  
**H. Humphrey**

## THANK YOU!

Thank you for reading our EBook - *21 Ways to Help a Grieving Loved One or Friend.*

We invite you to explore our website and newsletter at [www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com](http://www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com) for tips, articles and inspirational stories on how to assist a loved one through the journey of restoring balance in their life after a loss. If you use an idea from our website or newsletter that brought joy and hope to a loved one, please let us know.

**We invite you to share your story.** Please email us your inspirational stories, letters/cards that have reached your heart, a favorite quote, an unforgettable adventure, a thoughtful gift idea, a book that touched your life, or a suggestion for our website or newsletter to [info@ididnotknowwhattosay.com](mailto:info@ididnotknowwhattosay.com). We would love to hear from you.

With Love and Gratitude,

*Lori Pederson*

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