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Twenty-Five
Supportive Things You Can Do
For Someone That Has
Lost a Loved One[©]



Plus
Ten Thoughtful Gift Ideas for Someone
That Has Lost a Loved One[©]

By Lori Pederson

Twenty-Five Supportive Things You Can Do For Someone That Has Lost a Loved One®

When a friend, colleague or family member is going through the grieving process, there is so much more you can do for them than just sending flowers. Having the support of family and friends can make all the difference. We have compiled a list of twenty-five supportive acts of kindness to get you started.

1. Listen, Listen, Listen. One of the most important things you can do is to make yourself available and truly listen.
2. 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. The smallest gestures can make a big difference in someone's life. Your note can be as simple as letting the person 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 for suggestions.
3. Make a phone call or stop by to make sure the person is doing ok.
4. Make them dinner or take them out for lunch, dinner or coffee. Allow them the space to talk about how they are feeling.
5. If you are part of a neighborhood association, religious organization, community group, a close group of friends or a work related group; set-up a schedule for people to bring meals to the family. Be sure to ask if the family has any dietary restrictions, food allergies or favorite foods. Comfort foods and healthy/well-balanced meals are always best. 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.
6. 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.
7. If the family has to fly to another destination for the burial, help them make travel arrangements. In most cases travel arrangements will need to be made at the very last minute and having someone help navigate this task is a wonderful gift you can give someone. When my mom passed away one of her friends was a Travel Agent and she took care of making all the flight arrangements for us to fly from California to South Dakota where my mom wished to be buried.

8. Attend the funeral or memorial service. Unless it is a closed family funeral, having friends and family around at this very difficult time can mean a great deal to your friend or family member.
9. Work with the family to help them provide a reception after the funeral or memorial service. Help them make arrangements for food, flowers and setting up the reception... and don't forget to help with cleaning up after the reception.
10. If the family needs financial assistances with the funeral, help them set up a fund that family and friends can donate money. Give Forward provides a great way to coordinate fund raising for the family. See our website for details www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/gifts.html.
11. Help them take care of everyday tasks. Take out the trash, wash the 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.
12. If you have a special expertise (lawyer, insurance agent, financial planner) 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, cancelling insurance policies, and going through accounts to be sure that they are aware of all the deceased's finances.) This can be a major undertaking and difficult to manage. Having someone assist with the paperwork that is familiar with the process can remove a great deal of stress from the bereaved.
13. When they are ready, offer to help them go through the clothing of the deceased. Many families will donate clothing to a charity or give items to friends and family. If they wish to donate the clothing, offer to take the items to the charity of their choosing or make arrangements to have the organization pick up the items. The gift of your time through this very difficult process will be greatly appreciated.
14. 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.
15. Help them get regular exercise. Exercise can be a great energy booster and help them in the recovery process. It does not have to be extreme, even taking the person out for a walk can help bring life back in. What do they enjoy doing? (Walking, bike riding, yoga, golf, running, 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.
16. 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.

17. Be sure they are taking care of themselves. Keep up with them on the basics. Are they eating? Are they getting up in the morning and taking a shower? Are they getting out of the house? Are they getting regular exercise? If not, talk to them about their well being.
18. Take the person on an inspirational adventure- what do they love to do? Reconnect them with life and joy through the simple pleasures of life. Do they love going to the movies? Going to the beach? Walking through the park? Make it simple and allow them the opportunity to talk about how they are feeling.
19. 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.
20. Help them put together a memory book or box 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 memories.
21. Help them 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. The Virtual Memorial Garden allows you to set-up a virtual Memorial for free – www.virtualmemorialgarden.net.
22. Visit the grave site with the bereaved on the anniversary of the person's death or on a special occasion. My Grandmother visits our family grave sites every Memorial Day and several members of our family and close friends attend to support her in her grief.
23. 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.
24. Remember the first year...holidays, birthdays, Father's Day, Mother's Day, and the anniversary of the person's death can be particularly difficult the first year. Sending a card or note during these special times let's your friend know they are not alone and they are loved. My old roommate use to send me a card on my mother's birthday – just to let me know that she remembered that this was a difficult time for me. My aunt marks her calendar with these special dates so she remembers to send a card to her friends and family during these special occasions.
25. 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 smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.
~Oscar Wilde

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Ten Thoughtful Gift Ideas for Someone That Has Lost A Loved One[©]

www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/gifts.html

1. Grief Support Basket – Send a gift of hope, inspiration, relaxation, and rejuvenation. Include an inspirational book, a journal, a memory book, a funny movie, a beautiful picture, a mediation CD, a comforting blanket, or any gift item that helps your loved one with the healing process.
2. Take them on a special Spa Day to pamper them. A great massage, a wonderful manicure/pedicure, and/or a relaxing facial will brighten their spirits and relax their mind.
3. Donate money to a favorite charity of the family. If they do not have a favorite charity, visit our website for ideas www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com/giving_back.
4. Give a plant or flower that they can plant in their garden as a memorial. Cut flowers can become overwhelming and difficult to manage. A potted plant or flower that they can plant will be a nice addition to their garden.
5. If they have to fly out of town for the funeral, offer to use your frequent flyer miles or help them purchase the ticket. Last minute reservations can be very costly and donation towards this expense can be very helpful.
6. Make the family a home cooked meal. If you are not able to make the meal yourself, you might want to consider hiring a personal chef to arrange healthy meals for the family.
7. Give a gift that comes monthly to remind the person they are not alone – flowers, an inspirational or funny movie, a helpful book, etc.
8. Buy them a Memory Book/Box to keep all their mementos. Look for a beautiful box or a memory book that reminds them of the deceased.
9. Make a CD of the person's favorite songs and/or uplifting songs to brighten their spirit when they are starting to feel lonely.
10. Help them create a DVD of photos and videos of the deceased's life. My uncle made a beautiful DVD with pictures from my Aunt Carol's life and included some of her favorite songs.

Thank You!

Thank you for subscribing to our I Did Not Know What To Say Ezine. We hope you found the suggestions in our report useful and insightful.

We invite you to explore our website at www.ididnotknowwhattosay.com for updated information and thoughtful ideas. If you use an idea from our website or newsletter that brought joy and hope to a loved one, please let us know. Stories, suggestions and insights can be emailed to us at info@ididnotknowwhattosay.com. We would love to hear from you.

With Love and Gratitude,

Lori Pederson

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