

Appendix 19

HELPING OTHERS THROUGH GRIEF

Don't walk in front of me... I may not follow. Don't walk behind me... I may not lead. Walk beside me—and just be my friend.

—Albert Camus

Most grieving people do not need professional help... they need a friend. Here is a "baker's dozen," of ways you can be a friend to someone who is grieving.

1. Be There.

Grieving people need support and presence much more than advice. It is important to offer support over time.

2. Initiate and Anticipate.

Grieving people often don't know or can't ask for what they need. Suggest times you'll be with them. Tell them ways you'd like to help.

3. Listen.

It's often hard to believe a loss has really happened. Grieving people often need to talk about it a lot and tell the stories over and over. Listening without judgement or interruption can be the most important gift you can give.

4. Avoid cliches and Easy Answers.

"I'm sorry"... "I care"... "You're in my thoughts" or "I'm with you" may be the best response.

5. Silence Is Golden.

Sometimes there are no words for grief and no words that bring enough comfort to take away the pain. Silence can demonstrate your trust and acceptance.