



When a Friend Dies

The unthinkable has happened. You received the news that your dear friend has died. Your heart and body may be alternately experiencing unimaginable pain and a sense of shock and numbness. Your head may be spinning with thoughts, memories, and things you wish you had said just one last time. In whatever way you are experiencing your grief, be gentle with yourself.

Many think grief is limited to family, and therefore friends who are also grieving are often overlooked. Everyone has the right to grieve. Perhaps you felt closer to your friend than members of your own family. While surrounding yourself with others may bring you a sense of comfort, there may be times you prefer being alone with your feelings and memories.

As you begin your journey of grief...

- Remember your grief is unique and personal. Take time to honor your feelings and memories.
- Let those around you know what you need as you move through this difficult time.
- You may find yourself wanting to pick up the phone to call or text your friend. It is common to miss them during the special moments you would have shared together or when you long to report something new you accomplished.
- Waves of sadness, daydreaming, difficulty concentrating, and feeling exhausted may weave in and out of your day.
- Your sleep and appetite patterns may change.
- People around you may have a hard time understanding the depth of your grief and want you to get back to your “old self” quickly. Take as much time as you need to slowly return to doing things in the same way, or in a whole new way if it brings you more comfort.

As your journey of grief continues...

- While the raw pain you feel in the very beginning will lessen, grief can be retriggered at the most surprising times. As the years move along and milestones are crossed, you may experience an intensity of many different feelings all over again.
- Maintain a feeling of connection with your dear friend by looking at photos and recalling moments you shared together.
- Visit places you both enjoyed and shared a love for.
- Staying in touch with your friend’s family members can provide continuing comfort.
- Create ways in which to carry on their legacy or values.

As you cherish your friend’s memory and the meaning of your friendship, the connection you shared can forever hold a special place in your heart and thoughts.

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