

SIDEXSIDE

People in Need of Change **Helping**



People in Need of Change

PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS

■ DON'T

- Be quick to speak; nothing you can *say* will make someone who has suffered devastating loss “feel better.”
 - Guard against clichés

■ DO

- Be present. Never underestimate the power of empathetic presence— “I’m here. This hurts. I’m so sorry. I love you. I want to feel your sorrow with you, not just feel sorry for you.” (Job. 2:13)



PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

■ DON'T

- Intentionally avoid the loss to prevent tears or a potential breakdown—people grieving the loss of a loved one, for example, aren't trying to forget them.

■ DO

- Speak appropriately about the loss, remember the person lost in the case of a death, and make it clear that you are a person in whose presence it is completely safe to grieve and express pain, whatever that looks like.



PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

■ DON'T

- Assume you know just how this person is feeling because you have experienced a similar kind of loss and presume to give them counsel based on your own experience. Despite core similarities, emotional responses are too person-relative to universalize.

■ DO

- Accept that a grieving person's grief is their own, despite similarities it may likely have with your own. The fact that you would be responding differently in the same circumstances is irrelevant in helping them in the grieving process.



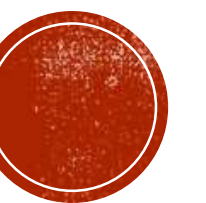
PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

■ DON'T

- Tell a grieving person to let you know if there is any way that you can help. They won't do it.

■ DO

- Anticipate concrete ways to help and make specific suggestions and then act with permission.
 - Examples:
 - “Can we bring some meals over this week so that you don't have to cook?”
 - Would it be helpful if we got Glen to assist you with finances/bills and to help you file a life insurance claim?
 - Could we do your laundry and clean your house once a week for the next month or two?
 - Would you like me to go with you to the funeral home and help make arrangements?”



PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

■ DON'T

- Correct people's "words for the wind" (Job. 6:26) or their inexact theology of death and the intermediate state—it's not the time.

■ DO

- Affirm what is good, true and beautiful about what they articulate in proper perspective.
 - "What if they ask me if _____ is in Heaven?"



PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

■ DON'T

- Fall into the trap of thinking that grief is something to be either “corrected” (like a bad temper) or “moved past” (like an embarrassing moment at church) according to a grieving schedule.

■ DO

- Acknowledge that grief is something to be personally tended to and carried along as one moves forward with their life—the loss is part of their story. Grieving people are hurt by others believing that they should “be back to normal by now.” After devastating loss, there is (often) a new normal—one that can be amazing, but often new nevertheless.



PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

■ DON'T

- Allow grieving people to be overwhelmed by others, even those with the best intentions. Many people in the midst of deep grief simply don't have the energy or emotional capacity to interact and communicate with a large number of people.

■ DO

- Ask them if they would appreciate a gatekeeper or point person to relay information to the outside world and organize well-wishers and acts of kindness.



PRACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS CONT...

- **DON'T**

- Just play the short game. Most reasonable people are considerate and attentive to grievors in the short-term, but their mid and long-term support is poor.

- **DO**

- Make efforts to remember that person's loss with them, set calendar reminders for birthdays/death days, follow-up periodically and be ready to listen and love well for the long haul.

