

# THOUGHTS ON SUPPORTING FRIENDS DURING PROFOUND LOSS

## **Say something. Anything.**

You might feel like you don't know what to say—but silence can be more painful than imperfect words. Call, text, or write. Start with: “I'm so sorry.” or “I don't know what to say, but I'm here.” Even that is enough.

## **Share a memory of their child.**

When a child dies, no new memories will be made. So the ones you hold are precious. Tell them something beautiful or funny you remember—especially something they may not have known.

## **Say how special their child was to you.**

Let them know the impact their child had on your life or your family. Knowing their child mattered—and still matters—brings enormous comfort.

## **Avoid phrases that start with “At least...”**

“At least they didn't suffer” or “At least you have other children” may be well-intentioned, but they minimize grief. Just be present in the sadness without trying to fix it.

## **Don't ask what they need—just do something.**

Saying “Let me know if you need anything” puts the burden on the griever. Instead, offer something concrete:

“I'll stop by Thursday to weed the garden.”

“I'm bringing dinner tonight.”

“I'll come sit with you while you cry.”

## **Just show up and sit with them.**

Grief doesn't always need words. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is simply be there—quietly, lovingly, without expectations. Let them lead the conversation... or the silence.

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## **Keep showing up—in a week, in a month, in three months.**

Grief doesn't end after the funeral. Send a message: "I'm thinking of you." or "This must still be so hard. I see you." Consistent support over time is everything.

## **Don't expect anything in return.**

Grievers don't have the energy to reciprocate. Don't wait for a thank-you note or acknowledgment. Give because you care—not to be appreciated.

## **Try not to compare their loss to yours.**

This is their grief. Sharing about your own loss—even if it feels similar—can feel dismissive in the early days. Hold space for their pain without making it about your experience.

## **Remember important dates.**

Mark their child's birthday, the anniversary of their death, and other milestones in your calendar. Reach out with a message or small gesture to say: "I remember."

## **Say their child's name.**

Don't be afraid to speak their name. It may bring tears, but it also brings comfort. It shows their child is still remembered, still loved, still real.

## **Offer support for siblings too.**

If there are surviving siblings, remember them. Include them in plans, ask how they're doing, drop off something just for them. Siblings often carry grief quietly and feel overlooked.

## **Be patient with who they become.**

Grief changes people. Your friend may not laugh the same way, respond the same way, or show up how they used to. That's okay. Let them evolve. Love them as they are now.