

Letter to a Friend/Relative

Personal loss is a challenge. A friend's or relative's loss is challenging in a different way; but challenging all the same. Along with the inevitable feelings of pain and bereavement, there is the unfamiliar territory of the sufferers' anguish that needs to be addressed.

You, too, are affected by suffering from the loss of someone precious, and the grieving process is something you must acknowledge, confront and deal with. Simultaneously, you are faced with your friend's or relative's pain and you may feel ill-equipped to handle the stormy emotions.

Although every person seeks different forms of comfort, there are some guidelines that are basic to human nature. While following these pointers, keep an open mind and an open heart in order to perceive your friend's unique needs. She may want your comfort or prefer her space. She may be in need of a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on. She may even be repeating the same things again and again and just need you to listen once more, or she may just need a friend's quiet and comforting presence. When there are no words to console, just the fact that you're there for her is a comfort. There is no right and wrong when it comes to the healing process. There is only hope.

- Let your friend know that you are there for her. Offer concrete assistance - be it in the form of meals, babysitting, carpool, or running errands.
- Don't hover over her at every juncture. Like a young bird learning to fly, she wants to flex her wings and master the art of living in the aftermath of her loss.
- When your friend shares some of her feelings, listen sympathetically. Don't try to whitewash her pain. It's real and it must be addressed. She may not be ready to hear

words of inspiration and hashkafah yet. Just validate her emotions and give her the strength to face them head-on.

The grieving process has no time limit. As much as you wish the pain would just disappear, it must be given ample space to work its way through the maze of emotions and the course of healing.

Remember, as a dear friend or close relative, you have a unique role in alleviating your friend's pain. Although you may not be able to rectify the situation, you can help her find the strength within herself. Never underestimate the power of comfort offered by a caring and empathetic friend.

If you have any questions or wish to receive more detailed guidance, please feel free to contact us at 718-925-2113. Your efforts and concern will certainly go a long way in helping your friend/relative come to terms with her loss.

Best wishes,

Mrs. Malkie Klaristenfeld
Pregnancy Loss Support
Knafayim, Director

My Dear Friend, Family Member, Employer and/or Co-workers;

I have experienced a loss that is devastating to me. It will take time, perhaps years, for me to work through the grief I am experiencing because of this loss.

I may cry more than usual. My tears are not a sign of weakness or a lack of hope or faith. They are symbols of the depth of my loss and a sign that I am recovering.

I may become angry when there seems to be no reason. My emotions are all heightened by the stress of grief. Please be forgiving if I seem upset at times for no apparent reason.

I need your understanding and your presence more than anything else. If you do not know what to say, just touch my hand or give me a hug to let me know that you care. I may at times prefer to have space and solitude to think and reflect. I will try to communicate that to you. I may not be able to. Please do not wait for me to call you. I am often too tired to even think of reaching out for the help and support that I need.

Do not let me withdraw from you. I need you more than ever right now. Instead, keep me in your thoughts each day. A card, a note or a phone call to let me know that you are thinking of me may provide strength on a more challenging day. I may not always call you back. I will not always be up to talking, but I appreciate your support. If you, by chance, have had an experience of loss that is anything like mine, please share it with me. It will not make me feel worse; sharing with others can often reduce the burden of individual pain.

This loss is very painful for me. Where there is love there is pain. But, I will get through it and I will live again. I will not always feel as I do now. I will laugh again. Thank you for caring about me. Your concern is a gift I will always treasure. Dearest Friend, please treat me normally. I am normal. It is the situation that's not.

Sincerely,