

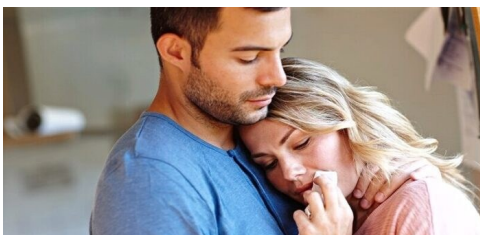
## HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE IN GRIEF

“What should I say? What should I do?”

If you’ve ever asked that question while standing beside someone who is grieving, you’re not alone. It’s a tender question, and the truth is—there’s no script. But there is something more potent than perfect words: your steady, compassionate presence.

Grief is not something a person just “gets over.” It changes shape over time, but it never entirely disappears. What we often call early grief can last two years—or longer. Eventually, the rawness softens and becomes something more bearable, but grief remains a part of the love that endures.

How long does grief last? The most honest answer is this: for as long as the one they loved is gone. That may sound blunt, but it’s said with love. The key is to release the pain that causes suffering by “feeling the feelings” — telling stories, being honest, forgiving, and mourning. Mourning is an outward expression of grief. The more you mourn, the less the pain, and it’s the pain that causes the suffering. The love remains—and it always does—grief stays too. Even if laughter returns and life moves forward, the missing doesn’t vanish. It simply finds a quieter place to live inside the heart. So if you’re wondering how best to walk alongside someone who is grieving, start here. Sometimes knowing what not to say or do can be just as important as knowing what helps.



## Gentle Reminders — “Dos” and “Don’ts”

### Do:

- ✓ Let go of expectations and follow their lead
- ✓ Listen without trying to fix
- ✓ Allow them to feel what they feel—even if it’s anger, numbness, or silence
- ✓ Accept that if they feel lost, only they can find their way out
- ✓ Validate their thoughts, feelings, timing, and the magnitude of their loss
- ✓ Be present, patient, and willing to sit with their pain
- ✓ Let go of discomfort or the need to say something clever or comforting
- ✓ Mirror their tone and respect their need for space
- ✓ Remember, thoughts and feelings aren’t always rational
- ✓ Be comfortable with silence and ask how you can support them
- ✓ Bring food or practical help
- ✓ Ask about favorite memories and share your appreciation of the person who died
- ✓ Check in long after the funeral or memorial
- ✓ Invite them to meals or events, especially in the months after a spouse’s death

### Don’t

- ☒ Judge how they’re grieving, including commenting on how “well” they’re doing
- ☒ Compare their grief to anyone else’s
- ☒ Imagine how you would feel or project your beliefs onto them
- ☒ Pressure them to talk before they’re ready
- ☒ Try to rush their grief or “make them feel better” before they’re ready

## Grief Through the Eyes of C.S. Lewis

Thanksgiving represents more than turkey and tradition—it's a season rooted in both gratitude and resilience. Joy and sorrow. Certainty and doubt.

The Pilgrims faced devastating losses that first year, yet still gathered to give thanks. In many ways, grief is like that: a season of deep questioning, of aching hearts searching for meaning. In the midst of it, we may hear trite sayings or even berate ourselves for not “feeling better.”

But take heart. You're not alone in this journey. I want to introduce you to someone who grieved deeply, too—C.S. Lewis. He asked the same hard questions, wrestled with his faith, and found his own quiet truths on the other side of sorrow.

C.S. Lewis is best known for writing *The Chronicles of Narnia*, but what many people don't realize is that he also penned one of the most honest, soul-baring reflections on grief that exists today.

Later in life, Lewis fell in love with Joy Davidman, an American poet and writer who brought laughter, depth, and light into his world. Their time together was short. Joy died of cancer just a few years after their marriage, and Lewis was left devastated, heartbroken, and filled with questions no theology textbook could answer.

He didn't mask his pain. Instead, he poured it into a private journal that became the short but powerful book *A Grief Observed*. It's not neat or tidy—it's raw and deeply human. He wrote:

***“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear.”***

Lewis described the emotional and even physical disorientation of loss. How everything around him looked the same, but nothing felt the same.

***“Her absence is like the sky,  
spread over everything.”***



That's what grief does. It doesn't just visit one room of our heart—it covers everything. It shapes how we think, breathe, move, pray, and relate to the world. And yet, through all the sorrow, Lewis kept walking. He kept asking the hard questions. He even wrestled with God. And in time, he reached a quiet, sacred realization:

***“The pain now is part of the happiness  
then. That's the deal.”***

That sentence has stayed with me. Because it speaks the truth so plainly: grief is love's shadow. We hurt deeply because we loved deeply. Grief is not a mistake to fix or a weakness to overcome. It's a reflection of something beautiful that mattered.

If you're grieving this season—whether your loss is fresh or quietly lingering after many years—know that your sorrow is valid. Your questions are welcome. And you're in good company. C.S. Lewis stood where you stand now. He wept, he doubted, he remembered, and he healed—slowly, honestly, and without rushing the process.

So as we move through this season of Thanksgiving, hold space for both your gratitude and your grief. They are not opposites. In fact, they often walk side by side.

And like Lewis, may you come to see that the pain now truly is part of the happiness that will come then. Because love—real love never leaves us empty. ©VickiJolene Lindley Reece



## INSPIRATION

*"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others."* — Cicero

Gratitude can be a quiet companion, even in grief—reminding us of the beauty of what was.  
*"When we are brave enough to tend to our sorrow, we often find gratitude sitting quietly nearby."* — Brené Brown  
Grief doesn't erase gratitude; it deepens it.  
*"The wound is the place where the Light enters you."*  
— Rumi

In the broken places of our hearts, we may still find moments of light and grace.  
*"Sometimes, only through the deep ache of loss can we fully recognize the depth of our love."* — David Kessler  
Grief is a mirror of love. Gratitude can rise from honoring that love.  
*"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."*  
— Marcel Proust  
Autumn reminds us: even after loss, the love we received still shapes us.

## THE HOLIDAYS WON'T FEEL THE SAME! SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS WORKSHOP

November 6, 2025

1:00 pm, Cabin Coffee, 2040 Kimball Ave **or**  
5:00 pm, Locke Tower Park, 4140 Kimball Ave.

Planning for the holidays is essential for grievers because this season often magnifies both love and loss. Traditions, gatherings, and familiar sights can trigger powerful emotions—sometimes unexpectedly. Without a plan, these moments can feel overwhelming, leaving you caught off guard by the mix of joy and sorrow. Being intentional allows you to set realistic expectations, protect your energy, and make thoughtful choices that honor both your grief and the values you still hold dear. This workshop will offer compassionate guidance drawn from real experiences, helping you navigate the holidays with greater clarity and self-care. You'll receive practical tools, honest encouragement, and meaningful questions to discuss with your family before Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Together, we'll explore ways to preserve what matters most, release what no longer serves you, and create space for both remembrance and hope.

## WHAT CAN I SAY TO SOMEONE WHO'S GRIEVING?

When someone you love is grieving, it's natural to feel unsure about what to say. You might worry about saying the wrong thing or not saying enough. But the truth is, your presence and your sincerity matter more than perfect words ever could. One of the most meaningful things you can do is speak from the heart about the person who died. Avoid trying to explain the loss or make it better. Just let your love and appreciation be felt.

You might say:

**"I just want you to know how much I admired [Name]."**

Then share something real—"She had such a gift for making people feel seen," or "He was one of the most thoughtful people I've ever met." A simple, specific memory can bring a moment of comfort.

Or:

**"There's no one like them. I'm so sorry they're gone."**

This says what's true. It honors the irreplaceable loss without needing to fix it.

**"I can see how deeply you loved them."**

These words acknowledge the relationship, which is often what a grieving person most wants the world to remember.

You don't have to fill the silence.

You don't have to wrap the pain in a tidy bow. Just be real. Be present. And let them know you're walking with them in this season of sorrow. Because in the end, grief and love walk hand in hand—and your compassion may be the gentle light that helps them take one more step forward.  
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“...how the world, moist and beautiful, calls to each of us to make a new and serious response.  
That's the big question,  
the one the world throws at you every morning.  
**'Here you are, alive. What would you like to do with your one wild and precious life?'**”  
— Mary Oliver

## In This Issue

- How to Support Someone in Grief
- Grief Through the Eyes of C.S. Lewis
- What can I say to Someone Who's Grieving
- Surviving the Holiday's Workshop
- Dates of Continuous Care Support Groups

## JOIN US every week!

### 2025 Continuous Care Support Groups



#### Grief Support Daytime Meetings

TIME: 1:00—2:30 p.m.  
LOCATION:  
Cabin Coffee,  
2040 Kimball, Waterloo

#### Grief Support Evening Meetings

TIME: 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
LOCATION:  
Locke at Tower Park,  
4140 Kimball, Waterloo

#### Thursday Dates:

Oct 3, 9, 16, 23, 30  
Nov 1, 13, 20  
Dec 4, 11, 18

#### Suicide Grief Support Meetings

TIME: 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
LOCATION:  
Locke at Tower Park,  
4140 Kimball, Waterloo

#### Biweekly Wednesday Dates:

Oct 1, 15  
Nov 5, 19  
Dec 3, 17

*Please feel free to bring a friend. All groups are free & open to the public!  
Call with questions 319-233-6138.*

**WEATHER ALERT:** If schools are closed due to weather, the meeting is canceled.

Want to be on our e-mailing list? Call and we'll add you to our quarterly newsletter list.