

Helping People You Love in Times of Change

Don't walk in front of me. I may not follow. Don't walk behind me. I may not lead. Walk beside me and just be my friend. ~Albert Camus

Be There – With support and presence over time, but limit advice giving.

Listen – Without judgment or interruption.

Anticipate and Initiate – Plan, arrange, and organize ways to help your loved one without being asked. They may be too tired, overwhelmed or embarrassed to ask.

Avoid Clichés and Stories – “I’m sorry” “I care” and “I’m thinking of you” are better choices than “I know how you feel”, or “My second cousin’s aunt had cancer and...”

Silence is Golden – Silence can express trust and acceptance when no words can bring this comfort.

Express and Accept Expressions of Feelings – Without judgments.

Help Them Find Support and Encouragement – Find support groups and attend together.

Allow Them to Go at Their Own Pace – There is no right “speed” or order to dealing with life changing events.

Be Patient – With your loved one and yourself.

Provide Times of Lightheartedness – Initiate laughter, fun and silliness.

Believe Tenaciously in Their Strength and Ability to Heal – Tell them!

Marvel at the Way They Cope – “You constantly amaze me”, “I am so proud of the way you _____” are good ways to open conversation.



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Helping Yourself in Times of Change

Protect Yourself in a Vulnerable Time

Your physical, emotional, relational and spiritual parts need extra care.

PHYSICAL

Don't overextend – do activities till your body is tired, not till the task is through or the event is over. Sweep half a room.

Avoid many time commitments – leave your schedule flexible.

Avoid new responsibilities – just say “NO”!

Prioritize your rest periods – schedule them, insist on them, stick to them.

Take extra care doing normal things – in driving, on stairs, using knives.

EMOTIONAL

Be kind to yourself – tender, gentle and forgiving.

Don't expect to always “handle” things or to be “strong”.

Expect to feel confused, overwhelmed and forgetful at times.

Don't expect to have all the answers figured out all of the time.

Set a time limit on “why” and “what if” sessions.

Give in to sad days and be sad.

Give in to sudden joys and fits of silliness.

Anticipate a positive outcome – Focus on it. Expect it. Believe in it.

RELATIONAL

Avoid toxic people and situations – stay away from people and situations that drain you energy.

Don't take on jobs that aren't yours – stop feeling other's feeling and concentrate on your own.

Accept love and attention in any form.

Ask for comforting – be direct and specific with what you want or need.

Find others who have survived similar things – Learn from them. Take hope from them.

SPIRITUAL

Express your feelings – both positive and negative.

Reaffirm your beliefs regularly.

Seek spiritual guidance – from others and in daily living. Be open to guidance from surprising sources.

Ritual, prayer and worship services renew a tired spirit.



FROM GRIEF TO GROWTH

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