

To the dear grieving

Lessening the pain and learning from it
[Previously published as fb191026 piya]

Here are some tips to help the near and dear to deal with the grief of loss.

1. Don't just say (or don't say): "Anything I can do, please ... " or something similar.

Offer to do something real and tangible. "Can I come over for a coffee?" or "Can I bring you anything from the supermarket?"

2. Be prepared to deal with a muddled mind.

The grieving person often needs help making decisions, but help gently. Clarity of whatever you're offering is imperative. Simply just deciding a meeting place and time for that promised coffee should be enough. Be a little more patient with the grieving than usual.

3. Anything can put the grieving on an emotional downward spiral.

Often, however, talking about the lost beloved brings the most peace to the grieving—yet it's the one thing most people avoid talking about.

4. Watch out for any triggers.

Often the grieving has triggers associated with death. For some, it is ambulances or sirens; for others, it may be a photo. These are neither eggshells we should skirt around nor should we baby the grieving. This helps us understand any sudden change of emotion or conduct in the grieving in the face of the trigger.

5. Listen when the grieving tells you of a change in behaviour or in the way they cope.

And listen intently. Read between the lines. Meet up for a cup of tea and talk about it. They may be trying to tell you they're going downhill and need a shoulder, without wanting to appear weak.

6. Understand that they can function quite normally, too.

Often enough, we somehow manage our grief and get on with our life. It's just that there may be occasions when some powerful images or memories overwhelm us. This is where we should be prepared to apply the coping skills we have learned, or contact someone we can turn to in such times.

7. Tears

When the grieving cries, it's normal to feel awkward. Pass him the tissues. Hold his hand. Quietly listen. It's a valuable human experience which helps us understand the nature of grief and loss.

Concluding remarks

One of the biggest false statements we often make is to say "Time heals." We just **learn** to cope and live with it. One of the worst pressures is to think that by a certain date, we should be healed.

Time may blunt or lessen the sting, but for the griever, it's can be a prison sentence without parole. There seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. We just have to get up each morning and hope something gives us a glimmer that gets us through the day.

That glimmer for some is the warm presence of family, good friends, new friends, and the small things we have done along the way. One day, we, the grieving, will repay the warm hands of kindness shown to us, when, sadly, their time comes for them to walk down the same road.

Sky lanterns

For the 100th day memorial, a great idea would be for the immediate family to float **sky lanterns** as a gesture of love and closure. This is best done in an open space away from an airport, air base, or when planes are flying above. Before lighting the lanterns, someone or everyone may say some reflective words for the dearly departed. The lanterns are then lit and floated up with a feeling of love and well wishes.

A sky lantern, also known as “Kong Ming Lantern,” “Wish Lantern,” or simply Chinese lantern, is an airborne paper lantern which derives buoyancy through heated air enclosed within the body of the lantern. Heat is usually generated through a small flame housed within the lantern. Sky lanterns are commonly released during Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival.

How to make a **sky lantern**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHyAefvWpXA>.

In Singapore, before releasing sky lanterns, we should be aware of some rules regarding it:

<https://www.caas.gov.sg/public-passengers/aerial-activities/release-of-sky-lanterns>

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