

Patience/Understanding/Forgiveness/Faith

Dear Family & Friends,

As I grieve the loss of my husband, I know that many of you are grieving for him also. I realize we all grieve in our own way and at our own pace. Please realize that grief is a life-long process. Don't expect me to be "done" with grief at a point in time that seems logical to you! Please don't give me an allotted amount of time for my grief.

Thank you for being there for me. Please realize I did not only lose my spouse, I also lost my lover, my companion, my confidant, my household assistant, the father to my children, my way of life, my future and most importantly, MY BEST FRIEND. He was the person who knew me the best. He kept me balanced. Should it be a surprise to you that I seem unbalanced or unstable right now?

The relationship with my husband has not ended, rather it has changed. He is and always will be part of my life. Please do not be afraid to talk about him, I need that now more than ever. Don't worry that your mention of him may make me sad, because nothing could make me sadder than I already am. I want to talk about him, I need to talk about him.

It is common for friends to disappear at a time like this! I realize this is an uncomfortable situation for you. I am not expecting you to fix me or make me better. If you don't know what to say, then simply say, "I don't know what to say." Just being there for me is enough!

Try not to judge me for being an emotional mess at this time in my life. If I lost a limb, you would not expect me to function as I used to! Yet, I have lost an even bigger part of me than all my limbs combined. Please remember I am broken right now...I know it is not always easy to be around me. Please understand that since I have lost a part of me, I have also lost much of my identity and self-confidence. I am struggling to find out who I am right now. Even though it may seem like I am pushing you away, please be patient. I need you now more than ever. I will need you just as much a year after his death as I did a month after his death. And when things are better, I will remember how you were there for me.

Please don't tell me how strong I am. I am not trying to win a contest. I am trying to be a role model. The truth is, I am anything but strong! I have to force myself out of bed each morning. What choice do I have but to go on? You may see me as strong, but more than likely I fall apart when you're not around.

Although I know this is said with the best of intentions, and I truly do appreciate it, please don't tell me to call if I need something. Determining when to call is very difficult for someone who is grieving. Determining what I actually NEED is next to impossible. Coming up with words to ask for something is a monumental task. Remember that yesterday, I was a perfectly capable person and that this is new territory for me and new things overwhelm me. If you really want to help, try and determine what I might need or what my children might need and call and offer it – or just do it!

A phone call from you is just what I need right now! Please don't make me initiate all contact with you. It is extremely difficult for me to call you. Don't be afraid to call me and if you really care, call me even if you don't feel like it. Many people avoid you when you are grieving. They don't know what to say or they may think you're busy. Sometimes they are afraid of you because you have changed. It is difficult for a hurting person to make good decisions in relationships. I would appreciate your help and understanding with that, especially now.

If you want to know how I am doing, please ask me, I am the only person who really knows! Others cannot possibly see through me and know what I am feeling and how I am doing. Anything they tell you, would be a guess at best and their perceptions are typically quite different from the way things really are!

I know that right now, I am not the person I was. Please accept this new "me" and remember I am grieving not only my loss, but the losses my children have experienced. I am also grieving what my husband has lost – the graduations, weddings, grandchildren, etc. that he never got to see during his lifetime. I am grieving the loss of my dreams. My children are a great comfort to me but please remember they are no substitute for my husband. I still feel incredibly lonely even with my children around.

Please remember it is natural for me to feel incredibly lonely. My need for people has increased and yet the presence of people in my life has decreased. We live in a very busy world, but if you ever have a moment, please consider sharing it with me.

My children are grieving too. It is very difficult in my own grief to be the fortress that my children so desperately need. One of the best gifts you can give me is to be there for my children. The main adult in their lives right now is lonely, grieving and sometimes irrational. It is difficult for me to ask you for your precious time but what a gift you could give me by giving some special time to my children. Emotionally, they need more than I can give them right now. Please try not to tell me how I should feel or what I need to do to get over this. Don't tell me it could be worse -- in my mind it could not be any worse than this.

Please understand that I will never be the same again, my life has changed forever. Your prayers are much appreciated, and while it is nice to hear someone say, "I'll pray for you" it means even more when they ask you for specific prayer requests or when they offer to pray with you.

Besides your prayers and encouragement, I ask four things from you --- your patience, your understanding, your forgiveness and your faith.

I ask for your patience --- please be patient with me. I will make many mistakes as I enter this new chapter in my life.

I ask for your understanding --- please understand that I am truly the best I can -- life is very difficult right now!

I ask for your forgiveness --- please forgive me for not being the person I used to be, please forgive me for not being a good friend right now and please forgive me if I seem selfish -- I don't mean to.

I ask for your faith --- please have faith in me!!! I will get through this with your help!

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

God's blessings and love to all of you!