



PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

Dear Compassionate Friends:

Members of The Compassionate Friends and grieving families often assume an unwilling role of educating and/or comforting well-meaning people who want to offer comfort to us, but really don't know how to go about it. They may not say anything at all or unintentionally say something that is not comforting.

Recently a friend shared this frustration. She mentioned that she had seen a friend who very recently lost her granddaughter in an accident. My kind and thoughtful friend wanted to offer comfort in a hug or just a gentle touch, but "didn't want to make her feel worse".

I shared that sometimes the only thing you can offer is a hug or comforting touch. Words are often inadequate, but physical touch tells that griever "I'm here and I care".

What are some gestures of comfort and offers of help you were given in those first terrible days and months of grief? Were they helpful?

Follow the lead if the person wishes to share details and just listen if they do. Sometimes going over and over the details is the only way we can wrap our heads around trying to understand the enormity of our loss.

Don't say "I know what you're going through." You don't-you really don't.

The grieving person may be so emotionally distraught they cannot physically function. Please don't say "please call me if you need anything". They won't. Instead offer to mow their lawn, water their flowers, or do their grocery shopping. Take their surviving children to school. Offer to drive and accompany them to a Compassionate Friends meeting, or email them the link to our webpage. I look forward to hearing from you and passing on to our members those gestures that help.

We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

In friendship,

Nadine

