FOR A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER

Sitting with someone who is grieving

A reader may have handed you this page. They are not asking you to fix anything. They are asking you to help with the days.

Do not tell them to rest. Everyone already has. In the first weeks after a loss, empty time is often the hard part. The book's advice is to let other people structure the days.

Offer one specific thing. "Let me know if you need anything" leaves the work with them. Try:

- "I'm bringing dinner on Thursday. Is six or seven better?"
- "I'm walking at ten tomorrow. Want to come, or should I come get you?"
- "I'll pick up the forms and the groceries. You do not have to talk to me."

Be fine with silence. Sitting in the same room, not talking, is a real way to help. Say so: "I can just sit here."

Do not answer "I'm fine" with a pep talk. Say, "Okay. I'll check in tomorrow. A text is enough." Then send the text.

Follow their lead on the person who died. Missing someone and talking about them is part of loving them. You do not have to steer away from it, and you do not have to bring it up every time.

Keep showing up after the first month. The meals and cards stop when the days are still long.

When to say something

Be gentle and direct if you notice that:

- Their low mood has lasted for weeks.
- They cannot do the basic tasks of the day.
- The same painful thoughts will not loosen.

Say: "This sounds heavy. Would you talk to a doctor or a grief counsellor? I can help you find one."

If they mention harming themselves, call or text 988, the suicide crisis helpline in Canada and the United States, or use your local emergency number.