A FREE GUIDE FROM PUT ON YOUR BIG GIRL PANTS

What to Say (and What Not to Say) When Someone Is Grieving



You want to help. You're scared of getting it wrong. Here's what actually helps — from someone who's been on both sides of it.

If you're reading this, someone you love is hurting — and you've been standing there not knowing what to say. Maybe you've already said the thing you're worried was wrong. Maybe you've said nothing because you were afraid.

I've been the one bringing the casserole. And I've been the widow on the other side of the door, counting who showed up. When my husband Clint died, I learned that grieving people don't remember most of what anyone *said* to them that year. They remember exactly what people *did*.

So let me go first — here's what I wish everyone knew.

— *Kamille*

Kamille Bauer

Host, *Put On Your Big Girl Pants* • Keynote speaker on grief, loss & hope

PART 1 — SKIP THESE

Things that land wrong (even with love behind them)

1. "At least…"

"At least he's not in pain." "At least you had good years." Anything that starts with *at least* asks them to feel grateful in the middle of the worst thing that's ever happened to them.

2. "Everything happens for a reason."

Maybe it does. But a person in fresh grief can't hold that yet — it can feel like you're explaining away their person.

3. "He's in a better place" / "God needed another angel."

Even when they believe it, it can sound like their loss was the plan. Let them get there on their own.

4. "Let me know if you need anything."

Kind — but it hands the work back to them. A grieving person will never call you and ask. (What to do instead is on the next page.)

5. "How are you?"

They don't know. And now they have to perform an answer. Try "I've been thinking about you today" instead — it needs no reply.

6. Comparisons.

"I know exactly how you feel, when my dog…" Even well-meant, it quietly moves the moment onto you. You don't have to understand it to sit with it.

7. Anything about a timeline.

"It's been a while now." "Shouldn't you be feeling better?" Grief doesn't clock out on a schedule. There is no "should."

The one rule under all of these

You don't have to fix it. You can't. Your job isn't to make the pain smaller — it's to make sure they're not carrying it alone.

PART 2 — SAY THIS INSTEAD

Words that actually help

"I don't know what to say — but I'm not going anywhere."
Honest beats perfect. You don't need the right words. You need to stay.

Say their person's name.
"I was thinking about Clint today." People are terrified the one they lost will be forgotten. Saying the name is a gift.

"You don't have to respond to this."
Give them permission to receive your love without owing you energy back.

"I'm bringing dinner Tuesday — I'll leave it on the porch."
Specific. Already decided. No decision required from them (more on this next).

Later — weeks and months later — ask again.
"How are you, really?" The first answer is always "I'm fine." Ask once more. That second question is where the truth lives.

> Everyone comes to the funeral. Then it goes quiet. The disappearing is the part nobody warns you about — so be the person who's still there in week six, and month six.

PART 3 — BETTER THAN WORDS

Don't ask. Just do the thing.

A package showed up on my first Valentine's Day without Clint. The person didn't ask what I needed or whether I wanted company. They just sent it. A decade later I remember almost nothing anyone said that year. I remember exactly what people *did*.

So don't ask "what do you need?" — pick something and do it:
Drop off dinner. Mow the lawn. Take the kids for an afternoon. Send the gift card. Text on the hard dates — the birthday, the anniversary, the holidays — and say the name. Put it in your calendar so you don't forget when everyone else has moved on.

PART 4 — COPY, PASTE, SEND

Texts you can send today

Not sure how to start? Pick one, swap in their person's name, and hit send. Short and specific beats perfect.

> Thinking of you and [name] today. No need to reply.

> I'm dropping off dinner Tuesday. I'll leave it on the porch — no need to come to the door.

> I know today is [name]'s birthday. I'm remembering them with you.

> I don't know what to say, but I'm not going anywhere.

> Still thinking of you. Want to go for a walk this week? I'll pick you up.

> I was thinking about [name] today. I miss them too.

Want this message for your team, church or event?

Kamille shares her keynote *From Tears to Treasure* with companies, hospitals, women's events and congregations — real stories, real tools, and hope for hard seasons.

Book a 20-minute call → calendly.com/kamillebauer/intro

If this helped, there's more where it came from.

I talk about all of this — grief, faith, and how to put your big girl pants on and show up when life is hard — every other week on the podcast.

Listen: search **Put On Your Big Girl Pants** wherever you listen, or on YouTube. • kamillebauer.com • youtube.com/@KamilleBauer

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