

Friends in Pain: How to help your hurting loved one

Written by admin

Sunday, 25 September 2011 05:15 - Last Updated Tuesday, 04 October 2011 11:09

By Jennifer Brost

"Where's your husband?" the nurse asked.

"At school," I struggled to respond.

"What school?" the nurse knew he needed to get to the hospital ASAP.

In what was a miracle, I named the seminary and recited the phone number. My husband made it to the hospital and waited through the emergency surgery that would save my life but not our son's.

The medical "shock" from nearly bleeding to death was remedied by 16 blood-transfusions and a corrective surgery, but the shock to my spiritual life was made worse by the attempts of others to transfuse their beliefs into my deadened faith.

"You need to learn to accept God's will," "God has a good reason for allowing this to happen," and incredibly, "One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy, and you aren't displaying much of it!" These comments were the price I paid for expressing my grief and anger.

When someone is hurting, we would all like to know what to say. Here are my thoughts on how to heal and not injure:

1)When in doubt, keep quiet. Silence is often all that is needed when sitting with one who is grieving. The bereaved might desire to tell the blow-by-blow account of the loss or injury. If this is the case, asking questions for clarity is helpful: "Where were you when you got the news?" "How old was he?" "Does his father know yet?" Others may wish to simply cry in silence, but few hurting people want comments about your personal life or theology.

2)Correct with extreme caution. While we stood around my mother's lifeless body, my father

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asked the Pastor if he thought we could still communicate with her. The vagueness of the Pastor's answer led my father to believe that my mother could still be accessed. This resulted in many failed relationships and business transactions because, according to my dad, my mother had told him to jump into these doomed attempts. The theology of the hurting will come out as they talk through their pain. However, when our three-year-old mispronounces a word, I don't say, "That's not right! Here's how you say it" Instead, I simply state the word correctly. I wish the Minister would have replied, "It is difficult to say good-bye, but reality is that your wife is not here anymore."

3)Gently nudge the hurting away from guilt and shame. When the focus of the wounded becomes, "I should have" "He could have" or "Why did God allow this?" find a way to gently nudge him or her back to the hard road of grief, but this time, point toward the future. Try, "Do you know when the service will be?" or "Do you have any idea of what you would like to do next?" The assignment of blame is, after all, a futile attempt to feel better.

With the Spirit's leading and a hearty dose of sensitivity, there isn't a reason why anyone should have to mourn alone.

Pastor's Wife, Jennifer Brost fell into suicidal depression after multiple losses while in her early 20s. All profits from her book "How I Suffered from my Theology: and regained my faith by questioning 3 beliefs," are donated to charity. To order: 1-800-672-1885 or www.deliverancepublishers.com

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