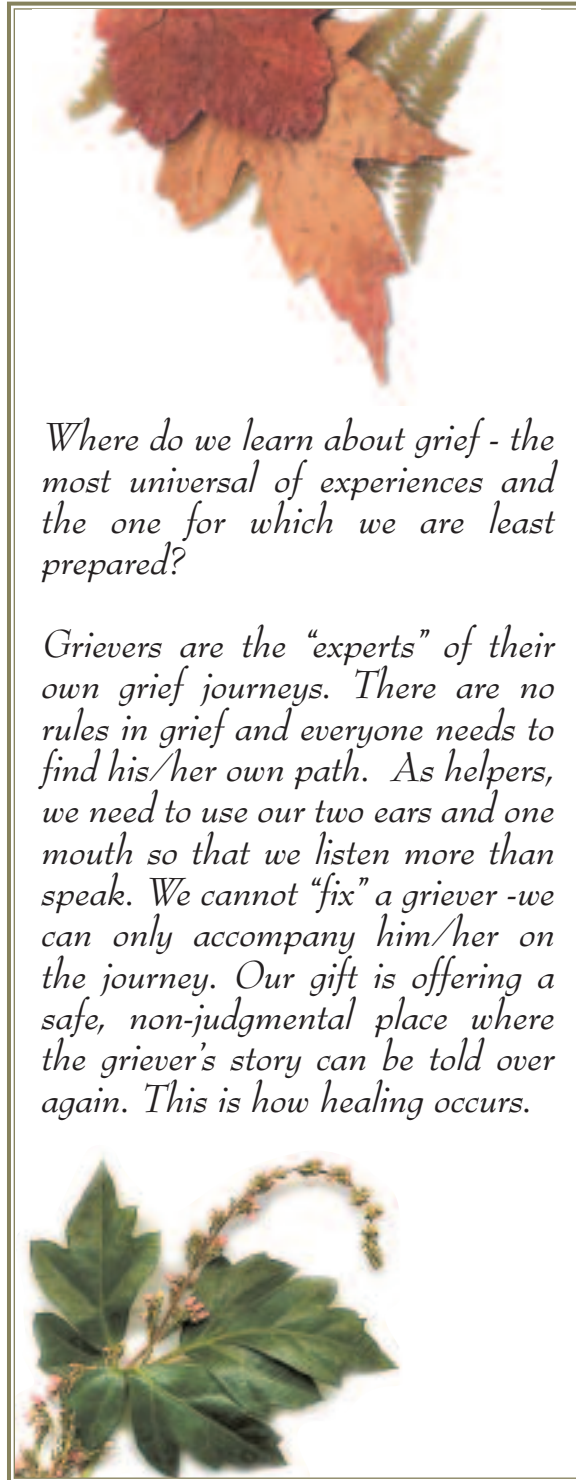


DO

1. Do be there to listen without judgment. Grief work takes as long as it takes.
2. Do use the name of the person who has died. Encourage the expression of memories.
3. Do encourage and allow expression of all the feelings of grief. There are no right or wrong feelings - they just are.
4. Do say: "I'm sorry"
"Do you feel like talking about it?"
 " How are you feeling today?"
" It's OK to cry."
 " I can't imagine how awful this is for you."
" I wish you strength."
5. Do something concrete - make a meal, run an errand, offer to drive - rather than saying "Call me if I can help".



Where do we learn about grief - the most universal of experiences and the one for which we are least prepared?

Grievors are the "experts" of their own grief journeys. There are no rules in grief and everyone needs to find his/her own path. As helpers, we need to use our two ears and one mouth so that we listen more than speak. We cannot "fix" a griever -we can only accompany him/her on the journey. Our gift is offering a safe, non-judgmental place where the griever's story can be told over again. This is how healing occurs.

DON'T

1. Don't avoid your grieving friend because you are uncomfortable. This only adds to the pain.
2. Don't try to find something positive about the death.
3. Don't change the subject when the person who has died is mentioned.
4. Don't avoid mentioning the dead person for fear that you will remind them of their pain. You can't make it worse.
5. Don't say: "I understand."
"I know how you feel."
 " You're lucky, it could have been worse."
" It can't be that bad."
 " At least . . ."
 " It was God's will."
 " You're so strong."
"Don't take it so hard."
6. Don't judge feelings by using words like "should" or "ought to". No body likes to be "should upon".

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

There's an elephant in the room.
It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get
around it.
Yet we squeeze by with "How are you?" and
"I'm fine"
And a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.
We talk about the weather.
We talk about work.
We talk about everything else - except the
elephant in the room.
There's an elephant in the room.
We all know it is there.
We are thinking about the elephant as we talk
together. It is constantly on our minds.
For you see, it is a very big elephant.
It has hurt us all.
But we do not talk about the elephant in the
room.
Oh, please, say her name.
Oh, please, let's talk about the elephant in the
room.
For if we talk about her death,
Perhaps we can talk about her life.
Can I say his name to you and not have you
look away?
For if I cannot, then you are leaving me
Alone . . . In a room. . .
With an elephant.

Terry Kettering

Bereavement Support Groups are offered in the fall, winter and spring. These free 8-week sessions provide participants with the opportunity to discuss their personal losses and related grief issues in a safe, non-judgmental and confidential environment.

For more information, please call
(514) 279-7358

Dawn Cruchet BN, MEd, CT
Grief Educator
Coordinator, *Growing Through
Grief Program*



MOUNT ROYAL
COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES
1297 Ch. de la Forêt,
Outremont QC
H2V 2P9
(514) 279-7358
Fax (514) 279-0049
www.mountroyalcem.com



Helping a Grieving Friend

