

Compassion for Those Grieving

C- Care

Care about the person who is suffering. If you don't care about someone who is in pain, get curious about why.

O- Open

Open your heart. Your closed heart cannot truly care about another's broken heart.

M- Mind

Mind your words, thoughts, and actions. Be gentle.

P- Practice

Practice self-awareness, and take note of your own emotions, judgments, and defenses.

A- Accept

Accept - without judging - the emotional expressions of the person who is grieving.

S- Stay

Stay with them. It is a privilege for you when they trust you enough to share or remember their beloved. Don't check out even if the dialogue, or your own emotions, become uncomfortable for you.

S- Self-awareness

Notice any impulses to fix, cure, or minimize their pain. They are not broken: they are brokenhearted. Stop those impulses. Deal with them later.

I- Intuit

Engage your own intuition with the aid of deep listening. Through intuition, we are guided by our hearts, not fear.

O- Own

Own your own pain. Do your own grief work. Often, those who are the most avoidant of others' pain are those who are avoidant of their own pain. Grief has a way of waiting for you, and it will come out sideways, following you, and unabashedly affecting you, your entire life. It will be much more difficult to be an integrated and compassionate person if you haven't owned your own painful emotions.

N- Never

Never - ever - underestimate the power of compassion.

Compassion...

The happiness-cult is causing more pain to grieving people. In my latest book, [Bearing the Unbearable](#), I speak extensively about the pervasive and superficial happiness-pursuing in our culture. This does not serve those who prefer authentic and connected relationships well. And it certainly does not serve those who are grieving. Compassion can be a practice. Holding "space" for another who is hurting is a wisdom of the heart that we can hone. As I was watching some blue herons today, I started to write this piece in my mind. I hope it serves as an invitation to the inner journey for those who are in a position- professional or personal- to help someone who is suffering. Please, feel free to share this.

Bowing to every broken heart upon whom this missive of compassion will land.