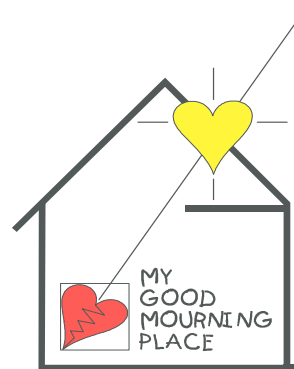




Words of Comfort

A practical guide to expressing messages of sympathy and condolence.



FOR CHILDREN, TEENS & FAMILIES

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At one time or another, everyone faces the difficult task of trying to express, in a heartfelt way, words that will provide comfort to someone in their time of grief. Often, we are at a loss for words on how to let people know just how badly we feel.

With this guide, you'll find a simple approach to crafting a heartfelt note of sympathy. We'll provide valuable Do's ✓ and Don'ts ✗ to ensure you deliver the most appropriate words of comfort possible.

Here are some simple steps to follow in writing a heartfelt condolence note:

✓ **1. Use an appropriate form of personalized communication**

- Choose a store-bought greeting offering a simple generic message and write a personalized message in the space on the left side of the card.
- A personalized, handwritten note on quality stationery of matching paper and envelope. Keep the message to a page or less.

✗ Never send a humorous greeting card!

✗ This is about your friend; don't talk about yourself.

✗ Don't write an excessively long note.

✗ Don't send an email in place of a card.

✓ **2. Acknowledge the loss**

- *I was saddened to hear of your mom's passing.*
- *I was saddened to learn about the loss of your dad.*
- *Words cannot begin to express our sorrow at the loss of your dad.*

✗ Don't use the words "dead, died, killed, murdered, committed suicide" or other such descriptive words.

✓ **3. Express your condolences**

- *Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your dad.*
- *My heart goes out to you in this time of sorrow.*
- *I'm sorry to hear that your mom has passed.*

✗ Don't say "It's for the best, he's at peace now.", "It must have been his time.", "It was God's will.", "He's better off.", "You'll get over it.", "It's time to put this behind you and move on with your life."

✓ **4. Reference special qualities of the deceased**

- *Your mom always made me feel like I was part of the family.*
- *Everyone always loved hearing your sister sing in choir.*
- *We will miss Bob; he touched so many lives in our community.*

✓ **5. Share a favorite heartfelt memory**

- *I'll also have fond memories of spending Sunday afternoons visiting with you and Frank.*
- *While I didn't know your sister, I have heard so many good things about her.*

✓ **6. Offer specific help (only if you'll follow through)**

- *I'll stop by next week to take you to your appointment.*

✗ Don't say you'll stop by if you're not going to follow through.

✗ Don't say "Call if you need something." You should always call them.

✓ **7. End with thoughtful words**

- *You and your family will be in my thoughts and prayers.*
- *With love and prayers during this difficult time.*
- *Wishing you God's peace.*
- *With deepest sympathy.*
- *May your sadness quickly be replaced by the happy memories of your life together.*
- *Your mom will never be forgotten.*
- *The memory of Sally will always be in our hearts.*
- *May your heart find peace and comfort.*
- *May the love of your family help you through the days ahead.*
- *Peace, prayers and blessings.*

And some additional final tips:

- ✓ It's okay to reference a long illness and say that the deceased is no longer suffering.
 - ✓ It's perfectly fine to admit that you can't put your feelings into words.
 - ✓ Never avoid the grieving family because you're not sure what to say. Being there for them and providing a sympathetic ear is more important.
- ✓ Some of the loneliest times will be after all the activities surrounding the funeral are over, leaving the family with nothing but their grief.

In all things,

 - ✓ Always speak from your heart.

"Mourn not too long that he is gone, but rather, rejoice forever that he was."