



Messy Mortality

Dear Readers,

Thank you to all, especially the Beaufort community, my beloved Facebook peeps, the membership and leadership of The Society for Marketing Professional Services,(SMPS), and my dear neighbors for your support when I had to face the death of my husband. It means the world to me and makes the path easier.

Here are a couple of the questions that readers had about similar situations. It is hard to believe we are so unprepared for what we all have to suffer at some time in our life. Death is unfathomable and there is no way to prepare for the loss, whether it is yours or another's.

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I read your column about losing your husband and want to extend my condolences. It must be very difficult.

I am embarrassed to ask your advice about the death of my friend's husband. I was devastated at the news, and called her immediately. I meant to write but every time I tried, I couldn't get it

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy
Tuesday, 26 June 2018 11:55

right, so I kept putting it off. I didn't call her regularly because I didn't want to bother her, and now I feel like I let her down and was not a good friend. What should I do?

Sally

Dear Sally,

Let me assure you that you should not feel terrible about this. Your reaction is normal and does not mean you are a heartless fool.

It is so hard to know what to say and do when something so devastating happens to a friend. It is easy to get paralyzed with the desire to do the right thing and the fear of making a mistake.

One thing you can do now is send her some lovely flowers with a note telling her how sorry you are that you didn't step up to the plate earlier. Or, you can just send the flowers and say that you hope they bring her some joy during what you know is a long and difficult journey. You could also show up with food, a well-chosen book, or a token of your love.

It doesn't matter what you do as long as you reach out. However, whatever you do, know that even the smallest effort will bring great reward. In fact, being late in your condolences has the effect of helping when it is least expected and will be appreciated and remembered.

Oh, and if it isn't, that wasn't your friend anyway, so don't fret.

Best, Aunt Bossy

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Dear Aunt Bossy,

What did people do that helped when your husband died? I always freak out in those circumstances and don't know what to do.

Curious George

Dear George,

I am assuming you aren't the real "Curious George." I love him, and you already did something good for me by using that name.

So, what did people do that helped? Anything and everything. Truly.

A kind word, a couple of cookies, entire meals, heartfelt cards and messages, running errands, inviting me out: it all worked – and is working – to lighten my load.

The only thing you should try not to do is show up and ask what you can do. I know people who do that mean well, but it adds pressure to come up with directions. On the other hand when people called and said, "I'm serious. Let me know when I can do something" it was a gift. When I needed someone to take a chore off my list – a run to the post office, grocery store, a phone call to a supplier, even walk the beloved Frankie dog – I did not hesitate, and it was wonderful.

I really believe that "thoughts are things" in all circumstances. In this circumstance, the thought really counts; so don't worry too much about doing the "right" thing. Just do something, sooner or later.

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Love to you, George, and everyone who tries.

Aunt Bossy