

1) Intend to help.

Form a genuine intention to help. Think: “This is not something apart from me. I am no different than this person. Fear of facing that fact makes me want to turn away, makes me want to think that there is nothing I can do.”

(2) Don't know.

In mental quiet, set aside expectations (about success, or gratitude). Consciously and intentionally set aside your opinions, ideas, concepts, beliefs about what is going on or what needs to be said. Maybe imagine setting all of your ideas on a safe shelf where you can recover them later.

(3) Be present.

As is appropriate to the situation and relationship, offer open-hearted presence, fully mindful presence, deep listening. Give full attention.

(4) Act

Act in whatever way naturally arises as a caring response within this intimate presence. No playbook. This could include silence, touching, song, prayer, asking the person, “How are you right now?” “What is this like for you right now?” Be open to seeing what might help THIS person, what resources they might have in their beliefs, family, or traditions.

Some Resources

- Brach, Tara. *True Refuge*. Mindful coping when wounds are NOT self-inflicted.
Ellison, Koshin Paley. *Awake at the Bedside*. Contemplative care for the dying.
Halifax, Joan. *Being with Dying*. Contemplative care for the dying.
Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*. Classic, Christian wrestles with faith in face of terrible loss.
Newland, Guy. *A Buddhist Grief Observed*.
Oates, J.C. *A Widow's Story*. Vivid grief memoir
Ostaseki, Frank. *The Five Invitations: What Death Can Teach us about Living Fully*.
Sogyal Rinpoche. *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*.
Soko Morinaga. *Novice to Master*. Zen memoir addressing living life in face of death.
Tan, Chade-Meng. *Search Inside Yourself*. Mindfulness, emotional intelligence: introduction.