



## Tips & Strategies for Saying a Good Goodbye

- There is no one right way to say goodbye—it might feel messy or imperfect, and important things may go unsaid. That’s human.
- Start with saying thank you. Let someone know what they taught you and why you’re grateful to have had them in your life.
- If you can, talk openly about death and dying. Don’t avoid conversations about death, or pretend that it isn’t happening. Don’t try and protect people from the reality of death. Do ask questions and listen well.
- If naming death feels too difficult, you can bring it up indirectly. Try saying “I fear I might not see you again.”
- Tell people that they will always be a part of you. Let them know what you will always remember.
- Document your memories. Write down shared favorite times. Take photographs.
- Acts of service speak volumes. Don’t worry if you don’t know what to say—just being there and acting out of love can communicate a lot.
- It’s okay not to be present during the actual moment of someone’s death. Some people may prefer it that way.
- Say the things you need to say now, don’t wait. These conversations are worthwhile in many stages of life and death. There’s no timeline.
- These five things make loss traumatic: feeling alone, feeling helpless, feeling hopeless, feeling confused, and feeling shocked by unexpected loss. Everything you do to address these will help you and your family: talk about the loss and your feelings about it with others; find ways to be helpful; find new things to hope for, even small things; learn more about the illness, and ask your doctor to be very clear about what to expect.
- After loss, find ways to give yourself peace and closure—talk to the person you’ve lost, write them letters, remind yourself of your favorite memories of them.
- Embrace your grief. Keep choosing to feel it. Grief can be overwhelmingly painful, but if we dare to go into it we will emerge feeling more alive and whole.

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