

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Holding Space

Are there people in our life that **hold space** for us?

What does it mean to **hold space** for someone else? It means that we are willing to walk alongside another person in whatever life experience without judging them, making them feel inadequate, trying to fix them, or trying to impact the outcome.

When we hold space for other people, we open our hearts, minds and bodies, offer unconditional support, and let go of judgment and control. Sometimes we find ourselves **holding space** for people while they **hold space** for others.

It's virtually impossible to be a strong space holder unless we have others who will **hold space** for us. Even the strongest amongst us need to know that there are some people with whom we can be vulnerable and weak without fear of being judged.

Holding space is not always easy, because we have a very human tendency to want to fix people, give them advice, or judge them for not being further along the path than we are. But we keep trying, practice makes progress.

To truly support people in their own growth and transformation in loss, grief and bereavement or any life crisis, we can't do it by taking their power away (i.e. trying to fix their problems), shaming them (i.e. implying that they should know more than they do), or overwhelming them (i.e. giving them more information than they're ready for). We have to be prepared to step to the side so that they can make their own choices, offer them unconditional love and support, give gentle guidance when it's needed, and allow them to feel safe even when they make mistakes.

Suggestions for **holding space**:

- Give people permission to trust their own intuition and wisdom.
- Give people only as much information as they can handle.
- Don't take their power away.
- Keep your own ego out of it.
- Allow them to feel safe enough to fail.
- Mistakes are proof we are trying.
- Give guidance and help with humility and thoughtfulness.
- Bear witness not fear when complex emotions, fear, trauma, shock, anger, etc, are expressed.
- Allow them to make different decisions and to have different experiences than you would. 'Live and Let Live'.
- Practice makes progress.

Adapted from 'What it means to "hold space" for other people and how to do it well' by Heather Plett www.heatherplett.com

*"Life is
changed not
ended"*



*"Where the weak
have nothing to run
from and the strong
have something to
strive for"
(Rule of St Benedict)*

*"Death does not
end our story...
Death does not
end our
relationships"*