

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Exquisite Witness

The Exquisite Witness is one who enters the sacred space between two human souls—having the deepest respect for the yearning, seeking, wishful hopes of the other to diminish pain and survive in a new world after the death of someone close.

What distinguishes an *exquisite witness* is one's willingness to approach another human being with compassion and deep respect for that person's needs, fear and grief.

The term '*witness*' directs us to understand that the experience belongs to the bereaved person. We are the experts in our own unique loss and grief experiences.

As a witness, we observe more than act, listen and learn more than talk, and follow more than lead. Witnessing celebrates the dignity and authority of the bereaved person.

When we are bereaved we may need to be heard over and over again without receiving any advice, interpretations, or words of wisdom. In this context, we agree to be a **nonjudgmental exquisite witness**. It is more than being a skilled listener. When people share their pain and fears, we are on sacred ground.

We all have the opportunity to listen, learn, support, encourage, guide and grow in our experiences of loss and grief in bereavement. We can become more tender, gentler and kinder human beings.

When we are an *Exquisite Witness* we *listen and learn more than talk, observe more than act and follow more than lead*. Never underestimate the power and benefit of our *caring human presence*.

Adapted from: *Helping Grieving People –When tears are not enough: A Handbook for Care Providers*, J.S. Jeffreys

*“Death does not end our story...
Death does not end our relationships...
Life is changed not ended”*

*No rule book,
No time frame,
No judgement,
Grief is as
individual as a
fingerprint,
Do what is right
for your soul.*



*We earn the trust
and respect of
those around us
by being a
resource not a
“know it all”*