



Have you heard...

**IT COULD
BE WORSE**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

Sometimes, others will comment on ways that a situation could have been more difficult to focus on positive, or at least less negative, aspects of what occurred. This might involve recognizing what you or others didn't experience, like a long illness or physical trauma, or focusing on aspects of your loved one's life or faith, like a positive relationship with them or a belief that they are in Heaven. While this statement is usually meant to offer comfort and focus on positive memories or future hope, it may feel like negating or diminishing your loss by noting that a worse situation could have occurred. It may make you feel like your emotions should be less intense or not present at all, or that sadness or anger is not congruent with your belief around where your person is now. If others around you are also grieving, this might push you toward comparing your grief and the circumstances of your loss with others, and judging the validity of your response by how your loss compares to theirs.





HERE'S THE TRUTH:

No matter what happened when your person died, or what your relationship was like, your emotional response is important and deserves space and time to be heard and felt. Every kind of loss has difficult aspects to it. Sudden loss may have left you feeling shocked, unable to prepare, or fearful about the future. Slower, more drawn-out loss may have left you with difficult memories, taken up time or depleted emotional resources, or changed your relationship with your person as they experienced pain or physical or emotional limitations. No matter how your person died, there were hard things you experienced and challenges that were not a part of your situation. There is no objective measure for what kind of loss is the worst.

Especially if your person believed in Christ, this statement may have been linked with the knowledge that you will be reunited with them. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says “Do not grieve as those who have no hope.” This does not mean that believers do not grieve, as we are told in other passages that there is a time to weep (Ecc. 3:4) and to mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15). This loss is not eternal which is a reason for hope. And this loss is current, which is a reason for grief and all the emotions that come with it.

You could say:

- **“Every kind of loss has things that are especially hard about it.”** When we think about what happened to our person, we might wish that something had been different, and we might be glad that some things happened how they did. All your feelings about this loss are important, even if it feels like other people had harder or easier things happen to them. What parts of our person’s death were the hardest for you? Did anything make some parts easier to get through? Are there any parts of losing or missing our person that you feel like other people don’t notice?
- **“We can be glad that our person is with God and miss them at the same time.”** God tells us that our grief is different because we know we will see people again, and also tells us that our emotions are okay. We don’t know how long it will be until we see our person, and it can feel like a long wait. We can miss our person and be sad that we don’t have them with us right now and look forward to seeing them again in the future.