



Have you heard...

**“THEY’RE NO LONGER
SUFFERING / THEY’RE IN
A BETTER PLACE”**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

Sometimes people will say this when someone was sick for a long time or struggling with other difficult circumstances. Even though it is normal to feel some relief if a person died after significant suffering, this statement may make you feel guilty for experiencing sadness, anger, or other negative emotions because of the loss rather than only being glad that they are no longer in pain. This also focuses entirely on the person who died, rather than on the people who are grieving, not acknowledging that those who are still alive are suffering now.

This can also inadvertently suggest that it is unfair for you to wish that the person was still alive, since this would mean wishing for their pain to continue or for them to be in worse circumstances.

If you do not believe that your person is in a better place, or their beliefs about what happens after death differed from yours, this can also bring up confusion, anger, or other difficult emotions toward God or the person who died.





Everyone experiences mixed emotions after a death, often including relief if the death was painful or drawn out. Wanting your person to be free from suffering does not mean that you wanted the separation you are now experiencing.

Normal, healthy grief also include sadness, anger, and wishing for more positive time and interaction with that person regardless of the circumstances prior to their death. Grieving often involves holding tension between multiple true things - you can feel relieved that your person is not hurting, and also wish that they were still with you. Your current emotions matter to you, other people, and God, even if you believe your loved one is in the best place imaginable.

If your beliefs differed from those of the person who died, you may be experiencing a sense of loss, regret, or hopelessness which others may not be aware of or understand well. You may want to seek out support from your faith community and people who can understand how this changes the impact of the loss for you. No one knows what work God does in the last minutes or hours of a person's life, and scripture shows us that God can bring redemption even in people's final moments (Luke 23:39-43).

You could say:

- **“We can feel relieved that our person is not in pain, and sad that they are gone at the same time.”** Even though we are glad they aren't hurting anymore, our hurt and other feelings matter, and it's okay to want things to be different. What are some things you wish could change about what we're going through right now?
- **“Wanting someone to feel better or not hurt is not the same as wanting them to die”.** Sometimes, if you hope someone stops hurting, and then someone else tells you they are not hurting anymore because they died, it can seem like you wished for them to die, even though you didn't mean it that way. What you wanted or thought, or even prayed, did not cause what happened to them. Because while we can ask God for things, we don't have the power or authority to make him do things.
- **“Our person might have believed or said different things about what they thought would happen after they died.”** It can be really confusing to sort out what we believe about where that person is now or what is happening to them. We can talk to God about those worries and fears, and also remember that God knows more than we ever could about what our person thought, felt, or believed when they died. (And if you're curious to explore your own beliefs and faith practices, reach out to a pastor, faith leader, or spiritual director.)