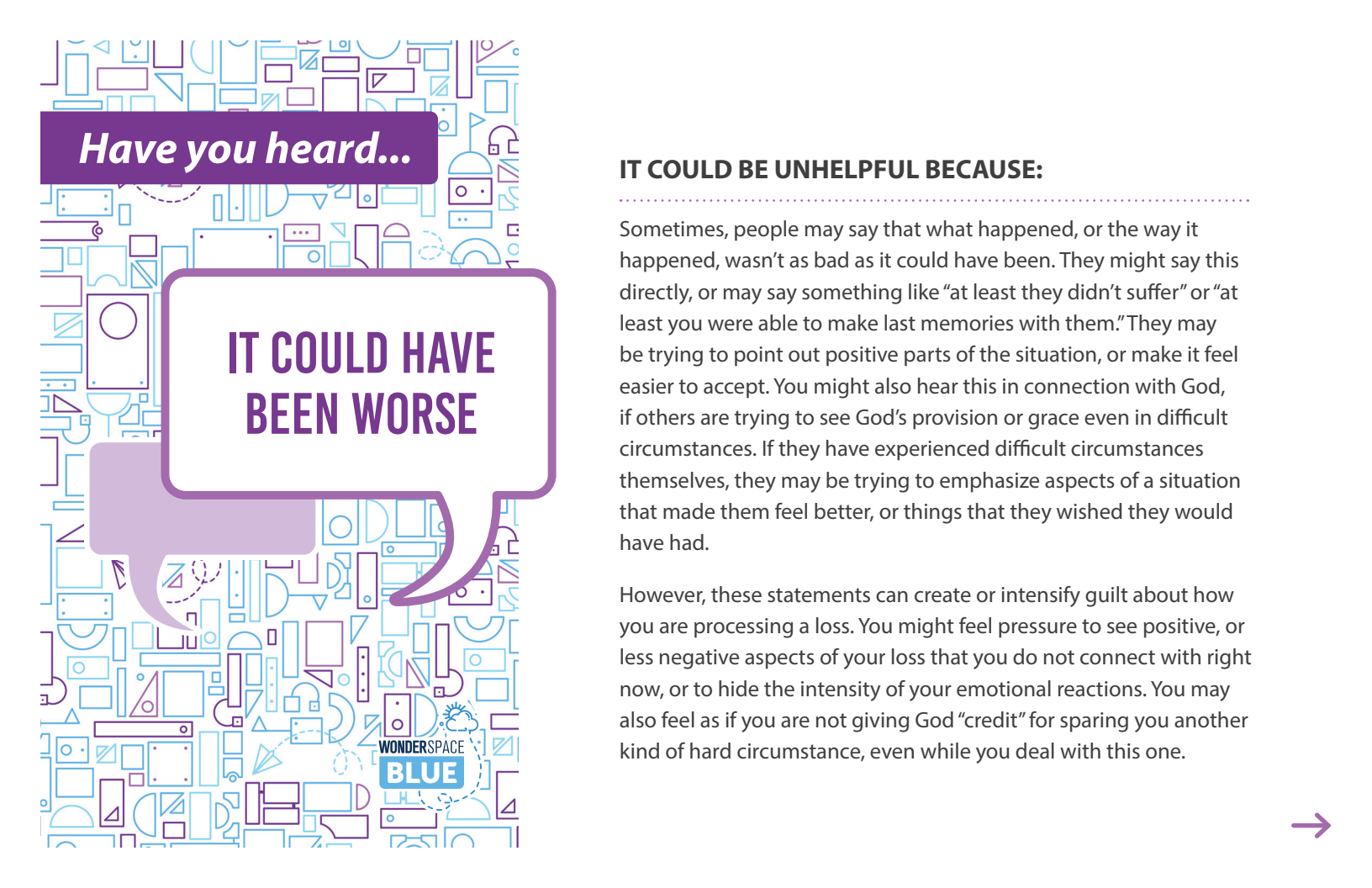




Have you heard...

**IT COULD HAVE
BEEN WORSE**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

Sometimes, people may say that what happened, or the way it happened, wasn't as bad as it could have been. They might say this directly, or may say something like "at least they didn't suffer" or "at least you were able to make last memories with them." They may be trying to point out positive parts of the situation, or make it feel easier to accept. You might also hear this in connection with God, if others are trying to see God's provision or grace even in difficult circumstances. If they have experienced difficult circumstances themselves, they may be trying to emphasize aspects of a situation that made them feel better, or things that they wished they would have had.

However, these statements can create or intensify guilt about how you are processing a loss. You might feel pressure to see positive, or less negative aspects of your loss that you do not connect with right now, or to hide the intensity of your emotional reactions. You may also feel as if you are not giving God "credit" for sparing you another kind of hard circumstance, even while you deal with this one.





Loss, and the way that it happens, does not have a ranking system that makes some circumstances better or worse than others. No matter how your person died, you experienced a unique event that was difficult to cope with. Sudden loss may have different challenges than an extended process of death, and loss of a person who was close to you feels different than someone with whom you had a strained relationship. All of these challenges are worthy of time, attention, and room for processing the emotions connected with them.

You may also have some strong feelings about what made your situation particularly difficult or easier to cope with for you. Your personal history, personality, support system and other parts of your life matter as you think about the harder and easier parts of coping with your grief. Some losses may be harder to cope with than others, but you are the only one capable of judging how difficult this loss is to process right now.

God tells us throughout the Bible that He is able to bring redemption to painful things, such as when Joseph told his brothers that “you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). However, scripture does not suggest that we re-label the original event as “not that bad,” because of God’s redemptive actions. It is possible to see God’s work without invalidating the pain we are in.

You could say:

- **“It’s hard to cope with death, no matter how it happened.”** Sometimes people think that the way a person died makes it easier or harder to grieve. It’s okay to talk about the things that are hard for you, as well as things you might be glad didn’t happen or are over now. What has been the toughest part of our person’s death for you so far? Is there anything that has helped, or anyone who has done something good?”
- **“God knows and cares about how we’re feeling.”** God didn’t create death as part of the original plan for the world. It’s okay to tell God and other people that what we’re going through is hard, and that we wish it wasn’t happening. Sometimes, God makes something good happen by using something really hard, and we can be glad about that. It’s still okay to be angry, sad, or scared and see God working at the same time.”