

Quit Avoiding Talking About Your Pain

There's this standard.

This nice wall, politely decorated, a wall, a rule that says we don't talk about things that are hard, things that hurt. It's uncomfortable and, quite frankly, not polite dinner talk.

We leave people alone in their pain, so we aren't confronted with it. But it also secludes us in our pain, because we don't want to be that one who says the uncomfortable thing. I think God has called me to talk about these hard things. Not liberal, "get in your face and shove what I think down your throat" kind of things, but those hurts we ignore, those sadnesses that we can't seem to put into words. There's a healing in talking about it, in crying over it, in mourning losses, and in screaming in pain and anger. We shouldn't be a people who isolate ourselves or others in pain. We should be those who listen, and cry with them, who are just as angry at injustice. Let us be a people who let others heal. God is helping me not to push others away in my pain, and to welcome others' pain.

Being a friend when someone is hurting is so important, but it can also be scary. What do you say? What do you do?

When listening about another's hurts, don't discredit their pain. Is it the worst they've ever been through? Maybe not. Will there be worse pain in the future? Probably so. But do you remember the headache of yesterday, when you stub your toe today? No.

The pain that they are experiencing now is the most real and painful thing they feel right now. So as a friend don't say, "At least ... " or "It could be worse" or "Others are going

through much worse.” Validate their pain as real and just that, painful. Allow them to mourn, allow them to cry, allow them to be angry, allow them to heal. And most of all, allow them time.

Sometimes pain and hurt is from loss. Loss is permanent. Other things or people cannot replace who you have lost. If you have a friend who has experienced loss, don't say, “At least you still have ... ” or “At least you had them this long” or “At least you can get pregnant.” These are not kind responses, and they don't allow the person to mourn the loss they have experienced. Validate the pain as very real. The loss as real, no matter how long ago they experienced loss. Loss is loss, and it is permanent. New life comes, but loss doesn't go away. They can heal if they are allowed to mourn.

Something really important is that you may not understand another's pain. You may be able to sympathize or even empathize, but not necessarily understand because they are different. They process different, their journey is different and how they go through hurt and healing will look different. And that is OK!

Time doesn't heal all wounds. God does! But time is very crucial for the healing process. God is a patient Father who does not become impatient or frustrated when we take time to heal. Even the body takes time to heal. You must not rush healing, if you want complete and total restoration. Be patient.

Don't forget people in their loss. You know the saying “out of sight, out of mind.” Well, too many times that is how we treat people who have experienced loss. We surround them with love and support in the moments immediately following their loss, but as time goes on, so does our lives.

Just because sadness no longer overwhelms us doesn't mean that they still don't struggle to catch their breath from the pain

of loss. It doesn't mean that they still don't wake up and wonder how the world can keep spinning and life go on without their loved one. Don't forget them. Check on them. Reach out to them. Love them in their pain and their ongoing loss. It washes over them afresh every day, renewed with every faint reminder of their loved one.

Time will help, but don't leave them lonely in that time. We are called to pray, encourage and restore! Let's listen to others and love them well through their pain! {eoa}

*Adapted from Next Gen Worship blog. **Tiffany Velez** is a wife, mother and a powerful worship leader who loves learning and growing. She is fiercely loyal and a fighter for what is right. She has a great sense of humor and loves the joy of life!*