

## The After Loss Credo

I need to talk about my loss.  
I may often need to tell you what happened -  
or to ask you why it happened.  
Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself  
face the reality of the death of my loved one.

I need to know that you care about me.  
I need to feel your touch, your hugs.  
I need you just to be "with" me.  
(And I need to be with you.)  
I need to know you believe in me and in my  
ability to get through my grief in my own way.  
(And in my own time.)

Please don't judge me now -  
or think that I'm behaving strangely.  
Remember I'm grieving.  
I may even be in shock.  
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.  
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.  
I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before.

Don't worry if you think I'm getting better  
and then suddenly I seem to slip backward.  
Grief makes me behave this way at times.  
And please don't tell me you "know how I feel,"  
or that it's time for me to get on with my life.  
(I am probably already saying this to myself.)  
What I need now is time to grieve and to recover.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend.  
Thank you for your patience.  
Thank you for caring.  
Thank you for helping, for understanding.  
Thank you for praying for me.  
And remember, in the days or years ahead,  
when you may have a loss - when you need me  
as I have needed you - I will understand.  
And then I will come and be with you.

--Barbara Hills LesStrang