

Writing a Comforting Condolence Letter

When someone you care about passes away, finding the right words to express your feelings isn't easy. Yet writing a condolence letter may be an important step toward healing. It can be an inspiring way to offer support to someone grieving.

Those grieving the loss of a loved one may receive many sympathy cards. A personally written condolence letter is a unique gift that will be cherished. It's a tribute to the deceased and a comfort to the bereaved.

You may find the following tips helpful when writing a condolence letter to a grieving friend or loved one.

Acknowledge the loss

Begin simply by expressing your reason for writing. For example, "I'm writing to extend my deepest sympathy to you and your family."

Use sensitivity and respect

Use compassionate, gentle references when describing the loss. If the deceased had been ill, it's okay to say, "I'm consoled that William is no longer suffering."

Personalize it

Keep your letter personal by using the deceased's name. Use titles like, "Mrs. or Mr." if you didn't know the deceased well. For example, "Please accept my condolences regarding Mrs. Garcia's recent death."

Express your feelings

Say how the deceased's passing affected you. For example, "I was saddened to learn about the loss of your mother."

Say something nice

Kindly remembering the deceased's unique qualities or personality will comfort their family. Staying positive or neutral is best. For example, "I appreciated your mother's laughter and sense of humor," or "Your sister had such a lovely garden. I admired her talent."

If you didn't know the deceased, it's fine to write that you would have liked to know them better or others said good things about them. For example, "I would have liked to have known your father. I've heard what a caring person he was," or "I'm sure he was a special person."

Include favorite memories

Mentioning fond memories may help a grieving loved one remember better times. For example, "I remember your mother's delicious dinners," or "I'll always remember the fun we had going to baseball games with your brother."

Offer encouragement and support

Saying words like, "I know how much your dad meant to you," or "Your mother cherished you," are comforting expressions of support.

If you can, extend a specific offer of help. For example, instead of writing, "Let me know if I can help," try "I know Alice drove you to church. May I take you on Sunday morning?"

Finish positively

End your letter with an uplifting thought, hope or wish. For example, "You are in my daily thoughts," or "Wishing you peace and comfort."

A letter of condolence need not be lengthy to express support or compassion. A personally written note is a meaningful way to honor the deceased and a treasured source of healing and comfort to the bereaved.