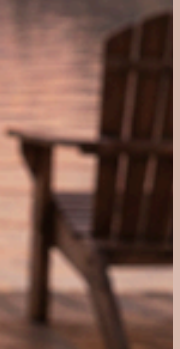


— *Part Four* —

Navigating Young Loss



*Carrying Love Forward
and Getting Support*



KONTINA VANESSA CLARK

*"Blessed are
those who
mourn, for
they shall be
comforted."*

MATTHEW 5:4
(NIV)

How We Keep Them With Us Without Getting Stuck

*Honoring Their Memory While
Still Moving Forward*



SAME LOVE.
DIFFERENT DAYS.
A FULLER TOMORROW.

Kontina Vanessa Clark ♥

SECTION ELEVEN

How We Keep Them With Us
Without Getting Stuck

Honoring Their Memory While Still Moving Forward.

Remembering Is Not
the Same as Being Stuck

After someone dies, people sometimes feel pressure to stop saying their name, put away the photographs, or avoid anything that brings the grief close again. But remembering is not the same as refusing to move forward. Love does not disappear because someone is no longer physically present. Saying their name, telling their stories, remembering their birthday, cooking a favorite meal, or keeping a photograph nearby can be healthy ways of acknowledging that the relationship mattered.

Love Can Continue
in a New Form.

The relationship changes after death, but the bond can continue through memory, values, traditions, stories, and the ways that person shaped you. You may repeat something they used to say. You may teach your children a tradition they taught you. You may make a decision and think, 'They would be proud of this.' These moments do not mean you are living in the past. They can be evidence that love has found a new way to remain part of your present.

*You do not have to erase their presence
from your life in order to keep living yours.*

SECTION ELEVEN

How We Keep Them With Us Without Getting Stuck

Honoring Their Memory While Still Moving Forward.

Healthy Ways to Keep Them With You



1. Say Their Name

Let their name stay part of the family conversation.

2. Tell the Stories

Share the funny, ordinary, and meaningful moments that made them who they were.

3. Keep What Brings Peace

A photo, recipe, piece of jewelry, letter, or tradition can become a gentle point of connection.

4. Create a Ritual

Light a candle, visit a meaningful place, cook a favorite meal, or mark a birthday in a way that feels right.

5. Let Their Life Influence Yours

Carry forward the kindness, faith, humor, values, or lessons they gave you.

Let Memory Become Connection, Not Obligation



Not every tradition has to stay exactly the same. Not every belonging has to be kept. Not every anniversary has to be marked in the same way forever. Sometimes families feel guilty changing a ritual because they fear it means the person is being forgotten. But love is not measured by how many objects you preserve or how perfectly you repeat the past. Choose what feels life-giving. Keep what helps you feel connected. Release what has become heavy. You are allowed to let remembrance change as you change.

Create New Ways to Carry the Love



You might plant something, make a recipe, support a cause they cared about, wear a piece of jewelry, create an annual family tradition, or simply keep telling the stories that make everyone laugh. The goal is not to freeze life where it was. The goal is to let love keep participating in the life that is still unfolding.



*Memory should feel like connection—not a command
to keep every object, repeat every tradition, or stay
exactly where grief first found you.*



SECTION ELEVEN

How We Keep Them With Us
Without Getting Stuck

Honoring Their Memory While Still Moving Forward.

When Remembering Starts
to Keep You From Living

Sometimes remembrance begins to feel less like connection and more like fear. You may avoid new experiences because enjoying them feels disloyal. You may feel unable to change anything because change feels like losing them again. You may believe moving forward means leaving them behind. Those feelings deserve compassion. They can also be a sign that grief needs more space, more support, or a gentler way of being carried.

Make Room for the Life
Still in Front of You

You can keep the photographs and make new ones. You can honor old traditions and create new ones. You can speak their name and still introduce yourself to a future they will not physically be part of. The person you love does not have to become the reason your life stops. Their love can become part of the reason you live more intentionally. You are not choosing between memory and movement. You are learning how to carry both.

A TRUTH TO CARRY

*Keeping them with you does not require staying where
grief first found you. Love can remain while life continues.
You are allowed to carry their memory—
and still keep becoming.*

SECTION ELEVEN

Sacred Pause

REFLECT | RELEASE | REMEMBER | REFOCUS

*"In peace
I will both
lie down
and sleep, for
You alone,
O Lord, make
me dwell
in safety."*

PSALM 4:8
(NIV)



Take a moment to pause. Grief doesn't follow a timeline, and healing isn't linear. This is your space to be real with God, with yourself, and with what you're carrying. Use these prompts to reflect on what this section has stirred in you, what you want to remember, and what you want to take with you.

REFLECT

What truth from this section spoke to me the most, and why?

RELEASE

What do I need to release so I can keep moving forward in a healthy way?

REMEMBER

How do I want to remember and honor my loved one without getting stuck in the pain?

REFOCUS

What is one intentional step I can take to live fully while still carrying their love with me?

*Grief changed my story,
but it didn't end it. ♥*

Kontina Vanessa Clark ♥

SECTION TWELVE

What to Say When Someone in the Family Is Struggling



*How to show up with compassion
when someone you love is having a hard time.*

Kontina Vanessa Clark ♥

SECTION TWELVE

What to Say When Someone in the Family Is Struggling

How to show up with compassion when someone you love is having a hard time.



You Do Not Need the Perfect Words

When someone in the family is struggling, it can be hard to know what to say. You may worry about saying the wrong thing, sounding awkward, or not being enough. But the goal is not to fix their pain with a perfect sentence. The goal is simply to help them feel less alone.

People do not need you to have all the answers. They need to know you care, that you see their hurt, and that they can be honest with you. Your kindness, patience, and steady presence often mean far more than the right words.

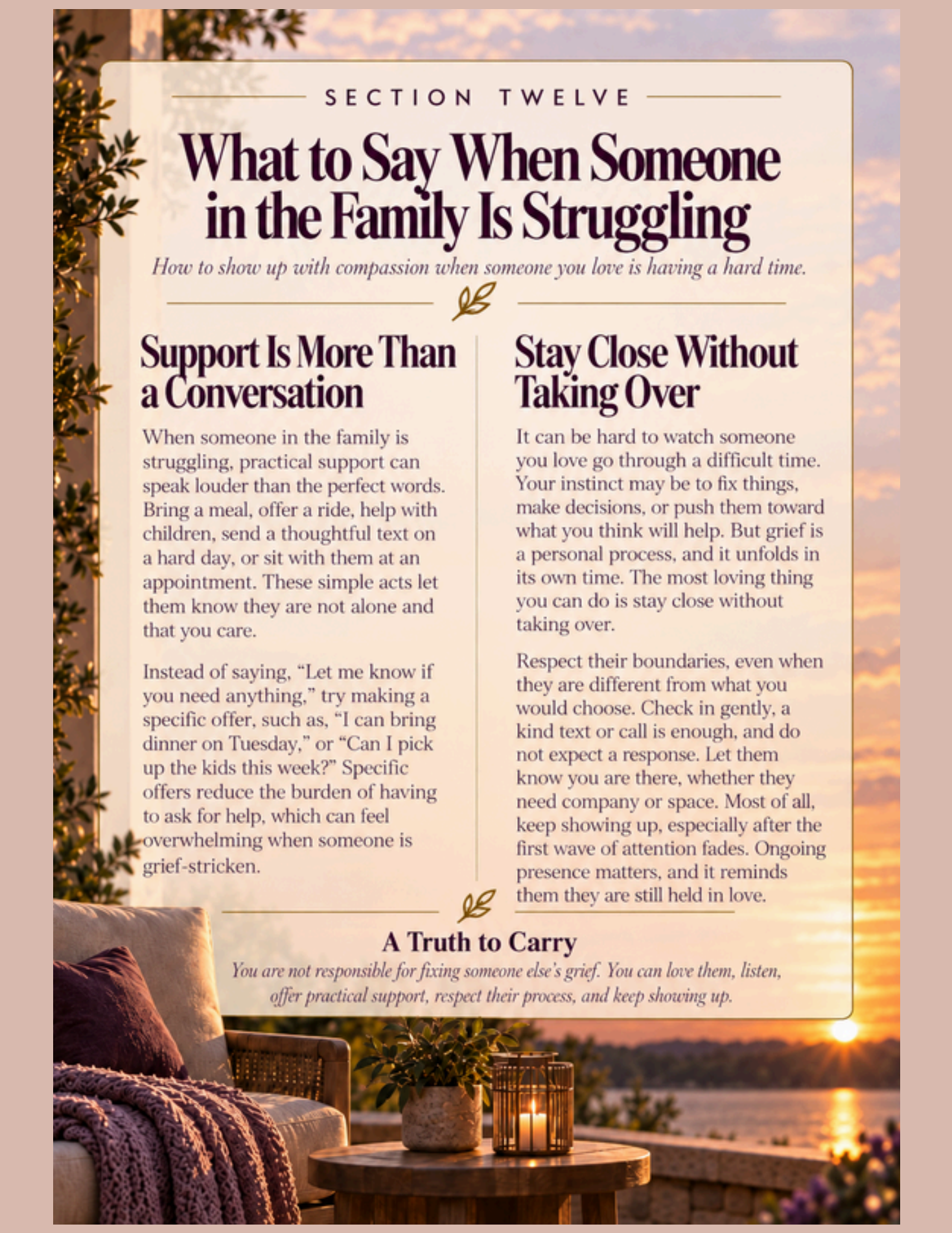
Start With Presence, Not Advice

Most people need a safe place to land, not a list of quick solutions. Before offering advice, take time to ask what they need in this moment. You might say, “Do you want me to just listen, pray with you, help you think through it, or would you just like some quiet company?”

Simple, supportive statements can make a big difference. Try saying, “I’m here.” “I’m listening.” or “You do not have to pretend with me.” These words communicate safety, acceptance, and love. They remind your loved one that they are not alone, and that you are willing to walk with them, whatever they are facing.



*“Sometimes the most comforting words are simply:
I’m here. I’m listening. You do not have to carry this alone.”*



SECTION TWELVE

What to Say When Someone in the Family Is Struggling

How to show up with compassion when someone you love is having a hard time.



Support Is More Than a Conversation

When someone in the family is struggling, practical support can speak louder than the perfect words. Bring a meal, offer a ride, help with children, send a thoughtful text on a hard day, or sit with them at an appointment. These simple acts let them know they are not alone and that you care.

Instead of saying, "Let me know if you need anything," try making a specific offer, such as, "I can bring dinner on Tuesday," or "Can I pick up the kids this week?" Specific offers reduce the burden of having to ask for help, which can feel overwhelming when someone is grief-stricken.



Stay Close Without Taking Over

It can be hard to watch someone you love go through a difficult time. Your instinct may be to fix things, make decisions, or push them toward what you think will help. But grief is a personal process, and it unfolds in its own time. The most loving thing you can do is stay close without taking over.

Respect their boundaries, even when they are different from what you would choose. Check in gently, a kind text or call is enough, and do not expect a response. Let them know you are there, whether they need company or space. Most of all, keep showing up, especially after the first wave of attention fades. Ongoing presence matters, and it reminds them they are still held in love.

A Truth to Carry

You are not responsible for fixing someone else's grief. You can love them, listen, offer practical support, respect their process, and keep showing up.

What to Say When Someone in the Family Is Struggling

How to show up with compassion when someone you love is having a hard time.



What You Can Say

The right words cannot take away someone's pain, but they can help them feel seen, safe, and not alone. You do not need to have all the answers. You simply need to be present, kind, and willing to listen. A few honest, caring words can remind your loved one that they matter and that they are not facing this alone.

Here are some supportive phrases you can try:

- "I'm here for you."
- "You don't have to be okay with me."
- "That sounds really hard. I'm sorry you're carrying this."
- "Would you like to talk, or would you rather have company without talking?"
- "What would make today a little easier?"
- "I may not understand exactly how you feel, but I care about what you're going through."

What Can Hurt Even When You Mean Well

Even with the best intentions, some phrases can unintentionally minimize someone's pain. They may suggest that their feelings are not valid, that they should be further along, or that there is a simple explanation for something that is deeply complex.

Here are some common examples that can be hurtful, even when they are said with care:

- "At least ..."
- "Everything happens for a reason."
- "You need to be strong."
- "You should be doing better by now."
- "I know exactly how you feel."

These kinds of phrases can make someone feel misunderstood, pressured, or like their pain is being dismissed. Instead of offering explanations, corrections, or comparisons, choose curiosity and compassion. Ask, listen, and let their experience be what it is. Your presence is far more powerful than the perfect thing to say.



"Compassion does not require an explanation. It requires room."





*"A quiet
heart hears
God more
clearly."*

SECTION TWELVE

Sacred Pause

REFLECT • BREATHE • REALIGN

Before you move forward, take a moment to pause. This is your space to reflect on what you've read, process your thoughts, and invite God to give you wisdom, compassion, and the right words for the people you love.

What is one key truth from this section that spoke to you?

Who in your family might need your support, encouragement, or a different kind of response right now?

How can you show up with more compassion and less judgment?

What is one thing you can pray about and release to God today regarding a loved one's struggle?

*"Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do
is be present, pray consistently, and love without conditions."*



Kourtina Vanessa Clark ♥

HEALING DEEPLY. THINKING BIBLICALLY. LIVING COURAGEOUSLY.

SECTION THIRTEEN

When Grief Needs More Support



KNOWING WHEN TO REACH
FOR ADDITIONAL HELP
AND WHERE TO FIND IT



Kourtina Vanessa Clark ♥

HEALING DEEPLY. THINKING BIBLICALLY. LIVING COURAGEOUSLY.

SECTION THIRTEEN



When Grief Needs More Support

Recognizing when grief may need more care.



When Grief Starts Interfering With Daily Life

Grief can affect many parts of daily life. It may change your sleep, appetite, concentration, energy, motivation, and relationships. You might find it harder to focus, keep up with responsibilities, or engage in the activities that once felt meaningful.

These changes are a natural part of grief and do not automatically mean something is wrong. Grief can be disruptive, especially after a significant loss, and everyone's experience looks different.

However, when the pain stays intense or everyday life becomes hard to manage, additional support may help. You do not have to wait until you are completely overwhelmed. Reaching for help early can provide a safer place to process what you are carrying and give you support as you move through your grief.

Signs It May Be Time to Reach Out

While everyone's grief is unique, these signs may indicate that additional support could be helpful:

- Feeling overwhelming sadness, numbness, anger, or hopelessness that doesn't seem to ease.
- Difficulty functioning at work, school, home, or with daily responsibilities.
- Major changes in sleep, appetite, or energy.
- Pulling away from people or activities you usually value.
- Feeling stuck in guilt, panic, despair, or constant distress.
- Using alcohol, drugs, or other unhealthy coping strategies to numb or escape difficult feelings.
- Thoughts of self-harm or not wanting to be here.



"Needing more support does not mean you are grieving incorrectly. It means your grief deserves care."

SECTION THIRTEEN



When Grief Needs More Support

Finding the kind of support that fits what you need.



Support Can Come From More Than One Place

There is no single right kind of grief support. What helps one person may not be what helps another.

A licensed therapist or grief counselor can help you process emotions and build coping tools.

A support group can connect you with people who understand the experience of loss.

A primary care provider can help when grief is affecting sleep, appetite, anxiety, or physical health.

A trusted pastor or spiritual leader can provide prayer, spiritual care, and a safe place to wrestle with questions of faith.

Family and friends can offer companionship, practical help, and consistent presence.

Faith and Professional Help Can Coexist

Seeking counseling does not mean you have stopped trusting God. Prayer and therapy do not have to compete with each other.

Many people find that spiritual support and professional care work well together: one helps them stay connected to faith and meaning, while the other gives them clinical tools to manage grief, anxiety, depression, trauma, or complicated loss.

Receiving help can be one of the ways you steward your mind, body, and spirit with wisdom.



“You can pray, believe, hope—and still sit with a counselor. Support is not a substitute for faith; it can be part of your care.”

SECTION THIRTEEN



When Grief Needs More Support

Knowing when the situation needs immediate attention.



When Help Cannot Wait

If someone is talking about wanting to die, harming themselves, feeling that others would be better off without them, or being unable to stay safe, treat it seriously.

Stay with them if you can do so safely. Remove immediate dangers when possible. Contact crisis support or emergency services rather than trying to manage the situation alone.

In the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. If there is immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency service.

How to Ask for Help

You do not need a polished explanation. You can begin with one honest sentence:

"I'm not doing well and I think I need more support."

"Grief is affecting my daily life and I need help figuring out what to do next."

"I'm having thoughts that scare me and I do not want to be alone with them."

You can ask a trusted person to help you make the call, find a therapist, contact your doctor, or sit with you while you reach out.



A Truth to Carry

You do not have to prove your strength by carrying more than you can safely hold. Asking for help is an act of courage, wisdom, and care.

*"Pause
is not
giving up.
It's giving
yourself
permission
to rest,
process, and
let God
be near."*

SECTION THIRTEEN

Sacred Pause

REFLECT • BREATHE • REALIGN

Grief can be overwhelming, and sometimes the most faithful thing you can do is pause. This is your space to slow down, be honest, and invite God to meet you right where you are.

What did this section stir in your heart?

Where do you need more support right now—emotionally, spiritually, or physically?

What is one step you can take this week to reach out for help?

Who can you trust enough to be real with about what you're going through?

What is one prayer you want to pray over yourself today?

*"He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds."*

PSALM 147:3 (NIV)



Kontina Vanessa Clark ♥

HEALING DEEPLY. THINKING BIBLICALLY. LIVING COURAGEOUSLY.

You Are Not *Alone*

Grief can make you feel like the world stopped, but you're expected to keep going. This guide was created to remind you that healing is possible, support matters, and you don't have to carry your grief alone.

Whether your loss is recent or years ago, this pocket guide offers compassionate insight, practical tools, Scripture, and gentle encouragement to help you navigate the hard days and honor the love that remains.

*You can grieve deeply and still live fully.
There is grace for both.*

HEALING DEEPLY.
THINKING BIBLICALLY.
LIVING COURAGEOUSLY.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kontina Vanessa Clark is a nurse, author, speaker, and founder of The Kovac Collective. Through her writing, teaching, and creative work, she helps women heal deeply, think biblically, and live courageously after life's hardest seasons. She is passionate about turning pain into purpose and creating spaces where healing and hope meet.

Kontina Vanessa Clark ♥

FOUNDER | WRITER | CREATIVE | KINGDOM BUILDER

STAY CONNECTED



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KOVAC

THE KOVAC COLLECTIVE

KINGDOM-ORIENTED VISION AND CREATIVITY

*"There is beauty
on the other side
of grief."*



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HEALING PEOPLE. IMPACTING GENERATIONS.