

Auxiliary Power

We are well into a new year once again, ---its tax time, the weather is not great and people are living through many kinds of grief. Maybe our resolutions for 2009 have been long forgotten. Perhaps the current war has brought to mind the grief families in the military experience. One resolution might be to **reach out to another auxiliary member**, or perhaps a friend that is going through a rough time. Grief is complicated. We have all been through it and each of us responds differently. There is no **one right way to help** a person who is grieving, but there is one **golden rule—listen**. The greatest gift you can give is permission to talk about his or her loved one. “You don’t have to give advice or opinions, you just have to be present and listen,” said Mary Kay Olson, a grief counselor, in the November issue of *Military Officer*.

Often, well-intentioned people don’t know what to say, so they don’t say anything. It is far better to risk saying the wrong thing than not to be there for a friend. These are sure ways that you can help:



- 1) **Share stories.** If you don’t know what to say, sharing a memory of a friend’s loved one is a great start, stories become treasures. Children and grandchildren love to hear stories about a deceased loved one, it makes them seem real. It tells them that his/her life mattered, affected many other people and it goes on and on.
- 2) **Keep your word.** If you say that you will continue to check on them or come by for coffee, keep your word.
- 3) **Remember to laugh.** The old adage “laughter is the best medicine” can apply to grief. Laughter reminds us there still is joy in life, and our loved one brought joy to our lives.
- 4) **Offer specific help.** It may be help with child care or thank-you notes or meals. Try to offer help that is specific to your friend’s needs.
- 5) **Look for red flags.** If that friend can’t sleep or can’t eat or can’t get out of bed for an extended period, gently suggest professional grief counseling.

/ Jackie Peters, VCOC Auxiliary Liaison

Auxiliary Liaison is a position that MOAA asked **each chapter** to establish as a link to the Auxiliary Committee of the MOAA Board. Auxiliary members (survivors of deceased officers) may also hold other offices of MOAA. Most chapters have adopted those same rules for Regular and Auxiliary members, so Auxiliary Members may serve on their boards in other capacities (president, secretary, treasurer, hospitality, personal affairs).

Testimonial. “As an auxiliary, it is doubly important for me to stand up and be counted! Legislators must be constantly reminded of the importance of the benefits of those of us left to star in this new ‘role.’ MOAA’s magazine and web site keep me informed of upcoming legislation, changes in TRICARE for Life and virtually all military activities and interests. MOAA, whether National or my local Chapter, keeps me involved and connected with the military community.” */ Jackie Peters, testimonial, from MOAA Website*



Jackie Peters

Tell Your Story. Surviving spouses are invited to share their story, testimonial and/ or original article. Send with photo to MOAA at auxcomm@moaa.org .