

Opinion / Politics

— EDITORIAL —

Good grief?

Like most people who have hit middle age and beyond, we've been through the loss of friends, family members, pets ... and sorted through the stages of personal grief in search of healthy emotional healing. No easy task, that.

But this week our thoughts have turned more toward how to support someone else in their own time of need.

We know it's natural to want to take the hurt away when someone you love feels such pain, and we worry that we're not able to say or do the right thing at the right time. We worry that attempts to help might come across as just one more thing the bereaved has to deal with. We worry about intruding. We just ... worry. There's no greater feeling of helplessness.

Platitudes such as, "We know how you feel," or "Time will heal" strike us as empty and false, as well.

And certainly there are more healthy ways to grieve than others—but we have to take a step back and realize that each person grieves in different ways, and there's no set timeframe either. Those two things can be hard to recognize when you so much want the bereaved to be happy and healthy. But people are what they are. "Do you feel like talking?" might be a way to express support. "How are you doing today?" "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Maybe it's more important to listen than to try thinking of anything meaningful to say or do anyway.

Helpguide.org offers the following advice to help listen with compassion.

- Accept and acknowledge all feelings. Let the grieving person know that it's okay to cry in front of you, to get angry, or to break down. Don't try to reason with him or her over how he or she should or shouldn't feel. The bereaved should feel free to express his or her feelings without fear of judgment, argument, or criticism.
- Be willing to sit in silence. Don't press if the grieving person doesn't feel like talking. You can offer comfort and support with your silent presence. If you can't think of something to say, just offer eye contact, a squeeze of the hand, or a reassuring hug.
- Let the bereaved talk about how his or

her loved one died. People who are grieving may need to tell the story over and over again, sometimes in minute detail. Be patient. Repeating the story is a way of processing and accepting the death. With each retelling, the pain lessens.

- Offer comfort and reassurance without minimizing the loss. Tell the bereaved that what he or she is feeling is okay. If you've gone through a similar loss, share your own experience if you think it would help. However, don't give unsolicited advice, claim to "know" what the person is feeling, or compare your grief to his or hers.

We accidentally implemented a few of these techniques just by instinct this week. Which is great, considering we probably didn't do so well in other areas.

Support doesn't just end after the funeral, either. Long-term tips from the same site as mentioned above include:

- Continue your support over the long haul. Stay in touch with the grieving person, periodically checking in, dropping by, or sending letters or cards. Once the funeral is over and the other mourners are gone, and the initial shock of the loss has worn off, your support is more valuable than ever.
 - Don't make assumptions based on outward appearances. The bereaved person may look fine on the outside, while inside he or she is suffering. Avoid saying things like "You are so strong" or "You look so well." This puts pressure on the person to keep up appearances and to hide his or her true feelings.
 - The pain of bereavement may never fully heal. Be sensitive to the fact that life may never feel the same. You don't "get over" the death of a loved one. The bereaved person may learn to accept the loss. The pain may lessen in intensity over time, but the sadness may never completely go away.
 - Offer extra support on special days. Certain times and days of the year will be particularly hard for your grieving friend or family member. Holidays, family milestones, birthdays, and anniversaries often reawaken grief. Be sensitive on these occasions. Let the bereaved person know that you're there for whatever he or she needs.
- Meanwhile, an offer to take bring someone lunch, coffee, walk their dog, help choose hospice care or make funeral arrangements, or just give a hug probably never hurt anybody...

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— SPECIAL COLUMN —

So I was thinking ...

Friends ...

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press

Friends. What would we do without them? They support us, make us laugh, and keep us grounded. Friendships come in all shapes and sizes, making them hard to categorize—but I'm gonna try just a few for fun.

Childhood friends: Some friendships go way back. So far back you can both vividly remember things from childhood. Shared memories of adolescent shenanigans are usually the topic of choice for longtime friends—the times you used to sneak out of class, where the coolest bike jumps were, stories from proms, 21st birthdays, bachelor(ette) parties, road trips. They've been there for everything. You've seen and done a lot with them and there isn't much you can't fully disclose to a longtime friend.

Party Friend: We all have at least one of these—the person whose party schedule is a full-time job. They're famous for the 2 a.m. call or text saying "why aren't you here!?" Their reputation for being wild is famous in six counties statewide and has resulted in the inadvertent destruction of thousands of dollars worth of household items and even more in legal fees. These friends are eager to help you with just about anything so long as beer is involved. Though wildly unpredictable at times, party friends are responsible for over half of your funny stories and will go along with any outrageous idea you have. Chances are they'll even say, "Yeah I tried that once." Their advice is illegal in three states and if followed will result in you apologizing to your spouse, boss, your boss's spouse, your neighbors, neighbors dog, various bar owners, and total strangers.

Mr. or Mrs. Perfect: This friend is the antithesis of Party Friend. They have never cussed, drank, smoked, told a lie, or forgotten to floss. They are the epitome of responsibility, and will do any favor you ask of them so long as it doesn't result in any of their active streaks being broken. They remind you to do what's right at all times, keep your jokes clean, and get eight hours of sleep. In ways they really are an inspiration but refraining from everything fun like they have just isn't your cup of tea. Somehow, they consistently beat you at every sport or game of chance which drives you crazy. Just don't let them hear you cuss when you lose.

Perpetually Late Friend: It's hard to believe a person can be late to every event they've ever attended in their life but this person has managed to do it. Their tardiness is always accompanied with a rehearsed 15-minute explanation



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

using every excuse known to man: flat tire, stuck at work, dog ran away, house got struck by a meteor. They've used so many excuses they've even recycled some of their old ones, hoping you may have forgotten. Deep down this friend is a good person and a lot of fun when they finally show up. It's unfortunate your annual birthday gift to them, a watch, hasn't got the point across. Though their watch battery being dead was one of their more believable excuses for being late.

Health Nut Friend: This friend is always there to remind you to be your best, something that really pisses you off sometimes. At various stages over the years this friend has enthusiastically promoted every diet and workout plan constructed in the last 25 years. Their idea of "hanging out" usually involves a brisk 12-mile run or vigorous feat of strength followed by workout related conversation over a salad (sans dressing) and water with a splash of lemon. You once considered ordering a cheeseburger in front of them until they reminded you how many calories it had. This friend means well, and they really do care about your health. You could lose 15 pounds just by hanging out with them one day a week for a month. Just don't make it Taco Tuesday.

The Honest Friend: He reminds you that you've put on weight. You remind him he's bald. She tells you your shirt is ugly. You tell her she's cheap. It's all in good fun. There's a comfort and humor in knowing you and this friend can be brutally honest with each other. These friends are there to make sure your ego doesn't get too big. So while your other friends may cringe at the verbal exchanges between you and Honest Friend, you know that if you need help moving or want to remodel your kitchen in a weekend they'll be the first one there to help. Just be prepared for them to tell you how ugly the flooring is you picked out for the kitchen.

The best part about having such a wide variety of friends is what happens when you all get together. When Party Guy and Mrs. Perfect debate the meaning of life. When Honest Friend tells Health Nut to lighten up and eat a cheeseburger. Everyone has something to offer and the common theme is that you love them no matter what because they're your friend.

Congressional 2016 app contest announced

As Oregon students head back to school, U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) announced an exciting opportunity for students to design an app as part of a nationwide competition.

The 2016 Congressional App Challenge is a chance for tech-savvy students across central, southern, and eastern Oregon to put their creativity to the test and design their own original smartphone or desktop apps.

The winner's app will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol among the best student apps in the country.

A panel of local experts from Oregon, including app developers and com-

puter science professors, will judge each student's work and select the winner and runners-up.

"The Congressional App Challenge is a fantastic opportunity for students to showcase their creativity in science, technology, and math. App development and coding are 21st century skills, and I believe somewhere in Oregon there could be a student with an idea that could become the next Facebook or Uber," said Walden. "One talented winner will have the chance to be recognized on the national stage. I look forward to seeing this year's entries and wish all Oregon's budding coders the best of luck."

In addition to having their apps featured in the U.S. Capitol, \$50,000 in Amazon Web Services credits will be divided among the student winners from around the country to be used for cloud computing services and other resources to advance their coding education.

To enter the challenge, students must submit a video demonstration explaining their app and what they learned, as well as the app's source code. The deadline for entries is November 2, 2016.

For additional details and steps to enter, please visit Walden's website at www.walden.house.gov/appchallenge.

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Thank you, Unity!

To the Editor:

A belated thanks to the people of Unity! On July 9 I was on the last day of a Texas to Oregon trip, but I had a flat tire on US 26 and discovered my lug wrench was the wrong size.

A gentleman from Vale stopped and

gave me and my dog a ride several miles to Unity, where many people helped and gave advice. Another fellow drove us back to my van and gave me the correct size socket. Thanks to all. Sorry I have forgotten your names!

Phil White
Austin, Texas

Letter to the Editor Policy: The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com.

Advertising and Opinion Page Disclaimer: Opinions submitted as Guest

Opinions or Letters to the Editor express the opinions of their authors, and have not been authored by and are not necessarily the opinions of The Baker County Press, any of our staff, management, independent contractors or affiliates. Advertisements placed by political groups, candidates, businesses, etc., are printed as a paid service, which does not constitute an endorsement of or fulfillment obligation by this newspaper for the products or services advertised.

— CONTACT US —

The Baker County Press

PO Box 567
Baker City, Ore. 97814

Open Monday-Thursday for calls
9 AM - 4 PM

Open 24/7 for emails

Phone: 541.519.0572

TheBakerCountyPress.com

Kerry McQuisten, Publisher
Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Wendee Morrissey, Advertising and Sales
Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com

David Conn, Advertising and Sales
David@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Published weekly every Friday.
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only.
Payment in advance.

A division of
Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

Copyright © 2014 -2016

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

President Barack Obama

202.456.1414

202.456.2461 fax

Whitehouse.gov/contact

US Sen. Jeff Merkley

503.326.3386

503.326.2900 fax

Merkley.Senate.gov

US Sen. Ron Wyden

541.962.7691

Wyden.Senate.gov

US Rep. Greg Walden

541.624.2400

541.624.2402 fax

Walden.House.gov

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown

503.378.3111

Governor.Oregon.gov

State Rep. Cliff Bentz

503.986.1460

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

541.490.6528

Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey; Mark Bennett; Tim Kerns

541.523.8200

541.523.8201