

# Grief Notes

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## The Impact of Clichés by George Mclaughlin, Bereavement Coordinator

In our fast-paced world of cellphones, computers, and social media platforms, it's easy to have quick and quaint responses and comments as we converse with each other. We often speak before clearly thinking through what we are about to say. We don't always consider a person's situation and what they are currently dealing with. It happens to us all, as words roll off our tongue, without much thought for their relevance to the current situation.

sound of a printing plate, which prints the same thing over and over. Like the original meaning, we can easily fall into the trap of using these phrases "over and over again." Doing so is "as easy as pie". But before we "throw the baby out with the bath water," we must remember that clichés are still used often in books, poetry, advertisements, television shows and movies. Even Shakespeare in his classic writings often used clichés, such as "All that glitters is not gold", "Melted into thin air" and "Jealousy is the green-eyed monster" to mention a few. So clichés are not always seen in a bad light.

Amid our loss, we can feel abandoned by people because of these or similar statements. We too may have said many of the same things to our own

Some of the most common clichés are:

- "I know how you feel."
- "Time heals all wounds."
- "Everything happens for a reason."
- "They have their angel wings."
- "They're in a better place."
- "Think of what you still have."
- "Every cloud has a silver lining."



The word cliché is a 19th century borrowed word from the French, which refers to a saying or expression that has been so overused that it has become boring and unoriginal. The French word "cliché" was first used to describe the

But how does this relate to those of us who are grieving the loss of a loved one? If you haven't already experienced the pain from clichés on your grief journey, you probably will at some point. Well-meaning relatives, friends, and co-workers who don't know what to say to someone suffering the loss of a loved one, often say nothing at all or fall into the trap of using clichés. They fear saying the wrong thing, but when sensing the need to say something may say the first thing that comes to mind ... a cliché. Clichés suggest that our loss isn't as bad as it feels and leaves us feeling isolated in our grief.

friends or loved ones over the years. It's easy to fall into the cliché trap. In the weeks and months ahead, be prepared for clichés to come your way. Try to be gracious with those who may say the wrong thing when attempting to be a comfort or help. They may "drive you crazy" but usually have "their hearts in the right place"; they just didn't choose their words well. Even poor attempts to bring comfort can be appreciated and will help you cherish those who are able to share meaningful words of love and support or who are just there to provide a listening ear. They are "worth their weight in gold"!