

# Suicide Grief: Just Say It – And Talk Until You’re Blue In The Face

[BY R. JADE MCAULIFFE](#)

*An excerpt from, [“Wake Me from the NIGHTMARE: Hope, Healing, and Empowerment After Suicide Loss”](#)*

## Talk Until You’re Blue in the Face

Initially, it’s good practice to talk about the suicide death itself. Often.

Repeating the story out loud and saying the word suicide will help the experience become more real so you can begin to believe it. I know you might not want to believe it, but telling and retelling your story will help you come to terms with the tragic loss of your loved one.

Although denial is a normal part of the grieving process, you can’t fully make peace with something you refuse to accept. This is a slow and steady process, so give yourself a break. Do the best you can to keep the lines of communication open.

Tell your story to your trusted supports as often as needed, and don’t hold any feelings back. Take care to honor whatever comes up without judgment, as this will help you avoid the pitfalls of guilt (which are also normal but can quickly send you into deep depression if you’re not paying close attention). Your thoughts and feelings, whatever they may be, need to be heard and acknowledged with compassion.

***People might inadvertently try to interrupt you, offer platitudes, or even be surprised by your words or your honesty. Don't let these reactions throw or shut you down.***

Sometimes people feel desperate to rescue or just aren't sure what to say. This usually has more to do with their issues than yours. Give them the benefit of the doubt, thank them, and tell them you only need to be witnessed and heard. Nothing more. They will be relieved, and you won't have to take it personally.

Many will offer sympathy rather than empathy and this can be hard to swallow. Those who haven't been through suicide loss often have a difficult time wrapping their heads around it. The words "I'm so sorry for your loss" sound a lot different than "What a shame," but either one of these statements can make you feel as though you're being brushed off or patted on the head.

I found statements like that latter to be callous and thoughtless and would've gladly settled for silence instead, but I had to keep in mind they were doing the best they could with the resources they had.

You'll probably be sensitive to the words of others now, but if your safe people are lined up and know how you need them to respond to you, they'll be able to do so in more favorable ways. It's your job to tell them what you need from them. Be as open as possible, and you'll get much better results. Remember, silence serves no one: not you and certainly not anyone else.

# Just Say It

Make sure you have the freedom to speak freely with at least one person.

When I say freely, I mean you can say anything without fear of freaking another person out or turning them away. This does not mean you won't be held accountable for your words, it simply means the other person promises to hold you in the highest regard no matter what you tell them.

There might be times you're feeling desperate to end your own pain. It's of utmost importance to express those feelings. This is completely normal after suicide loss, and you need to be free enough to honor the desperate feelings too.

However, you also need to have a plan in place in case you need additional support to get through a particularly rocky time. Again, this is normal, and if someone is genuinely worried about your mental or physical state, you would be wise to come up with a safety plan. Be sure to keep your support numbers accessible so you can find them easily if need be. Include both the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) and the Crisis Text Line (text "hello" to 741741) in case you'd like an additional option.

Often, just speaking about and admitting to our desperate thoughts and intense feelings will release their emotional charge, but please be sure to choose your listeners carefully, and never unload on children.

Sometimes we just need a break from regular responsibilities because of overwhelm and exhaustion. It's okay to ask for help, and people are probably waiting for a chance to be of service to you. Churches are a great resource during times like these, especially if cooking, cleaning, or childcare is needed.

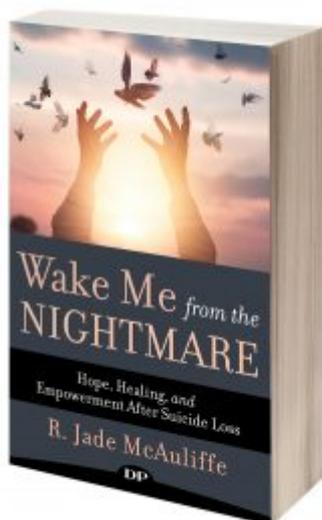
## ***Now is not the time to hold back the truth, no matter what it may be.***

Believe me when I tell you, someone will be able to handle it. I remember sitting in my pastor's office, shortly after my sister died. I was angry, hurt, and felt completely powerless. She sensed my despair. I said, "I just feel like..." I couldn't finish the sentence. I was afraid she'd call 911 and have me involuntarily committed. "Just say it," she said, "It needs to come out." I said the forbidden words, "I just want to go too! I want to be with her!" The world didn't end, she didn't call 911, and she didn't have me committed. She was concerned and made me promise that I'd do whatever necessary to keep myself safe and follow up with my counselor, which I did.

Ironically (or not), just saying those desperate words released me from their spell. This stuck with me, and since then I've made sure to accept and release these thoughts the moment I have them. They're only thoughts. I'm allowed to both have and express them.

*I don't have to act on them, though, and neither do you.*

Photo by [Chau Luong](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Click on this link to purchase a copy of R. Jade McAuliffe's book, ["Wake Me from the NIGHTMARE: Hope, Healing, and Empowerment After Suicide Loss"](#)

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