

DR. ALAN D. WOLFELT'S

Tenets of Companionship the Bereaved

Grief is not an illness; it is the natural and necessary sequel to love. Unlike the medical model of grief care, the companionship model does not seek to treat or cure but rather bear witness, learn, and accompany. Grievers are the experts of their own experience.

Companions offer a safe space, an open heart, affirmation, and hope.

Companionship is about being present to another person's pain; it is not about taking away the pain.

Companionship is about going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being; it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.

Companionship is about honoring the spirit; it is not about focusing on the intellect.

Companionship is about listening with the heart; it is not about analyzing with the head.

Companionship is about bearing witness to the struggles of others; it is not about judging or directing these struggles.

Companionship is about walking alongside; it is not about leading.

Companionship is about discovering the gifts of sacred silence; it is not about filling up every moment with words.

Companionship is about being still; it is not about frantic movement forward.

Companionship is about respecting disorder and confusion; it is not about imposing order and logic.

Companionship is about learning from others; it is not about teaching them.

Companionship is about compassionate curiosity; it is not about expertise.

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