



## Top Five Points

### *For Grieving Teens (with anxious parents)*

By Bruce H. Conley

#### **WHAT'S GOING ON**

One of the hardest things to know is who and what to believe. You probably heard rumors from other friends, before anything “official” came from school. Take note of both and be patient. Give truth a chance to unfold. In addition to talking to friends, talk to your parent(s) and adults you trust. Letting your parents in on what you heard *now*, can make it easier to communicate *later*. Clueless parents complicate things.

#### **KEEP IN TOUCH**

Clueless or not, parents worry. Make it easy on yourself and let them know where you are, who you are with and what’s going on. Parents know you want to be with your friends but they need assurance that you are safe. You may find it hard to believe, but losing you, is your parent’s worst nightmare- especially when that nightmare just came true for another parent. Keeping communication clear and open between you helps both of you.

#### **TALK, TEXT and TEARS**

Generally, it helps to talk to someone by any means possible; and, when no words can describe what you’re feeling, that’s why humans have tears. Let them fall. You’ll feel better and probably discover that you can cope again. The harder thing is to manage “overload” when the streams of talk, text and tears spiral out of control. That’s when you need to take a “time out”; breathe; make yourself do something else for a while. It will help restore your sense of balance.

#### **BOUNDARIES**

When traumatic things turn the world upside down, relationship boundaries get “fuzzy”. You can feel accepted one moment and rejected the next. You may think you are giving a hug and discover you have really stepped on someone’s toes! Everyone means well but sometimes things don’t go well. So be patient. Stop, look and listen before you “leap”. Take a moment to put yourself in the other person’s shoes. When in doubt, just ask. When you are misunderstood, forgive- and let it go. When you misunderstand, apologize and move on.

#### **GETTING INVOLVED**

In a day or two, plans are usually announced for funeral or memorial services. Even when those services are private, many schools and organizations hold gatherings, vigils and tributes to honor the memory of someone. Getting involved or just attending memorial ceremonies and events usually helps everyone do better. Small groups of friends often get involved making ribbons or pins, preparing collages and writing poems or composing music. Social networking sites help memorialize a friend in an ongoing and personal way. Memorial funds and fund raising events help support research, motivate change and raise public awareness that saves lives. However and wherever you choose to get involved, stay positive. Good things *can* grow from your grief.

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