



Teenhelp

menu



Death - If only...



What more could I have done?



The short answer is 'nothing'. But when someone close to you dies suddenly, or even if you expected it, you may feel like you never got the chance to really say goodbye to them. This can leave you feeling like there are still things you would like to say to that person. You may find yourself constantly revisiting memories of the last time you saw that person and the last words you said to them.

Some of these memories will be happy ones, but sometimes they may not be. Maybe you had an argument with the person and said things that you didn't really mean, and you didn't get the

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chance to tell them you are sorry. You may feel guilty.

Don't blame yourself for this, you had no way of knowing you would not get the chance to apologise.

When a death is unexpected and sudden, and even when it is not, it's normal to feel like you want to tell the person one last thing, to say sorry for something, or to say "I love you" for the last time.



What about what I didn't get to say/do?



No two people communicate perfectly all of the time, so it's likely that you will have some regrets about things you did or didn't do, or say to your loved one. That is a common response after a bereavement. Sometimes, those regrets fade with time and an understanding that it's ok to have normal relationships with normal ups and downs.

Other times, the regrets don't fade and they feel like a burden that we carry with us through every day. When that happens, we need to find creative ways of saying what we need to say to the person who has died.

Here are some ways that young people have used to express themselves to the person who has died:

- Tying a message to a balloon and letting it fly away
It can be nice to write something down, like a message or a letter, even just a sentence or a word. It can be something you used to say to the person, or something you wish you had said to them but didn't get a chance to. Some people like to write something and then burn it, or let it float away on water – whatever feels right for you.
- Creating a memory box
This can be a cardboard box you decorate yourself, or a wooden or plastic box you may want to buy specially. You can put anything you want into it – like photos or the person's favourite music, a piece of their clothing, something with their perfume on it, a ticket stub of something you went to together – anything at all!
- Writing a letter/poem/song about them, or for them.
- Planting a tree in their memory
- Talking to them in your mind

It might sound mad, but it can be nice to chat to the person, in your head or out loud, in your room or at their grave or in your favourite place together.

Some websites let you make pages for the person who died, and some, like Winston's Wish ([see Finding help](#)) have cool stuff like starscapes where you can name a star after the person, and attach pics to the planets that orbit it, or little stories, and then you can visit it whenever you want to. You can visit other people's stars too if they're not private – it can be nice to see other people's memories and feelings when you're feeling lonely.