

100 *acts of* LOVE

How to support your employee with cancer.

Video #1. What not to say

NOTE: This is a direct transcription of the video.

Congratulations. I am so glad that you are here and that you downloaded these three videos!

Before you begin, I do want to suggest you go in order of the videos. They actually all kind of work together, so make sure you watch this one first, the second one, and then the third one. The third one feels really tempting because it has all these ideas in it, but those ideas aren't going to work unless you know what not to say and what to say.

Okay, so you're here for the number one thing not to say to anyone with cancer, or really to anyone in crisis. Before I tell you, I'm going to let you know that you've probably already said this, and that's the bad news. The good news is you have the opportunity to do a do-over with whoever you said it to. A do-over is a beautiful, beautiful opportunity. It shows how much you do care, how much you have been thinking about what they're going through, and how much you really want to extend your support to them.

So the number one thing never to say to an employee with cancer, or in any crisis is "If you need anything, let me know." And here's why it's not helpful, "anything" is too big. When my husband had his first bout with cancer, our kids were 3, 5, and 9. I had no idea what we needed. We couldn't figure it out. The one thing we did know is that we needed meals. That was it. I had no idea I could have someone packed lunches, I had no idea to get rides for Art to the cancer treatment center, I have no idea that people could bring him his work, and I had no idea that filling a car with gas was really useful.

I knew none of that and your employee who's dealing with cancer right now probably knows none of that either. So, when you say that your employee thinks, "I don't even know what I need!" This brings us to step number two. They don't know what they need. They have no idea what they need, and you are not the only person who has made that offer to them. So, let's just say that they do figure out what they need. They can't remember who made the offer of "anything" because it's such a common statement that it blends into the background. It's useless.

The third reason it's not a good thing to say is because now you are putting the pressure on your employee. You've put the responsibility on the person

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who needs the support to reach out to you to ask for something that you may not be willing to do as a company or individual and risk rejection. I

don't know about you, but in those circumstances, I was not keen on doing that.

So, the more specific you are about the type of help that you willing to offer, the better off, and the more likely your employee is to accept it. Lastly, let's talk about asking for help. When was the last time you turned to someone and said, "I really need your help on something?" When you add to that the things your employee might need help with, it feels impossible to ask for help. When you have cancer, suddenly getting gas is really hard. Suddenly cooking a meal is really hard, suddenly getting to a meeting on time is really hard. There are so many things or places that they need help with, and it's very hard to ask for help in an area where they were previously able to do it by themselves.

So those are the three reasons why saying "if you need anything, let me know" is the least helpful thing that you can say. That's the bad news. The good news is there is video number two where you can learn what to say! So, go on over there, and I will see you there.