

your grief is real

a close friend, a best friend, a chosen sibling, the one who was more family than blood, is one of the great loves of a life. but the world has a quiet hierarchy of grief, and friendship sits low on it. you may not be offered leave. people may not think to check on you. and so this needs saying plainly: your grief is real. the love was real, and so is the loss.

you do not need anyone's permission, or a form, to mourn a great love. this one is yours.

WHAT MAKES THIS GRIEF ITS OWN SHAPE

the world recognises spouses, parents, children, and often overlooks the friend, even when the friend was the closest person of all.

you may lose not only them but the daily texture they held, the one you called first, the one who knew the whole story.

there may be no obvious place for you at the front of the mourning, even when your loss is among the deepest in the room.

the grief can arrive sideways, in the joke you go to text, the plan you half-make, the news you reach to share.

WHAT IS TRUE, WHATEVER THE WORLD COUNTS

your loss does not need ranking. grief is measured by love, not by labels. a friendship can be the primary bond of a life, and its loss the primary grief.

you are allowed to fall apart. even without leave, without casseroles, without the world pausing, you are allowed to be levelled by this.

say it was family. if they were chosen family, you are allowed to name them that, fully and out loud. no one gets to shrink that bond for you.

let every feeling have room. love and loneliness, anger at being overlooked and tenderness for them can share the same hour. none of it is too much.

IF THE DAYS FEEL UNBEARABLE

if you are struggling to carry on, please reach out. you should not have to hold this alone.

SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group): 0800 567 567

Lifeline South Africa: 0861 322 322

a great friendship is a great love.