



ASK
Cosmo

Dear Cosmo,

A friend of mine just died in a motorcycle accident, and I heard a lot of people try to comfort his family by saying that he died doing something he loved. Is that really much comfort? Maybe people are just searching for SOMETHING to say. What would you say? Signed, *At A Loss For Words*

Dear Words For Loss,

Jeez, morbid much? I think that in times of sorrow, people like to say something just to acknowledge the pain, but they're not always very skilled about conveying their

emotions. Sometimes awkward gestures let the speaker feel better but force still more sad reminders onto the mourner. They try to put a happy face on sad things. For example, when someone gets divorced, someone else invariably will say, "You're better off," as if that helps ease the heart-break, or "At least you didn't have kids," as if that were a plus amid the shattering of their family unit.

People may pass on during an enjoyable pursuit—like riding a motorcycle—but they are still dead. For people who have experienced the death of someone close to them, the method of death or the circumstances may determine whether certain phrases are comforting. Would you say that a cancer victim being fed from one tube and peeing into another died doing something they loved? Probably not, but to make it somehow OK, people will still say, "At least they're not suffering anymore." But the family still may be.

A hunter who dies of a heart attack dragging home a prize buck might merit the "doing what he loved" rationale, but not if a hunter were accidentally shot by his nephew. A heroin addict who overdoses, or a jihadist insurgent driving a truck bomb might be described as doing something they

loved....but that's not much comfort.

Would it be appropriate to tell the parents of a swimmer who drowned, or the spouse of a suffocated auto-erotic asphyxiator that their loved one died doing something he or she loved? Probably not much comfort there, either.

This is an area where dogs blow people off the map. It's a pity you humans can't just rest your chin on someone's leg and gaze up lovingly into their eyes, as if to say, "I'm sorry you're feeling blue, but it's OK, because I still think you're great." Wait! You humans can do that. So quit speakin' already, and just communicate! It wouldn't kill you chatterboxes to stop doing something you love once in a while, if for nothing else than to make good eye contact with someone while you listen to them.

Dear Cosmo,

Why are you down on cell phones? You complain about them in nearly every column. Do you hate technology that much, or are you just hopelessly old-fashioned—i.e. OLD? Signed, *Wireless Wiz*

Dear Wizz Without Support,

I love technology. It tastes great, but is sometimes hard to stomach. The phone I chewed up last week was a little chunky. But it'll help me with my education in the

ancient classics—I've been able to pass roamin' numerals!

What bugs me are people who use technology as a form of human performance art: "Check ME out, I'm talkin' on the phone about nothin' as a stroll down the street—and the rest of you are all gonna have to listen to me whether you like it or not."

About one in six people on any sidewalk seems to be engaged in a phone conversation—low on content, but filled with an urgency that simply can't wait. Another interesting statistic would be the percentage of persons on other ends of those conversations who are talking to someone who looks like a totally self-absorbed dork, yammering away as they cluelessly careen their insulating bubble down the sidewalk.

Cell phones keep people instantaneously connected, but they don't necessarily improve the quality of communication, or citizenship, or awareness of one's surroundings, and definitely not one's driving ability. If people planned ahead, they could care of all that drivvel up front and face-to-face, instead of subjecting the rest of us to impromptu brain-fart street theatre. Give us an intermission already! And start paying the original artists royalties for those stupid pirated ring-tones.

Ron Filippelli

Borough Council

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