



How To
Support Your Partner
When They Are In Pain



Coach Marika

Support for YOU when your partner has cancer
www.coachmarika.com



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Pain is a Part of Life

All of us would love to live our lives pain-free! But, unfortunately, we know that is not possible. Physical and emotional pain are part of life, and this is especially true if you have a serious illness. As a part of their journey, your partner will experience physical and emotional pain. Physical pain can be anything from aches, pains, and bloating to nausea and exhaustion. Emotional pain can come in all forms. Your partner is facing the loss of their health, independence, and privacy. They may feel uncomfortable with the constant attention. They are having to confront their own mortality in a very personal and often frightening way. All of these experiences can create emotional pain.

How Your Partner Responds to Pain Can Vary

Your partner's response to physical or emotional pain can vary a lot. Some people become angry and agitated. They might yell, lose their temper, or take it out on those around them. Others may shut down and withdraw. They may become quiet, closed off, or even depressed. All of these are normal and common responses to experiencing pain. Your partner will need time and space to process what they are going through.

Trying to "Fix" Your Partner's Pain

Seeing your partner in pain can be very difficult. You might worry about them, want to comfort them, or try somehow fix their pain.

When my husband was in pain, I felt it was my responsibility to fix it for him. Every time I saw him hurting, I would stress and worry. I would get busy and try to find ways of comforting him. This never worked and usually ended up irritating him more. Instead of being present and calm, I was busy and anxious.

You cannot fix someone else's emotional or physical pain. No matter how hard you try. It's simply not within your control. When you become focused on something outside of your control, like your partner's pain, you miss seeing what you do have control over.



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How to Hold Space for Your Partner

Holding space means letting your partner be fully in their emotion without trying to fix it for them or make them feel better. It means letting them express themselves without fear of judgment or worry about how they are coming across. When you do this, you acknowledge their experience by letting them be where they are. It's like creating a protective bubble around your partner. Within that bubble, they can safely express the thoughts and feelings they are having at the moment.

Sometimes the best way to hold space is to leave the room. Other times it's to just sit and hold their hand. The key piece is to not be in busy, worrying energy and instead be present with love.

Tip: *Always trust your instincts.* If something doesn't seem right, don't hesitate to call the doctor or emergency.

How Holding Space Helps Your Partner

People in pain, either physical or emotional, often want to be seen and have their pain acknowledged. By holding space, you are acknowledging what they are experiencing. You are giving them a safe outlet to experience it without judgment. This is so powerful. More than you may realize at the moment.

How Holding Space Helps You

By holding space for your partner, you become present. It keeps you focused on what you can control (your own emotional state). When you let go of your own judgments and worries, it will allow you to show up calmer and more in control. You become the calming, loving presence in the room. That is powerful.

Prepare Ahead of Time

In order to hold space, you have to identify and let go of your worries, judgments, and fears. This alone can be challenging. The worksheet below will help you work through this process.

Supporting Your Partner

What bothers me most about seeing my partner in pain (either physical pain or emotional pain)?

Tip: This is a super important part! You want to get all your thoughts and worries out *ahead of time!* It will help you to stay present in the moment.

How do I usually feel when they're in pain?

Remember that you can't "fix" their pain because their emotions are not within your control. Knowing that, how would you like to be able to support them?

Some ideas: hold their hand, give them space, just listen...

It can be helpful to repeat a mantra to yourself in order to stay calm. Write a mantra below.

Some ideas: I don't need to fix them, I can just love them. I can hold space for them right now. I just need to show love.



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Tips on How to Hold Space

- **Trust your instincts.** If something doesn't seem right, don't hesitate to act.
- Ask yourself, is there something I can do like call the doctor or get medication? If there is, do that first.
- Resist the urge to comfort or reassure your partner. This may seem useful, but it actually does not allow their pain to be seen, heard, and acknowledged. Often you don't need to say anything, but if you must, try something like: *"This must be hard, I'm here if you need me."*
- Sometimes, the best way to hold space is to leave the room. Not everyone wants a witness to their pain.
- Send loving thoughts from afar. You don't need to "do" anything, just think loving thoughts. If appropriate, hold their hand or rub their back. Often just a loving physical presence is enough.
- Calm your own mind. Don't think about it being unfair or wrong. Pain is part of our human experience. Yes, people who are ill sometimes have a lot of pain. When you feel it's somehow wrong, unjust, or unfair, you will only create more misery for yourself. It just is.
- Ask them how they *want* to be supported. You can do this at the time (if appropriate) or later when the crisis has passed. Just ask, *"How can I support you when you are in pain?"*



If you would like to be the rock you want to be for your partner, without all the worry and stress, then click [here](#) to schedule a free consultation.