

# Suggestions for Helping Your Man Through Recovery

by Cecil Murphey

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- Be honest about your feelings. Don't lie or try to hide how you feel.
- Try to be a reflective listener. That is, pay attention and give consideration to his thoughts and feelings.
- Seek eye contact. Look at him as he talks.
- Do whatever you can to make him feel safe with you.
- Suggest regular times to talk. Everything he needs to say won't all come out in one conversation. He might not know what he wants to say, or he may be unwilling to divulge more. As he speaks and you accept his words, it enables him to probe deeper into his past. As he probes, he heals.
- Accept him as he is. He won't be perfect at the end of his healing journey. Accept his idiosyncrasies or quirks.
- Recognize that healing won't always be in one straight line. After months of progress and increasing intimacy, he may suddenly reject you or create distance. Be patient. Think of it as a time-out for him.
- Realize that you may project your attitude or values on him. Be careful. Your own childhood experiences may affect your attitude.
- When appropriate, remind him that you love him, that you pray for him, and that God has always loved him.
- Keep your expectations for him realistic. Avoid keeping a mental calendar of when he should be healed or how quickly he should be able to move forward.
- Accept the pace of his progress, even if it's not as fast as you'd like. This is *his* painful past, not yours.
- Forego the temptation to say what *you think* he wants to hear. Speak the truth. If the truth might hurt, don't say it when he's still vulnerable.
- Avoid blaming him for the problems in your relationship. He has probably done many things wrong. Accept that it was the best way he knew to cope.
- Live in the present, and encourage him to do so as well. He needs to empty himself of the trauma of his childhood, but that doesn't have to control his thoughts so much that he holds on to resentments and anger of the past.
- Accept that you may not know what's best for him. You may, but what if you don't?

**\*Material is excerpted from *When a Man You Love Was Abused*, pages 255-256.**