

When You're Asked "How Are You?"

*Simple responses for the moments when an ordinary question
feels too big to answer.*

"How are you?" can become one of the hardest questions after a loss. People usually mean well, but the honest answer may be too heavy for the setting, and the polite answer may feel too small.

This guide offers short responses for different situations: public places, work, church, family gatherings, close friends, and the days when you do not want to talk at all. You do not owe everyone the full truth. You are allowed to answer in a way that protects your energy, fits the moment, and leaves room for honesty when you are with someone safe.



When You Need A Simple Public Answer

- "Thank you for asking. I'm taking it one day at a time."
- "I'm hanging in there today."
- "I'm doing the best I can right now."



When You Are at Work

- "Today is a little hard, but I'm here."
- "I appreciate you asking. I'm keeping things simple today."
- "I may not be up for talking about it at work, but thank you for checking in."



When You Are at Church or a Gathering

- "I'm glad to be here, but I may be a little quiet today."
- "Some days are easier than others. Thank you for caring."
- "I appreciate you remembering."



When You Are with Family

- “I don’t really know how to answer that today.”
- “I’m tired, but I’m trying.”
- “I may need some quiet, but I’m glad to be with you.”



When You Are with a Close Friend

- “I’m not okay today, but I don’t need you to fix it.”
- “I could use company more than advice.”
- “I don’t have words for it yet, but I’m glad you asked.”



When You Don't Want to Answer

- “I can’t talk about it right now.”
- “Thank you for asking, but I need a break from grief-talk today.”
- “I’m going to keep that answer private today.”



When You Want to Be Honest

- “Today is heavy.”
- “I miss him more than I know how to explain.”
- “I’m functioning, but I’m not really fine.”



A Gentle Reminder

You get to decide how much of your grief to share, and with whom. A short answer is not dishonest. It may simply be the answer that helps you get through the moment without handing your heart to the whole room.