
A Guide to Social Media Etiquette: After You Lose a Loved One



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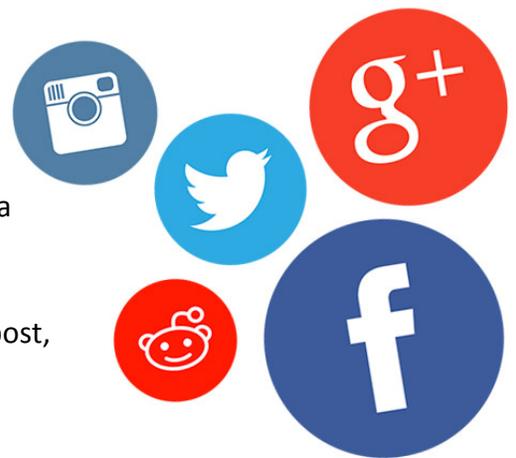
Losing a friend or loved one can be devastating. Since most people don't encounter it often, they don't know the proper etiquette of sharing and handling the situation on social media in general, and on facebook.com in particular. Becoming familiar with the acceptable practices can help you to better communicate with friends and family through Facebook and other social media resources during this difficult time.

About Timing

When a loved one passes, it's important to let friends and family members know about it. The general rule of thumb is to allow the immediate family to make the announcement of the person's passing. If you're not in the immediate family, give them a chance to make a formal announcement by other means and on social media before you do so. Keep in mind that it's a very personal announcement, and one that is best made to close friends and relatives in person, by phone or perhaps in a private email. If you're a family member of the deceased, you can prevent others from publishing on your Facebook page until all loved ones have been told. You can temporarily disable the comments section on your Facebook account until the proper notifications have been made. You can also relay important information that you want only certain people to see by sending it in a private group message.

Publishing Etiquette for Social Sites

Whether to post on Facebook and other social networking sites about a family member's passing is a decision for the next of kin and immediate relatives. It may be a natural step for them, especially if they know that friends, coworkers and others are socially active. If you've been informed by other means, wait until a family member makes a post about it before you do. While some generations are uncomfortable publishing to Facebook, it's still important to respect the family's wishes. Once they have made a post, you can then offer comments of sympathy and respect. A private message or reaching out offline is the appropriate response for a very personal comment.



Publishing Memorial Information

Once the initial announcement of a friend or family member's passing has been made, it's acceptable and helpful to publish the date, time and location of the wake, funeral, memorial service or celebration of life. This should only be done, however, if it's open to the public. The link to an online obituary can also be shared. Avoid discussing how the person died or relating specifics about their passing on social sites. These types of details are private, and are inappropriate for you to make part of a public announcement or discussion.

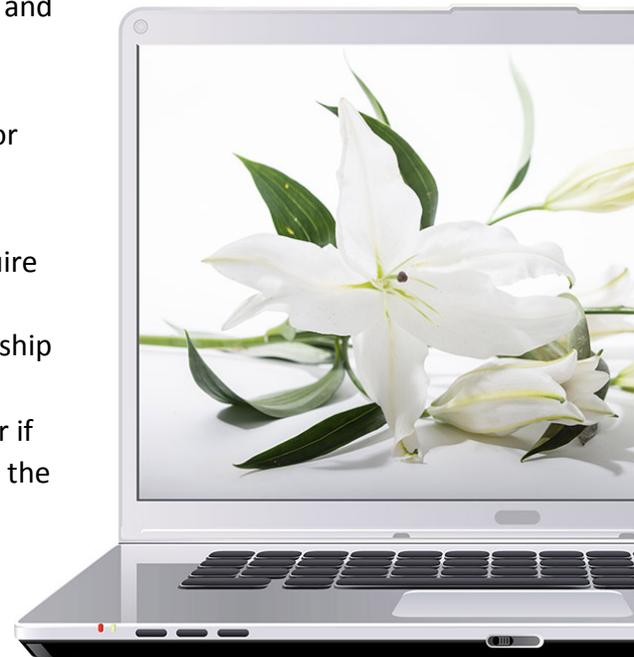
Profile Picture Etiquette

If the profile image on your social account already features a picture of the deceased, you don't need to remove it immediately. This can give the wrong impression. Instead, leave it in place for a time to show respect for your loved one.

Memorial Accounts

After someone passes away, their Facebook account can be converted into a memorial account. This allows people to make comments on the page, but prevents further timeline status updates from the deceased and eliminates them from being suggested as someone to follow. There are several considerations to make before requesting to have a Facebook account memorialized:

- Did the person ever discuss their wishes on how email and social accounts would be handled in the event of their death? Follow their wishes if they're known.
- People grieve in different ways. It can be comforting for others to post on the page, relating fond memories or perhaps celebrating the individual's accomplishments.
- If a memorial account is requested, Facebook will require certain information, including the full name of the deceased person, a link to their timeline, your relationship to them and a link to an obituary or news article.
- If the decision is made to not have a memorial page, or if it has not yet been determined, you may wish to block the person's account from showing up in your timeline.
- The person handling your loved one's estate affairs should typically handle the status of social accounts and electronic profiles.



Conclusion

After you lose a friend, family member or loved one, it's important to respect the wishes of the deceased and the immediate family. It's also helpful to follow proper etiquette and be mindful of the family's privacy during this difficult time. Whether you're a family member or a friend through social media, sharing funeral and obituary notice information or simply paying your respects online is acceptable when it's done within the guidelines of social etiquette.

About ObitsDaily.com

ObitsDaily.com is an online resource for viewing and posting obituaries in the U.S. It's an affordable and contemporary alternative to newspaper announcements and offers the distinct advantage of allowing families the opportunity to disseminate a death notice over various social media resources almost immediately after an obituary has been published. In addition, users can perform a death notice search and find obituaries online commemorating friends and loved ones who have died. ObitsDaily.com also offers resources on topics such as how to write obituaries and what steps to take after a friend or family member has passed.

