Grief is not an illness; it is the natural and necessary sequel to love. Unlike the medical model of grief care, the companioning model does not seek to treat or cure but rather bear witness, learn, and accompany. Grievers are the experts of their own experience. Companions offer a safe space, an open heart, affirmation, and hope.

Companionship is about:
- **Being present to another person’s pain;** it is not about taking away the pain.
- **Listening with the heart;** it is not about analyzing with the head.
- **Discovering the gifts of sacred silence;** it is not about filling up every moment with words.
- **Learning from others;** it is not about teaching them.
- **Going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being;** it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.
- **Bearing witness to the struggles of others;** it is not about judging or directing these struggles.
- **Being still;** it is not about frantic movement forward.
- **Respecting disorder and confusion;** it is not about imposing order and logic.
- **Honoring the spirit;** it is not about focusing on the intellect.
- **Walking alongside;** it is not about leading.
- **Compassionate curiosity;** it is not about expertise.

**About the Author**
Dr. Alan Wolfelt is an author and educator on the topic of healing in grief. He is a member of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Board of Advisors and he serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition. He is also on the faculty at the University of Colorado Medical School’s Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Wolfelt has written many compassionate, best-selling books designed to help people mourn well so they can continue to love and live well, including Healing Your Grieving Heart After A Military Death, co-authored with TAPS.

Visit [taps.org](http://taps.org) and [centerforloss.com](http://centerforloss.com) to learn more about the natural and necessary process of grief and mourning.