

# LET'S SAY GOODBYE to goodbye

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When someone dies, do we really ever say "goodbye?" You hear it all the time: They said their final goodbyes. Say goodbye to Grandpa. People who attended the funeral paid their final respect and said goodbye to a good friend.

What does "goodbye" really mean? Synonyms are farewell and adieu. Do we actually mean, "I will never see you again?" or does it mean, "Remove this person from your life" or perhaps, "So long for now until I see you again?" Think of someone special in your life who's died. Do you have someone in mind? Have you come across something that reminds you of this person: a song, a place, another person, a picture, a video, a movie, something online, a dream, a birthday or day they died? Do these sound like instances that reflect "goodbye?"

For example, if a man dies, how confusing it must be for his child to be told at the funeral, "Say goodbye to Daddy?" Later that day or a month or two or even years later the child may think, "I said goodbye to Daddy, but I still feel him with me. What's wrong with me?" How strange it must feel for a widow to be urged to say her "final goodbye" to her spouse of many years only to find herself months and years later still talking to him. She still says "Good night" to him and still asks him for advice. How odd for a teen-ager to be required to say "Goodbye" to his sister only to continue to search for her whenever he sees a crowd of kids or to live in her shadow as the years go by. How peculiar for a 50-year-old who was urged to say "Goodbye" to his mother only to feel her presence every time he walked into her house.

Goodbye is a term we should consider removing from our grief vocabulary. So, the next time you hear or are urged to say goodbye, you have to decide whether to remain silent and let the well-meaning person have their way or say something that comes from the title of a book by Sandy Fox, "I have no intention of saying goodbye." You might also add, "I know she died, but she is going to continue to be part of me the rest of my life."

She was part of you when she was alive, why stop now?