

## **When a Colleague Is Grieving**

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Patrik Svensson

**Summary.** Grief is a universal human experience, yet workplace culture is often inhospitable to people suffering profound loss. Managers come to work prepared to celebrate births and birthdays, and even to handle illnesses, but when it comes to death, they fall silent and... [more](#)

**Grief is a universal human** experience, yet workplace culture is often inhospitable to people suffering profound loss. “There are many taboos at work,” Laszlo Bock told us, “and death is one of the greatest.” The former Google chief people officer and a cofounder of Humu, a Silicon Valley start-up dedicated to helping executives humanize the workplace, was celebrating Día de los Muertos on the day we spoke. It was November 2, and following a coworker’s suggestion, Humu had adopted the Mexican tradition of honoring the departed. “We have the lace paper flyers in the office, and the candy stalls, and people have put up photos of family members who have passed away,” Bock explained. “We made offerings to their spirits. We’re doing it because we want to make it OK to have conversations about death, to recognize that everybody is human.”

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