

“Help! *I’m a Sequel Maker!*”

A Sequel Maker Playbook



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What is a *Sequel Maker*?

A Sequel Maker is anyone who was a caregiver and subsequently lost their loved one after facing a health crisis.

Even though you probably really, really, really loved the original first movie, it's okay to hope and pray that your sequel will be as good or better than the first. You could be creating *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Maverick*, or *Godfather II* (but hopefully NOT *The Godfather III*). While your sequel may take place in a similar setting, it has a new plot. And although some of the supporting characters are new, you are still the lead role, continuing your story.

You may have tough questions that need answers

- “How do I help my friends or kids through grieving when I’m still grieving myself?”
- “How do I possibly keep one foot in my original story and the other in this new sequel I’m making?”
- “What do I do now that the meal train and well-wishers have moved on with their busy lives?”
- “Should I feel guilty about dating again?”
- “How does dating even work these days?”

Jack's is here for Sequel Makers

You need a different kind of guidance from Jack's and can benefit from community with other Sequel Makers. At Jack's, our mission is to improve how guys think, feel, and act through every phase of their caregiving journey, including the part of your journey beyond caregiving.

Wisdom for Sequel Makers

from Sequel Makers

“Allow grief to have its way with you. If you feel like crying, cry. If you feel angry, be angry. We need to allow ourselves to experience all our emotions. Controlling them or stuffing them only brings more pain.”

-Anonymous Sequel Maker



Embrace the help that is available to you. There is no way to bury and outrun the grief and pain without it catching up to you, eventually. The beginning is lonely. Resist the urge to fill that with unhealthy coping, but rather, take a year to understand who you are now while you heal.”

-Anonymous Sequel Maker

A letter to send everyone you love who's told you, *"Reach out if I can help."*

Dear Loved Ones,

Here's the deal. I'm a Sequel Maker now, and I need help. There, I said it. And I'm asking you for some of that help. There, I said it again.

I'm learning how to get along without my loved one and am understandably overwhelmed by a million things to do. I don't have the mojo to do them all, so I'm asking you and some others to join me on this new journey of healing.

Here are some ways you can help... This is already getting easier to say... You can decide the best way for you to be a part of my team.

"Sequel Maker Sidekick"

This is the biggest and most challenging role. It essentially means you are willing to do anything at any time within reason. You are MY primary caregiver. Sometimes you'll have to do things that you don't feel equipped to do. Sometimes I might be in the darkest Sh\$%&iness of my life. Down in the bottom of a foxhole. And what I might need in that moment is for you to just climb down into that foxhole with me and hang out for a while. In this role you're there to remind me I'm the alpha dog, who's in my pack, and why I need them. To challenge me to think about who else I'm engaging in this healing journey.

"Check-in Checker"

This is a role many people can play. Simply check in on me weekly or monthly (ask me how often) – and simply ask what I need at that moment. I might need a pep talk, or just to shoot the Sh\$%& with a good friend. Or maybe for you to grab something from the grocery store. Be ready to drop what you're doing and dive right in.

"PR Person"

This role is responsible to get the correct story I want told to the outer perimeter. My peers at work. My long-lost aunt, living on the other coast. If this role isn't played well, I'll constantly be answering the same question. And constantly trying to correct rumors which inevitably happen when people have no information. You might use a blogging tool, a social media tool, or a good old-fashioned text chain.

“El Jefe”

Your job here is to come over (ask me how often) and become the foreman of my neglected to-do (and to-don't)-list. Then become the apprentice to help me get it done. And if there's stuff on that list you don't have the skills or the time to accomplish- find someone who does. You're the one on the scene to triage every to-do list item.

“Social Director”

I recently lost my job as caregiver, and now I have a lot more time and have become too familiar with my couch and Netflix que. I need you to present me with options for activities that I used to enjoy. From there you take the logistical reigns so that all I need to do is show up.

“Red Tape Wrangler”

This is a role for someone that loves digging into a question and answering it. Google is great, but there is more to this role. The questions that I will need answers to are often extremely nuanced and complex. You're the guy who might be willing to go with me to the DMV to transfer titles, be my hype-man for a difficult discussion with a credit card company, or when I have to explain for the 27th time that my loved one has passed away.

“Workout Buddy”

Often one of the first things to go is a caregiver's exercise routine. It's the time when he loses his edge both physically and mentally. In this role you work to establish that routine if I never had one or reestablish it if I did. Ideally these are outdoor activities like hikes or mountain biking. But the gym is cool too. Get and keep me in the habit of getting my blood pumping. In the habit of blowing off steam. In the habit of not feeling alone while I'm doing it.

“Dinner For Two...Or More”

Right now, my freezer is full of hot dish and banana bread and lately I've been doing a lot of cooking for one. You reach out every month and get on my calendar for a meal. Just you and me or invite others that you know I'd love to hang with.

How you can help more Sequel Makers like me

Donate, recommend a friend, or become a member of [Jack's Caregiver Coalition](#). Jack's mission is to improve the way guys think, feel, and act through every phase of their caregiving journey. To donate [click here](#). To become a member [click here](#).

This has been an unbelievably difficult time, but with the help of you and other caring friends, I know that I will get through it. Thank you for being there for me.