

# Grief - How to Deal with It



Grief is experienced whenever you lose something important to you. Grief is so powerful that people sometimes look for ways to go around it rather than experience it. This will not work. The best thing you can do for yourself is to work through grief and express your feelings. The following are specific ways to help yourself work through grief.

## BASIC HEALTH CONCERNS

- Try to eat regular, nourishing meals. If it is too difficult to eat three regular meals, try 4 or 5 small ones. Avoid chips and candy.
- Rest is important. Try to develop regular bedtime routines. If you are having a hard time getting to sleep, try a glass of warm milk or some soft easy listening music to soothe your thoughts.
- Continue your exercise program and develop a manageable routine.
- Meditation, perhaps in the form of prayer or yoga, can help you get the rest you need.
- Make sure your family doctor knows what has happened so he or she can help monitor you health.

## OUTSIDE SUPPORT

- Look for a support group, lecture or seminar that pertains to your situation.
- Continue attending church services and stay in contact with this “family,” that has been a source of support to you.
- Let your friends and other family members know what your emotional or physical needs are. They want to help. Tell them how they can.

## FEELINGS

- Read books or articles about the process of grief so you can identify what you are feeling and have some ideas on how to help yourself.
- Allow your feelings to be expressed appropriately.
- Crying is good. You feel lighter after you have had a good cry.

- Find friends or family members to share your feelings with.
- Be careful not to use alcohol, drugs, or tranquilizers. These will only mask the pain and could lead to problems.
- Keeping a journal is a good way to identify feelings and also to see progress as you heal.
- Holidays and anniversaries need special planning. They are impossible to ignore. Look for a workshop on dealing with the holidays and make plans with your family and friends.

## BE KIND TO YOURSELF

- If you desire some alone time, take it as often as you need to.
- Give yourself rewards along the way as something to look forward to.
- A short trip can be a good break from grief, but be aware that upon your return, the pain of grief will be waiting for you. However, you will have had a rest and the knowledge that you can enjoy some things in life again.
- Look for some new interests, perhaps a new hobby or resuming an old one.
- Carry a special letter, poem, or quote with you to read when the going gets tough.
- Try to enjoy the good days and don't feel guilty for doing so.
- Reach out to help someone else.
- Learn to have patience with yourself. Remember, grief takes time.

## HELP FOR YOUR MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Good communication is necessary. People cannot read your mind. They may not know that this particular day is difficult or they may not know how to help you.
- Talk about what is helpful to you and what is not helpful to you.
- Be sensitive to the needs of your partner. Grief is different for each person.
- By reviewing past losses together, you can understand how your partner may react to the recent one.
- Avoid competition in who is hurting most. Each person will have difficult issues to cope with. Grief is hard for everybody.
- Consult each other regarding birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries. It is a mistake to hope the holiday will slip by unnoticed. Make plans and discuss them.

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