

Facing Grief

There is no simple formula for getting through a loss. Each individual copes and processes loss differently. Loss can create a measure of loneliness for some people. Accepting loneliness is not a natural response to loss, although loneliness is a completely normal response in grieving. It is important NOT allow yourself to slip or sink into an atmosphere of isolation.

As you move through the process of grief, don't forget the following thoughts:

Choose good company. Look for friends, old and new, who know how grief feels and who can let you be "alone but not alone" when you just need company and who won't place any further burdens or expectations on you.

Be KIND to yourself. Try not to judge yourself for not "doing better" or "keeping it together." It will get easier over time to feel like your normal self.

Get LOTS of rest. Physical and emotional exhaustion is common. Take this time to rejuvenate, allow your mind and body the rest it deserves.

Embrace your emotions. Feelings come whether we like it or not. Allow your feelings to move through like waves in the ocean or clouds in the sky. It is neither weak nor abnormal to feel these waves/emotions. Don't hesitate to seek professional help when your feelings become unmanageable.

Set a sleep schedule. Make it your goal to go to bed wake at the same scheduled time each day. Give yourself plenty of time to rest (6-8 hours), but be on guard for sleeping too much. Too much sleep is simply avoiding the necessary work of grieving and healing

Move your body. That's the easy way of saying, get some exercise, allowing your circulatory system to assist you in your healing process. Get up and walk or move around, preferably outside, at least a little each day.

Talk to your doctor or therapist. Tell your primary care doctor/therapist you are grieving so he or she can help you keep an on eye on healthy habits.

Keep structure in your day. Personal hygiene and appearance is an important ingredient in feeling well, even if you are not leaving the house. Eat small, regular meals, even if you are not hungry.

Set realistic goals. Set small, reachable, short-term goals so that you don't get overwhelmed.

Make a list of daily reminders. This can help while you are grieving; forgetfulness is common.

Be careful. Do not make any major decisions or changes in home or work immediately after a loss without considering the long range consequences. Consult a trusted friend.

Take care of your inner/unseen needs. Find time, whether through a spiritual practice or a creative outlet, to connect to things that give you inspiration and help you maintain your sense of meaning and purpose. You could keep a journal, write a song, poem or letter to your loved one.

Sincerely, *Carlo Griseta*,
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* Consider visiting www.griefshare.org

(under "find a group" enter zip to discover FREE online or in-person support groups in your area).