



Family and Caregiver Education

BEREAVEMENT

Suggestions for Helping Yourself through Grief

The following is a list of suggestions for helping yourself move through grief. They are a collection of ideas gathered from many who have moved through the process of grief. Not all the suggestions will be helpful to everyone. Grief is unique and individual. Choose the ideas that appeal to you.

1. Go gently. Don't rush. Your body, mind and spirit need energy for repair.
2. Don't take on new responsibilities right away. Don't over-extend yourself. Keep decision-making to a minimum.
3. Accept help and support when offered.
4. Ask for help. Family and friends can't read your mind. It is very important to find someone who cares, understands and with whom you may talk freely. It's okay to need comforting.
5. Seek the support of others. Invite a relative/friend for dinner or overnight. Consider meeting new people.
6. Be patient with yourself. Healing takes time.
7. Lean into the pain. It cannot be outrun. Let the grief/healing process run its full course.
8. Through this emotional period, it is okay to feel depressed. Crying does make you feel better.
9. If Sundays, holidays, etc., are especially difficult times, schedule activities that you find particularly comforting into these time periods.
10. Seek the help of a counselor or clergy if you get stuck in the grief process.
11. Try to get adequate rest. Go to bed earlier. Avoid caffeine in coffee, tea and colas.
12. Good nutrition is important. Decrease junk food and try to eat a balanced meal.
13. Keep a journal. It is a good way to understand what you are feeling/thinking. Hopefully, when you re-read it later, you will see that you are getting better.
14. Read. There are many helpful books on grief. If grief is understood, it is a little easier to handle.
15. Moderate exercise helps (walking, tennis, swimming, for example). It offers an opportunity to work off frustration and may aid sleep.
16. Begin towards building a pleasant time with family and friends. Don't feel guilty if you are having a good time. Your loved one would want you to be happy.

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17. You may be angry at yourself, the person who died, others, God, or just feel angry in general. Don't push it down. Let it out—hit a pillow, scream, swim, and exercise, hit a punching bag.
18. Do not have unrealistic expectations of yourself. Grief takes time. It comes and goes.
19. Do things a little differently, yet try not to make a lot of changes. This sounds like a contradiction, but it is not.
20. Plan new interests. Join a tennis group; read a novel/mystery; take a class (crafts, skill, self-awareness); learn and do something new. Rediscover old interests, activities and friends.
21. Plan things to which you can look forward—trip, visit, lunch with a special friend. Start today to build memories for tomorrow.
22. Find quotes/posters that are helpful to you, and post them where you can see them.
23. Pray to the person who died.
24. Take time for yourself. Take a hot relaxing bath; bask in the sun; go to a movie, theater, dinner. Be good to yourself.
25. Do something for someone else. Join a volunteer group. Helping others does much to ease the pain.
26. Be determined to work through your grief.
27. Remember, *you will get better*. Hold on to *hope*. Some days, you just seem to exist, but better days will be back. You will develop a renewed sense of purpose gradually.
28. Simply stated—put balance in your life: *prayer, rest, work, reading* and *recreation*.

From *Grief and the Healing Process: Understanding Our Losses* © 1993, Rev 2003 by Steven D. Averill

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