

DEALING WITH GRIEF

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THE PHASES OF GRIEF

From *My Son...My Son...A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss, or Suicide*

By Iris Bolton

(Bolton Press, 1090 Crest Brook Lane, Roswell, GA 30075 - Phone: 770-645-1886.)

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There is no right or wrong way to grieve. All your feelings are normal. It is helpful, however, to know that human grief is a process that often follows a healing pattern.

Shock is the first stage. It is accompanied by disbelief and numbness.

Denial follows quickly, crying "I don't believe it," or "It can't be."

Bargaining is your promise that "I'll be so very good that maybe I can wake up and find that it isn't so. I'll do all the right things if only...."

Guilt is painful and hard to deal with. This is when one says over and over, "If only I had..." or "If only I had not..." This is a normal feeling and ultimately it may be solved by stating, "I'm a human being and I gave the best and worst of me to my friend (child, husband, etc...) and what he or she does with that is his or her responsibility.

Anger is another big factor which seems to be necessary in order to face the reality of life and then to get beyond it. We must all heal in our own ways. Anger is a natural stage through which we must pass. Your anger at your deceased loved one may even make you feel guilty, or it may be because your own life continues whereas your friend's life is over.

Depression is a stage of grief that comes and goes. Knowing this, be prepared to give yourself time to heal. Resignation is a late stage. It comes when finally you accept the truth.

Acceptance and hope! Understand that you will never be the same but your life can go on to find meaning and purpose.

WHAT TO DO

**Share your feelings with someone.
Discuss those feelings openly and frankly.
Show interest and support to those who need your help.
Get professional assistance!**

SUICIDE IS A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO A TEMPORARY PROBLEM

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HELP THROUGH GRIEF

*From Bereavement and Support by Marylou Hughes
Taylor & Francis, 1995, Used with permission*

1. Be patient with yourself. Do not compare yourself to others. Go through the mourning process at your own pace.
2. Admit you are hurting and go with the pain.
3. Apply cold or heat to your body, whichever feels best.
4. Ask for and accept help.
5. Talk to others.
6. Face the loss.
7. Stop asking "Why?" and ask "What will I do now?"
8. Recognize that a bad day does not mean that all is lost.
9. Rest.
10. Exercise.
11. Keep to a routine.
12. Introduce pleasant changes into your life.
13. Know that you will survive.
14. Take care of something alive, such as a plant or a pet.
15. Schedule activities to help yourself get through weekends and holidays.
16. Find someone who needs your help.
17. Accept your feelings as part of the normal grief reaction.
18. Postpone major decisions whenever possible.

19. Do something you enjoy doing.
20. Write in a journal.
21. Be around people.
22. Schedule time alone.
23. Do not overdo.
24. Eat regularly.

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SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

From *Bereavement and Support* by Marylou Hughes
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<p style="text-align: center;">PHYSICAL</p> <p>Hyperactive or underactive Feelings of unreality Physical distress such as chest pains, abdominal pains, headaches, nausea Change in appetite Weight change Fatigue Sleeping problems Restlessness Crying and sighing Feelings of emptiness Shortness of breath Tightness in the throat</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EMOTIONAL</p> <p>Numbness Sadness Anger Fear Relief Irritability Guilt Loneliness Longing Anxiety Meaninglessness Apathy Vulnerability Abandonment</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEHAVIORAL</p>

Overly sensitive
Dependent
Withdrawn
Avoid others
Lack of initiative
Lack of interest

Forgetfulness
Searching for the deceased
Slowed thinking
Dreams of the deceased
Sense the loved one's presence
Wandering aimlessly
Trying not to talk about loss in order to help others feel comfortable around them
Needing to retell the story of the loved one's death

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FEELINGS DURING THE PHASES OF GRIEF

From *Bereavement and Support* by Marylou Hughes
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<p>IMPACT (Felt when the knowledge of the death arrives)</p> <p>Denial Numb Relief Can't Remember EMPTY Shock</p>	<p>RECOIL (The time when feelings from the shock start coming back)</p> <p>Anger Fear Panic Disoriented Sick Exhausted</p>	<p>ACCOMMODATION (Occurs when the mourner realizes that life will go on)</p> <p>There's More Look Ahead It's Up To Me It's OK I'll Make It Healthy Again</p>
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HOW GRIEF CHANGES OUR LIVES

From *Bereavement and Support* by Marylou Hughes
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<p>EMOTIONALLY</p> <p>Sad Angry Anxious Guilty Lonely Resentful Denial Fear Flash-backs Relief</p>	<p>PHYSICALLY</p> <p>Fatigue Flare-ups of Chronic Conditions Crying Empty Feeling Sleeping Problems Eating Problems</p>
<p>SOCIALLY</p> <p>Fifth Wheel Said No To Invitations Self-Conscious Loss Of Companionship Avoid Places Make New Friends</p>	<p>BEHAVIORALLY</p> <p>Withdrawn Kept Busy Stayed In Bed New skills Lost Life-Style Have To Care For Self Restless</p>

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COMMON MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF:

*From **How To Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies**
by Therese A. Rando, Ph.D.*

- 1. Children grieve like adults.**
- 2. Grief is the same after all types of death.**
- 3. It takes two months to get over your grief.**
- 4. All bereaved people grieve in the same way.**
- 5. Your grief will decline over time without any upsurges.**
- 6. When grief is resolved, it never comes up again.**
- 7. You and your family will be the same after the death of a loved one.**
- 8. It's not okay to feel sorry for yourself.**
- 9. There is no reason to be angry at your deceased loved one.**
- 10. Men and women grieve in the same ways.**
- 11. Children need to be protected from grief and death.**
- 12. You will have no relationship with your loved one after his or her death.**
- 13. Parents usually divorce after a child dies.**
- 14. Once your loved one has died, it is better not to focus on him or her but to put him or her in the past and go on with your life.**

These and other myths can make the process of grieving more painful and difficult by creating unrealistic expectations for your recovery and preventing you from asking others for the support you need.

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Reflections Of This Survivor

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Reflections Of Other Survivors

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