



## GUIDELINES FOR HEALING GRIEF

***Accept the Grief.*** Roll with the tides of it. Do not try to be “brave”. Take time to cry. This also applies to men...strong men can and do cry.

***Talk about It.*** Share your grief within the family – do not attempt to protect them by silence. Find a friend to talk to...someone who will listen without judgement. If possible, find someone who has experienced a similar sorrow.

***Keep Busy.*** Do purposeful work that occupies the mind, but avoid frantic activity.

***Take Care of Yourself.*** Bereavement can be a threat to your health. At the moment you may feel that you don't care. That will change. You are important – your life is valuable – care for it.

***Eat Well.*** At this time of emotional and physical depletion, your body needs good nourishment more than ever. If you can only pick at your food, a vitamin supplement might be helpful, but it will not fully make up for a poor diet. Be good to yourself.

***Exercise Regularly.*** Return to your old program or start a new one as soon as possible. Depression can be lightened by the biochemical changes brought by exercise. And you will sleep better. An hour-long walk everyday is ideal for many people.

***Get Rid of Imagined Guilt.*** You did the best you could at the time, all things considered. If you made mistakes, learn to accept that we are all imperfect. Only hindsight is 20/20. If you are convinced that you have real guilt, get professional or spiritual counseling.

***Accept Your Understanding of Death,*** for the time being. You have probably asked “why” over and over and have finally realized that you will get no acceptable answer. But you probably have some small degree of understanding. Use that as a viewpoint until you are able to work up to another level of understanding.

***Join a Group of Others Who Are Sorrowing.*** Your old circle of friends may change. Even if it does not, you will need new friends who have been through your experience. Bereaved people sometimes form groups for friendship and sharing.

***Associate with Old Friends.*** This may be difficult. Some will be embarrassed by your presence, but they will get over it. If and when you can, talk and act naturally, without avoiding the subject of your loss.

***Postpone Major Decisions.*** For example, wait before deciding to sell your house or change jobs.

***Record Your Thoughts in a Journal,*** if you are inclined at all toward writing. It helps get your feelings out and records your progress.

***Turn Grief Into Creative Energy.*** Find a way to help others. Helping to carry someone's load is guaranteed to lighten your own. If you have writing ability, use it. Great literature has been written as a tribute to someone loved and lost.

***Take Advantage of Your Religious Affiliation,*** if you have one. If you have been inactive in matters of faith, this might be the time to become involved again if it fits your needs.

***Get Professional Help if Needed.*** Do not allow crippling grief to continue. The time comes to stop crying and start living again. Sometimes just a few sessions with a trained counselor will help you to resolve the anger, guilt and despair that keeps you from functioning.

***REMEMBER:*** No matter how deep your sorrow, you are not alone. Others have been there and will help share your load if you let them. Do not deny them the opportunity.

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