

## **HELPING YOURSELF THROUGH GRIEF**

***BASIC HEALTH CONCERNS*** – Grief is exhausting and it is important to be aware of your daily health routines and keep them up.

1. Try to eat regular, nourishing meals. If it is too difficult to eat three regular meals, try 4 or 5 small ones. Have nourishing food available to nibble on rather than chips, candy, etc.
2. Rest is important. Try to develop regular bedtime routines.
3. Continue with your exercise program or develop a manageable routine.
4. Make sure your family doctor knows what has happened to you so he/she can help monitor your health.

***OUTSIDE SUPPORT*** – Grief does not have to be as isolating as it seems.

1. Look for a support group, lecture or seminar that pertains to your situation.
2. Meditation is often helpful to help people get the rest they need.
3. Continue attending your church services and stay in contact with that “family” if that is a source of support to you.
4. Let your friends and other family members know what your needs are.

### ***ON FEELINGS***

1. Read some books or articles of the process of grief so you can identify what you are feeling and have some ideas on how to help yourself.
2. Allow your feelings to be expressed appropriately.
3. Crying is good. Almost always you feel lighter after you have had a good cry. Consider sharing your tears with other loved ones.
4. Find friends or family members to share your feelings with.
5. Be careful not to use alcohol, drugs, or tranquilizers to avoid the pain. These will only mask the pain and could lead to problems later.
6. Keeping a journal is a good way to identify feelings and also to see progress.
7. Holidays, anniversaries, etc. 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:***

1. If you desire some alone time – take it.
2. Give yourself small rewards along the way – something to look forward to.
3. Look for small ways to pamper yourself, such as bubble baths, a new cologne, soft pajama's, new hair cut, etc.
4. Short trips are good breaks from grief, just 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.
5. Look for some new interests, perhaps a new hobby or pick up on an old one.
6. Carry a special letter, poem, or quote with you to read when the going gets tough.
7. Try to enjoy the good days and don't feel guilty for doing so.
8. Reach out to help someone else.
9. Remember, grief takes time. Learn to have patience and yourself.
10. Know that you WILL get better and there WILL be a time when you can look forward to getting up in the morning and be glad you are alive and that your life is continuing.

Helen Fitzgerald, Author of the "Mourning Handbook"