

Hope for Healing



COPING

HOW WILL I EVER GET THROUGH THIS? Practical Tips to Help You Cope

Since the loss of your loved one, you may feel like you've been strapped on to a rollercoaster, emotions whirling you up and down, around and around. One minute you feel like things are going to be okay, then next thing you know, you take a dive. You feel yourself spinning through anger, guilt, sadness, loneliness, and occasionally get them all dumped on you at once. You may be getting drenched with the storm cloud of sadness and feel it will never let up. On the other hand, you may think you aren't grieving, yet you feel an underlying, nagging pain and tension inside that you can't identify; this may be due to unresolved grief. You may even feel a sense of relief now that your loved one is no longer suffering, yet now you are faced with unfamiliar territory. No longer does your life revolve around that loved one, and you don't know what to do with yourself. While all these feelings and experiences can be frightening and overwhelming, they are normal reactions to loss. Accepting them as part of the grieving process and allowing yourself to feel what you feel is necessary for healing.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve – but there are healthy ways to cope with the pain. You can get through

it! Grief that is expressed and experienced has a potential for healing that eventually can strengthen and enrich life. We will hold your hand throughout this process and have explained some coping techniques below that may help you get through this difficult time.

FEEL THE PAIN

In order for growth and healing to take place, it is essential to allow yourself to fully *feel all the emotions that arise*, as painful as they may be. Unfortunately, there's no escaping grief. According to an ancient African saying, "there's no way out of the desert except through it." Healthy grieving involves crying, affording us a positive release of all those feelings that accumulate inside of us rather than bundling them up to explode in a negative way later. Stuffed emotions can become like a poison that slowly eats away at you. So *cry unashamedly*, and teach those around you that it's okay; it's a blessed release, a cleansing of all the tension that builds up inside of us. Therefore, when the feelings arise, face them, feel them, and get them out of your system, so that you may *heal more quickly and find relief*.

Bereavement Services Available:

- *Individual grief counseling*
- *Mending Hearts grief support group:
open to the community.
Please call the number below
for current schedule*
- *Educational resources and referrals to groups in your area available upon request.*

Contact:

*J. Sita Lewi, LCSW, ACSW
Bereavement Coordinator
Altus Hospice
11233 Shadow Creek Pkwy,
Suite 123
Pearland, TX 77584
(281)493-9744*

*I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chatted all the way.
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow
And ne'er a word said she;
But oh, the things I learned from
her
When Sorrow walked with me.*



EXPRESS YOURSELF

Tell the story of your loved one and encourage others to share theirs. Repeating it over and over again helps your mind better understand and grasp the loss, and your heart will follow. *Reminiscing* on the good times you had with your loved one will also help fill the void in your heart with pleasant memories, so that, one day, you will be able to say their name with a smile, rather than tears. Writing in a *journal* can be very effective, as well. This can be a great way to unload thoughts and feelings that you do not wish to share with others, reflect on puzzling questions, develop self-understanding, track your progress, and relieve frustrations before taking them out on an innocent party.

SHARE YOUR SUFFERING

Take the time to *seek comfort* from people who will listen, whether it be friends, spiritual clergy, or a counselor. *Bereavement groups* can also help you recognize your feelings and put them in perspective. They can help alleviate the feeling that you are alone. The experience of sharing with others who are in a similar situation can be comforting and reassuring.

In addition, *tell your friends and family what helps and what hurts*. Everyone grieves differently, in their own way, and on their own schedule. Your family and friends aren't mind readers and may not know how to help. As a result, they may end up doing more damage than good. Educate them about grief and tell them what you need.

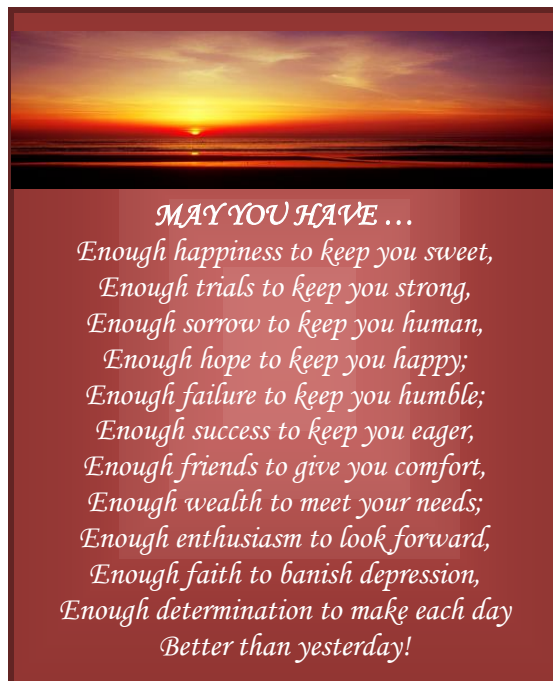
PREPARE FOR THE ROUGH DAYS

Certain dates can be more painful than others, such as *holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays*. Even if you've progressed, these dates may

bring back some of your painful emotions. *Make arrangements to be with friends and family members with whom you are comfortable*. Plan activities that give you an opportunity to *mark the anniversary*.

FORGIVE YOURSELF

Forgive yourself *for all the things you believe you should have said or done*. Also forgive yourself for the anger and guilt and embarrassment you may have felt while grieving, as these reactions are a normal part of the process.



BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

Grief is exhausting, draining and essential work – but you can't do it all the time. To sustain your energy, be sure to maintain a balanced diet and exercise regularly. The healing soul can only handle so much and therefore you must sometimes *take breaks from your grief*. Leaving this grief behind for a while does not mean leaving your loved one behind. You will always love them and will never forget them, whether you're expressing your pain or getting away from it for a while.

There's healing in routine and normalcy. Before your grief, you probably went to dinner, a show, a sporting event, bowling, or dancing. Those activities filled your life with joy and laughter. They won't fill your life like they used to because your life is so different now, but if you let them, those fun activities can take you away from your pain for a while. *Escape to a world where loss isn't on your mind all the time*.

PAMPER YOURSELF

Treat yourself to something nice to clear your mind and refresh your body. Take naps, read a good book, listen to your favorite music, get a manicure, go to a ball game, rent a movie... *whatever feels good to you*. Do something that is frivolous, distracting and that you personally find comforting. Let yourself feel true and genuine laughter. Don't stay away too long, but long enough to *recharge your heart*.

FIND YOURSELF

Losing someone close to us begins a new chapter in our life. Use this opportunity to *consider who you want to become throughout this journey*. The hardest times in our lives are what shape us, and the grief we experience offers the opportunity to make us a more compassionate, more loving person. *Set goals* for the future and don't be afraid to dream. Reading inspiring books and information about grief and loss can be helpful, as you learn from others' experiences and wisdom, seeing how they have survived. Honor your loved one by choosing to continue living until you can be with them again.

THIS JOURNEY IS SURVIVABLE!

Joy can return, but you will need to invest yourself in the process for that to happen!