

Grief Tips

19 Tips for Good Grieving

1. **Talk about your loss** with friends, family or a professional. Grief is a process, not an event.
2. **Grief is work requiring time and energy.** The memories, meanings and fulfilled needs provided by the lost loved one take time to work through.
3. **Let yourself enter the emotions of grief.** Grievors tend naturally to avoid painful emotions. Losing someone close to you means you deserve to allow yourself to feel all of your emotions – sadness, anger, intense longing, guilt and others.
4. **Consider writing your loved one a letter.** Say what you would tell them as if it were your last chance. Even if you never share the letter with anyone, writing it may help you work through your grief.
5. **Resume your life.** Leave time and space for grieving. Life marches on for the living. Try to resist the temptation to “throw yourself” into work or other diversions. This leaves too little time for the grief work you need to do for yourself.
6. **Take care of yourself.** You have been wounded. Something very valuable and dear has been taken away from you. Give yourself time and space to begin healing. Get enough rest. Eat nourishing food. Give yourself a break.
7. **Resist the temptation to use alcohol or drugs** to numb your pain. These can interfere with the grieving process by delaying it or covering it up.
8. **If you have any religious inclination,** consider contacting your place of worship. All religions recognize that grievors need special help. Consider taking advantage of these services even if you have not been attending regularly. You will not be turned away.
9. **Consider seeking out other grievors.** Someone who has also been through grief can empathize with you and vice versa. Organizations like “Compassionate Friends” or “THEOS” recognize the value of sharing in a group setting.
10. **Do not feel obligated to join groups** if they are not for you. The grief process is highly individual. Some people prefer solitude or reflection rather than group work. Do what feels right for you.
11. **Don’t neglect your own health.** Grieving puts a heavy burden of stress on your body. It can disturb sleep patterns, lead to depression, weaken your immune system and worsen medical problems. Take prescribed medications and get regular checkups. If you suffer from disabling insomnia or anxiety, see your doctor. Sometimes short term medication can be very helpful.
12. **Get help for severe or persistent depression.** Consider getting professional help if you feel overwhelmed, hopeless, or helpless. By all means seek medical help if you have suicidal thoughts.
13. **Grief work can become complicated.** Mixed emotions (positive and negative feelings) unresolved emotional turmoil and losing someone after an argument can complicate the grieving process. Sharing these feelings with a professional therapist can help.
14. **Anger is common in normal grieving.** Try venting your anger in a letter. Consider channeling your anger into constructive action. Volunteer your time. Spending your energy helping someone else can help you in the process.

15. **Allow time to grieve.** One or two years is not a long enough time to allow yourself to work through the grief. We need to remind ourselves that the healing process cannot be rushed: it will proceed at its own rate.
16. **Be patient.** The grieving process often includes setbacks. Don't expect to set an "I'll be over it" deadline and succeed. Often times, grieving resumes after a time. Reminders can trigger a flood of emotions. Don't be surprised if this happens and don't consider it a sign of weakness. Instead, your psyche is telling you more grief work needs to be done.
17. **If you feel stuck in your grief try a new approach.** We are creatures of habit who learn very quickly how to avoid painful situations. This may hinder working through the entirety of your grief. To jump start the process, look at home movies and photos. Talk about your loved one at holidays when his or her absence is most obvious.
18. **Create your own memorial service.** Celebrate their lifetime accomplishments, values, and principals. Consider carrying the torch for a cause they believed in as a memorial. Start a scholarship, plant a garden or make a donation in their name.
19. **The grieving process has run its course** when you feel weary of rehashing events and memories and know that your loved one can remain with you only in spirit. For some, the process never really ends; it just gets easier over time. You will know when you are ready to move forward when you feel you can reinvest the energy once invested in your loved one in a new place. This takes time. Good Grief means being good to yourself in the process.

(United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation)