

Grief – Expectations You Can Have for Yourself

You can expect that:

- Your grief will take longer than most people think it should.
- Your grief will take more energy than you imagine.
- Your grief will involve continual changes.
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life and affect your identity.
- You will grieve for many things (both symbolic and tangible), not just the death itself.
- You will grieve for what you have lost already as well as for the future – for the hopes, dreams, and unfulfilled expectations you held with and for that person.
- Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions: some expected, some not.
- This loss will resurrect old losses, feelings, and unfinished business from the past.
- You may have some confusion about who you are.
- You will have a combination of anger, depression, irritability, frustration, and intolerance.
- You may feel guilt in some form.
- You will lose confidence in yourself.
- You will experience spasms, waves, or acute upsurges of grief that occur without warning.
- You will have trouble thinking and making decisions.
- You may experience poor memory and lack of organization.
- You may feel like you are going crazy.
- You may be obsessed with death or preoccupied with thoughts of the dead person.
- You will search for new meaning in life. You will likely question your previously held beliefs.
- You may find yourself acting differently than you would expect of yourself.
- You may have physical reactions.
- Certain dates, events, seasons, and reminders will bring upsurges in grief.
- Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense grief feelings for you.

“...you have to learn where your pain is. You have to burrow down and find the wound, and if the burden of it is too terrible to shoulder, you have to shout it out; you have to shout for help... And then finally, the way through grief is grieving.”
— Jane Hamilton