

# 15 Tips to Help You Get Through the Early Stages of Grief

Losing a loved one is one of the most debilitating experiences you can go through. At times like this, it's normal to feel confused or even disoriented. Life seems to stop in grief and it's difficult to summon the energy to do even the most menial tasks. So how do you cope? Where do you go when you're in such a dark place?

Start by taking care of yourself. Here are 15 small, loving actions you can do each day to help yourself move toward a place of healing.

- 1. Get rest.** Take breaks from work or daily tasks to nap or just relax. Make yourself a cup of calming tea or take a leisurely walk.
- 2. Make lists.** It's easy to forget things when your circuits are on overload. Make lists but only include short tasks that don't require long periods of concentration. If you keep forgetting appointments, ask someone to remind you. This, too, will pass. It just takes time for all the parts of your system to reset, so be patient with yourself. It will get better.
- 3. Cry.** Do this as often as you need to. Tears provide a healthy emotional release and help clear out the cobwebs.
- 4. Talk to a friend.** Don't hesitate to talk about your feelings with others, particularly someone with whom you are comfortable. Finding comfort in someone you trust can do wonders for a battered soul.
- 5. Write.** Consider starting a journal where you can reflect on what happened, and how it has changed your life. A journal lets you release pent-up feelings and helps you begin the healing process. Just a few minutes a day gives you a framework from which you can view the changes you're going through.
- 6. Exercise.** Make sure some form of exercise is part of your daily routine. It doesn't have to be anything strenuous. Stretching or a few easy yoga poses can help release tension. Even something as simple as a 20-minute walk may help lift your spirits. Choose an activity you enjoy, so you can look forward to it.
- 7. Ask for help when you need it.** This can be as simple as asking someone to get something down from a high shelf. Or you can reach out for help with more complicated tasks, such as grocery shopping, that you are just not feeling up to.
- 8. Eat regularly.** Eating small meals 4 to 5 times a day can help curb emotional swings by keeping your blood sugar in check.
- 9. Drink a lot of water.** Every cell is dependent on water; a dehydrated body will only contribute to your emotional drain. Aim for 8 to 10 glasses a day.
- 10. Breathe.** If you find yourself drifting, take a few deep breaths. The body gets the oxygen it needs from the bottom of the lungs, but when we are tense and feeling stressed, our breathing tends to be shallow. Insufficient oxygen stresses the body, which just adds to the stress you're already feeling. Conscious, deep breaths not only help you relax, they give your system the oxygen it requires to function normally.

To help yourself breathe deeply, try breathing in and out through an imaginary straw so the oxygen can get to the bottom of your lungs. Or raise your arms slowly while breathing in through your nose, gauging the intake so you reach capacity when the arms are all the way up. Then slowly exhale on “sssss” while slowly lowering the arms, again gauging your movement so you reach “empty” when the arms are all the way down. Repeat this 2 or 3 times and then stop and smile. Do this several times a day, or whenever you’re feeling particularly stressed.

**11. Pray or meditate.** These practices bring you back to your calm center and help restore a sense of stability in your life.

**12. Laugh.** Even though this may be the last thing you feel like doing, do it anyway. Give yourself permission to laugh at something ... anything. Laughter helps to break up the clouds and bring you in a better place.

**13. End each day by giving thanks for your blessings.** Even in the toughest of times, there is something for which you can be thankful. What can you give thanks for today? Did support come from an unexpected place? Did someone say exactly what you needed to hear? Did a robin stop and sing on your windowsill? Blessings come in many forms. You may even wish to begin a gratitude journal in which you record how each day blessed you. Gratitude heals at a very deep level.

**14. Go to bed around the same time every night.** A regular routine helps create a feeling of stability. If sleep is difficult for you, a soothing bath or a cup of chamomile tea early in the evening will help you settle down as you prepare for sleep.

**15. Go your own pace.** Grief doesn’t have a schedule. Do what you need to do and feel what you need to feel in order to heal. You are doing the very best you can at any given time, so be easy on yourself and let the process unfold.

No matter how difficult things may seem, healing does come. Focus on the small things and big change will come in time.

Source:

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