



What Can I Do to Help Myself Deal with Loss and Grief?

There are certain tasks that help people adjust to a loss. Every person will complete these tasks in his or her **own** time and in his/her own way. The below suggestions may help you.

Understanding: facing the reality of death

1. Take the time to talk about death and loss as you experience it in everyday life. Tell your "story" of the death of your loved one.
2. Find someone who will listen -- a parent, a trusted adult, a health professional, or counselor.
3. Find someone who will listen long after you think you should be moving on, as you will revisit this grief in some way throughout your life.
4. Ask questions about death and loss.

Identifying and expressing feelings

1. Notice how other people talk about feelings.
2. Try to identify and express your feelings.
3. Try one of these activities:
 - ♥ writing about feelings
 - ♥ talking to someone about feelings
 - ♥ snuggling
 - ♥ art and crafts
 - ♥ physical activity like dance, martial arts.
 - ♥ crying
 - ♥ laughing
 - ♥ singing
 - ♥ walking

Commemorating/honoring the person who died

1. Create an ongoing list and put it on the refrigerator: "Things I remember about ____" and have family members contribute to it when they want.
2. Write a story, poem, prayer, or song for the loved one.
3. Create a memory book or box with photographs and/or items.
4. Plan a visit to the cemetery with your family. Take flowers or a balloon.
5. Plant a tree or some flowers in honor of the loved one.

Going on - not "getting over"

1. Create a ritual to say good-bye to the loved one.
2. Create a collage of the things that make you happy to be alive.
3. Express your mixed feelings about "going on."
4. Develop rituals around anniversary dates for remembering the loved one.

Adapted from: Nussbaum, K. (1998). Preparing the Children: Information and Ideas for Families Facing Terminal Illness and Death. Burnsville, North Carolina: Compassion Books.

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