

# GRIEF

BREAK FREE FROM PAIN

*A workbook designed to help you find  
your way through grief*

# Face Your Emotions

You may experience all kinds of difficult and unexpected emotions right now, from shock or anger to disbelief, guilt, and profound sadness. Don't blame yourself, it's normal. Grieving is a highly individual experience and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. The first step to cope with your grief is to face your emotions.

# CULTIVATE COMPASSION

There are five known stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. However, not everyone takes the same time in each stage, not everyone goes through all of these five stages, and not everyone goes through them in the same order, either. In any case, knowing they exist can somehow help us see that's normal what we are experiencing during grief.

## **DENIAL**

Denial is not only an attempt to pretend that the loss does not exist. We are also trying to absorb and understand what is happening.

## **ANGER**

It's normal to feel anger as we are trying to adjust to a new reality. Being angry is a way of releasing energy and of protesting a loss.

## **BARGAINING**

In the bargaining stage we may find ourselves intensely focused on what we or others could have done differently in order to prevent the loss of our loved one.

## **DEPRESSION**

During our experience of processing grief, there comes a time when we slowly start to look at the reality of our present situation. In those moments, we tend to pull inwards as the sadness grows.

## **ACCEPTANCE**

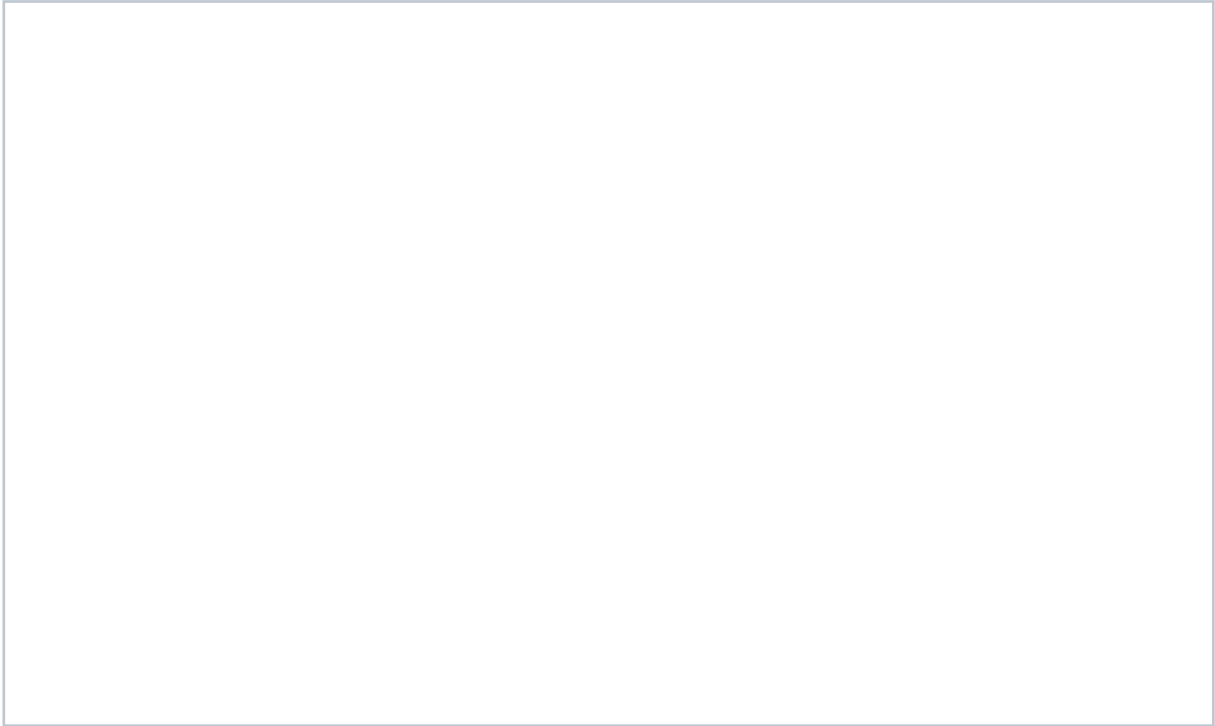
When we come to a place of acceptance, it is not that we no longer feel the pain of loss. However, we are no longer resisting the reality of our situation.

## 1. IT'S NORMAL TO FEEL THIS WAY

Don't blame yourself for feeling the way you feel. Reflect on what stage you are at and remind yourself that's part of the process. Show compassion to yourself.

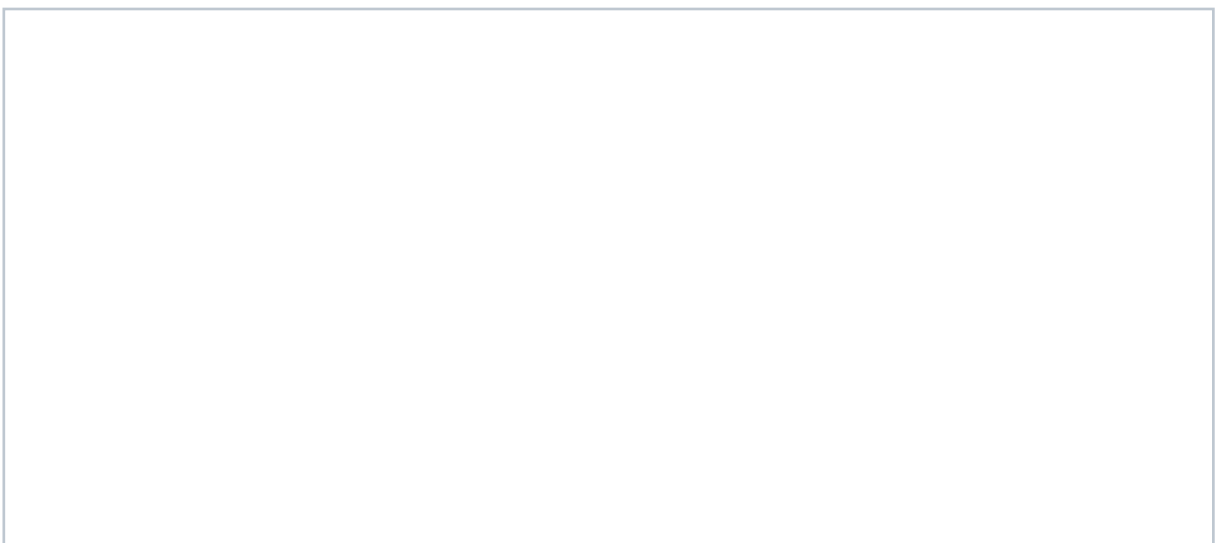
## 2. WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE PERSON I LOST, I FEEL...

Do not try to block your emotions no matter what you feel. Embracing what grief brings you will help you better deal with it. Ignoring your emotions will delay your pain and make you drag out all of the sad, bitter, angry, or hurt feelings that are inside you. Start by admitting to yourself that you're in pain because of this loss. There's nothing wrong with that.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their feelings about the person they lost.

## 3. I FEEL THE SADDEST WHEN....

You may think that nobody wants to see you looking sad but it's okay to feel this way. If you have to stay strong for other friends or family members do it but don't try to act "tough" or like you've got it all under control when you know that's not the case. You can still admit that you're feeling sad.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write when they feel the saddest.

#### 4. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

Moving forward means you've accepted your loss but that's not the same as forgetting. You can move on with your life and keep the memory of someone you lost as an important part of you. Remember that what you will live and who you become after the loss is also because of this person. So, keep all the memories. Don't let go of them.

WHAT I MISS THE MOST ABOUT THIS PERSON

MY FAVORITE MEMORY WITH THIS PERSON

#### 5. IF I COULD SAY SOMETHING TO THE PERSON I LOST, I WOULD SAY...

What would you love to say to the person you lost? If there are things you wish you had done differently and things you wish you had or hadn't said, write about that as well. And remember, regrets are part of life and a valuable way of learning.

## 6. ABOUT MY GRIEF

There is no specific time frame for grieving, but this doesn't mean that you should sit back and wait for the day when your grief magically goes away. Unfortunately, that day won't come. But little by little you will realize that you are able to live with your grief. The person you lost will always be special to you and will be on your mind, but there will come a day when you no longer feel overwhelmed by your loss.

WHAT HAS BEEN CONFUSING DURING MY GRIEF

WHAT HAS BEEN SURPRISING DURING MY GRIEF

WHAT I HAVE BEEN THANKFUL FOR DURING MY GRIEF

WHAT QUOTE HAS BEEN MEANINGFUL OR COMFORTING DURING MY GRIEF

# Getting Support

It's perfectly normal if we need some time alone but isolation won't help us in the long run. Sometimes all we need is someone to sit by our side even if we don't want to talk about it. You can ask that from a friend or family member. And if you want to put it out but you can't talk about it, text or write them a letter. The important thing is that you don't isolate yourself.

# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Create an emotional support list with your special people. Write their name and why they're on this list. It doesn't matter if you just have one name to write, that's your special person. If hanging out with your family and friends has a soothing effect, then plan to spend even more time with them and to make your social calendar a bit busier than normal.

NAME	WHY IS A SPECIAL PERSON

## HERE ARE 3 OTHER WAYS OF GETTING SUPPORT:

1

### JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Support groups can give you access to people who are suffering in a similar way and can help you feel understood. However, these groups aren't for everybody. If you join one and just don't feel like it's making a positive impact, it's okay to leave.

2

### GET PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Sometimes, it can be a big help to share your feelings with someone who doesn't know you on a personal level. Don't think that getting professional help means that you're weak. It's a sign of strength to admit that you need further help.

3

### ADOPT A PET

Obviously, a new pet can't replace the person that you lost but having a pet can make you feel better. A pet can bring you comfort and a sense of strength from being able to care for another being.



# **Moving Forward**

Finding our way through grief is hard work and unfortunately, we can't choose how long our grief process will be. So, what can we do? We can prepare ourselves to move forward.

# TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Our mental and physical health are extremely connected. The pain of grief can disrupt our physical health, making it difficult to sleep, eat, or even think straight. But the good news is that because they are so connected, we can also improve our mental health by taking better care of ourselves. This can be challenging, so start with just one thing you can do today.

5 SELF CARE KEYS DURING GRIEF	ONE THING I CAN DO TODAY TO IMPROVE
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REST</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try to find a balance, getting enough sleep but not too much, even if it's a struggle to get up</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EAT HEALTHY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Maybe you can barely eat one meal a day or maybe all you can do is order pizza twice a day because you don't feel like doing groceries and cooking a normal meal. Force yourself to eat foods that make you feel good and energetic as often as you can</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXERCISE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Move your body, even if it is just a walk around the block, because it will make you feel stronger and will improve your mood</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SPEND SOME TIME OUTDOORS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Go sit in a park instead of staying all day in your room. Walk that 20 minutes to the grocery store instead of driving. These small changes can make a big difference</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>KEEP YOUR HOBBIES</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">There's comfort in doing the activities that bring you joy. Remember that it's ok to do things that make you happy</p>	

# SAYING GOODBYE

When we are saying goodbye, we are not saying it to the love we feel. We are saying it to the old circumstances in which that other person was present. We never leave that person behind because we take a part of him/her with us. Think how lucky you are to have known someone who is so hard to say goodbye to.

I'M SAYING GOODBYE BECAUSE...

SAYING GOODBYE MAKES ME FEEL...

I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN WE...

YOU TAUGHT ME...

SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO KNOW IS...

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER...

# BE PREPARED

Anniversaries, holidays, milestones and certain places can reawaken memories and feelings. Though you can't rearrange your life completely to deal with your loss, some little changes can help you feel better. If you're sharing a holiday event with other relatives, for example, talk to them ahead of time about their expectations and agree on strategies to honor the person you lost. Such triggers can be tough to deal with in the beginning, but over time you may find that the same triggers fill you with a sense of love, warmth and comfort.

GRIEF TRIGGER	MY THOUGHTS ABOUT IT

# DON'T FORGET YOUR DREAMS

Remember that thing you'd love to do someday? Do it now. List all your dreams in the grid below and choose one to start. You don't want to have wasted your life waiting for the perfect time. Big dreams like a trip you want to do or a company you want to work for and little dreams like adopting a pet or learning to ride a bicycle are both valid. Living your best life is a beautiful way of honoring the life and memory of the person you lost.


# Write About It

Grief journaling helps us express the depth of what we're going through and that helps us rebuild ourselves. Whenever you are ruminating, grab this journal template or take a clean page and write freely. Either way, putting on paper your thoughts will help you better deal with them.

# TODAY'S REFLECTION

TODAY IS

RIGHT NOW, I FEEL...

TODAY, I'M REALLY MISSING...

TODAY, I'M HAVING A HARD TIME WITH...

A SIMPLE ACTIVITY I CAN DO TODAY TO SHOW COMPASSION TO MYSELF IS...

THINGS I'M GRATEFUL FOR · GOOD THINGS ABOUT TODAY · THINGS THAT MADE ME SMILE

# Help Others Grieve

Support others around you that are also grieving but remember to don't compare your journey with their journey. Each person will experience grief in their own way. Helping others has the added benefit of making you feel better as well.



# WHAT TO SAY AND WHAT NOT TO SAY

Our society avoids talking about grieving, which makes it hard to know the right thing to say in such situations. How can we know that we are saying something helpful? Well, trying to show the positive side of the situation to a person who has just lost someone is usually useless. Any sentence that starts with "at least" will not help. Also, comparing and commenting on how a grieving person feels and acts can hurt their feelings because not everyone experiences pain in the same way. Here are some ideas of what to say and what not to say to someone grieving.

## WHAT TO SAY

*"I'm so sorry for your loss"*

*"I'm just really sorry you've had to go through this"*

*"I wish I had the right words for you"*

*"I know how much you loved him/her"*

*"I don't know what to say but I can listen"*

*"You don't have to talk if don't want to. I'll just sit beside you"*

*"You can talk to me about him/her whenever you want – in 5, 10, 30 years"*

*"I am always just a phone call away"*

*"We'll get through this together"*

*"I don't know how you feel, but I'm here to help in any way I can"*

*"I'll drop by next week with a casserole"*

*"It's OK to be lost for a while. You don't have to have the answers right now"*

*"It's ok to feel that way"*

*"Whatever you are feeling, and whenever you are feeling it, it's OK"*

## WHAT NOT TO SAY

*"He/She is in a better place"*

*"Was god's plan"*

*"Everything happens for a reason"*

*"I know how you feel"*

*"You're handling this better than I expected"*

*"Oh my God, I could never handle what you are going through!"*

*"I didn't call because I figured you wanted to be alone."*

*"I didn't visit because I hate hospitals."*

*"At least you have other children"*

*"At least he/she lived a long life"*

*"You're young. You'll find someone else"*

*"Don't cry, you need to be strong"*

*"You need to move on with your life"*

*"Get over it"*

*"It could be worse"*