

## **GRIEF**

*Everyone can master grief but he that has it. – William Shakespeare*

As a funeral director, there are many opportunities to see how survivors are coping after the death of a loved one. It always amazes me to hear the following:, “That person should get on with their life” or “the death was so much easier to cope with because their loved one was sick for a long time”. I don’t place any substance in any of these statements. Grief varies with people....no two people are the same and the relationship between the deceased and a survivor can many times dictate the length of grieving.

When we love someone and they die, we feel pain. That pain is grief ...raw and unadulterated. Over time, grief changes to mourning which is a blanket of sadness that seems to be with you every day. Once the shock of death wears off, and mourning has blanketed your life, grief recovery needs to begin. The following are some suggestions for “grief relief” which is extrapolated from an article by Victor Parachin, a Grief Educator and author..

### **Go Back to Work**

If you have a job, return to it. Work can be a daily distraction from grief that allows you to concentrate on something else during the day. If you don’t have a job, get a job or commit to a volunteer job. The nights will continue to be unbearable for a while, but during the day, you will have no time to think about your loss.

### **Stay Fit**

Incorporate exercise into your daily routine. If you have never exercised before, start simply by taking a walk around the block or commit to an introductory program at the YMCA. There you will find people who have the same goal: to get fit. Exercise will provide a physical and emotional outlet for your grief and in the process you will meet new friends now that you are a changed person.

### **Enroll In a Class**

Learning something new will be a healthy diversion from the act of grieving. If you have never cooked and need practical, day-to-day advice, take a class in cooking. If your partner was always in charge of the financial paperwork, take a class in accounting. If grief is getting you down, attend a support group where you will find people in the same place you are. They can help you through the grief process because they are going through the grief process themselves!

### **Talk to a Friend**

While most people have close friends and family, it is not unusual for these same people to begin to tune you out. They have their own lives and you will slowly need to begin to adapt to a wholly different life. You might have one friend who is a good listener and very understanding but the best bet is to socialize with someone who knows what you are going through because they went through it themselves.

### **Avoid high stress relationships**

One of the things that happen when you lose someone is your inability to deal with all of the outside stress of things in your life. Encircle yourself with close friends and those who can let you be who you need to be at this time or provide you with what you need.

### **Educate yourself**

Since you don't believe that anyone can feel the pain you do, educate yourself about the grief process. Steer away from the textbook type books but look for books that are inspirational and realistic about how you are feeling. I have given out for the last ten years to my clients, the book, "Healing After Loss, Daily Mediations for Working Through Grief" by Martha Whitmore Hickman.

### **Think Right**

Right thinking is crucial for recovery. What does that mean? Your thoughts determine your actions and feelings. We can think ourselves into happiness...that our lives will be happy again or you can go into a deep depression. We can be paralyzed by fear or take a step to make our life better. Only you can determine your fate. *Believe that life is worth living and your belief will create the fact - William James*

### **Be Good to Yourself**

When you lose someone you love and life seems overwhelming, do something for yourself. Massage is a very effective stress reliever. When life gets you down, therapists will teach you that you need to find the beauty of just one thing in a day. That may mean taking a walk outside, buying a bouquet of flowers or looking at the sky for ten minutes. Find a way to bring a little beauty into your life on a daily basis.

### **Help Others**

When you find yourself overpowered by melancholies, the best way to help yourself, is to do something kind for someone. It is hard to feel sorry for yourself if you are helping someone else in need. Make a phone call to a lonely person, take flowers or homemade cake to a shut-in, read to a blind person. Or your partner may have had a special cause, and a legacy that you need to carry-on this cause.

### **Have Hope**

Hope springs eternal. Have hope that life will get better...it just takes time.