

Some thoughts On Grief

Grief is the NORMAL reaction to a loss. It is a process of learning to live without a person who was very significant in the griever's life.

Many factors determine the length and depth of grief. The most important one is the relationship the bereaved had with the deceased. A stormy relationship can create a difficult grief.

Grief lasts far longer than most people think. Two to four years is not abnormal. Grief may last longer if the deceased was a child.

Grief usually becomes more painful three to five months after the death. It can take this length of time for the reality of the death to reach the bereaved at a deep emotional level.

Because of the seemingly bazaar nature of grief manifestations, a bereaved person may appear to be mentally ill or indulging in self-pity—but neither is true.

The grieving person has a strong need to talk about their loved one and the circumstances of the death. Obsessive reminiscence is essential for healthy grief recovery. They need others to talk about and remember the deceased also.

“Keeping busy” does nothing for grief except force the bereaved to suppress his/her grief, which is emotionally unhealthy. Also, because fatigue and difficulty thinking are normal grief manifestations, it can wear him/her out physically

Remember the four “T’s” for helping grieving persons:

Talk Grievers need to talk. They need to say the same things over and over again. You can help with non-judgmental listening. Platitudes or telling the griever how he “should” feel, or that someone else has a worse loss, is not helpful.

Tears grievers need to cry. Crying is a healthy outlet for the stress of grief. Contrary to what most people think, crying at the loss of a loved one is not a sign of weakness, but that the griever loved.

Touch Grievers need to be touched. An arm around the shoulder or a hand held means a lot. A hug says “I care” and “I’m here for you.”

Time Grief takes time. Grieving people don’t get “better” on a steadily upward path. The process is more like a roller coaster, bad days and good days and, back again to bad days. Be patient. Remember birthdays, anniversaries and the holidays. They are difficult for grievers.

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