

Along The Journey of Grief

You can expect that:

- Your grief may take longer than most people think.
- Your grief may take more energy than you would have ever imagined.
- Your grief may involve many changes and be continually developing.
- Your grief may show itself in all spheres of your life: psychological, social, physical, and spiritual.
- The intensity of your grief may depend on how you perceive the loss.
- You may grieve for many things both symbolic and tangible, not just the death alone. You may grieve for what you have lost already and for what you have lost in the future as well.
- Your grief may entail mourning, not only for the actual person that you have lost, but also for all the hopes, dreams and unfulfilled expectation that you held for and with that person, and for the needs that will go unmet because of their death.
- Your grief may involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions, not just those normally associated with grieving, such as depression and sadness.
- The loss may resurrect old issues, feelings, and unresolved conflicts from the past.
- You may have some identity confusion as a result of this major loss and such feelings may be a new and puzzling experience for you.
- You may have a combination of anger and depression, including feelings of irritability, frustration, annoyance or intolerance.
- You may feel some anger and guilt, and may spend a significant amount of time searching for ways that you could have changed or prevented the death.

- You may have a lack of self-concern.
- You may experience grief spasms, acute upsurges of grief that occur suddenly with no warning.
- You may have trouble thinking (memory, organization and intellectual processing) and making decisions.
- You may feel as though you are going "crazy".
- You may be obsessed with the death and preoccupied with the deceased.
- You may begin to search for meaning and may question your religion and/or philosophy of life.
- You may find yourself acting socially in ways that are different from before.
- You may find yourself having a number of physical reactions.
- Society may have unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately to you.
- You may find that there are certain dates, events, and stimuli that bring upsurges in your grief feelings. Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense grief for you temporarily.
- In summary, your grief will bring with it, depending upon the combination of factors above, an intense amount of emotion that will surprise you and those around you.
- Our expectations tend to be too unrealistic, and more often than not, we receive insufficient assistance from friends and society. Your grief may not only be more intense than you expected, but it may also show up in more areas and ways than you ever anticipated.
- Your grief will be very idiosyncratic and dependent upon the meaning of your loss, your own personal characteristics, the type of death, your social support, and your physical state.