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Things Every Griever Needs to Know

1. WHATEVER YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AND FEELING IS NORMAL

Everyone experiences grief in their own way. There is no right or wrong way to grieve and there is no formula. You may have people around you who are reacting to the same loss in a much different way. Don't compare, judge or analyze. Your grief journey will be unique to you.

2. GRIEF IMPACTS EVERY PART OF YOU

Grief does not just impact you emotionally. It zaps you mentally, physically and even spiritually. Your body's resources are depleted as it responds to the trauma of the loss. You may be fatigued, distracted, have trouble thinking and sleeping. Answering questions can be difficult. People in grief take longer to think and process. Sometimes, you can think you are losing your mind, but you're not. It's grief. This is a time to be gentle with yourself and give yourself grace. You have suffered a serious injury even if it is not visible.

3. LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOURSELF

You cannot be expected to function as you did prior to the loss. You need time to recover. To expect that you can behave as normal in all the areas of your life will set you up for disappointment, discouragement and frustration. Lighten the load wherever you can. You need to rest. Part of healing is giving yourself permission to sit with the grief and feel it. Keeping busy and trying to do all you could before can actually delay your healing process. Remember, be gentle and give yourself grace.

4. LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS

People around you care but often do not know what to do. They see you in pain and want to fix it, but there is nothing they can do. In their efforts to help, they might say or do something that hurts you. Please remember they usually come from a very good place and their intention is to help. They get tongue tied and feel awkward around us. If you are honest with them about what you need, they will usually happily respond. They take their cues from you. Tell them if you want to talk about your loved one. Tell them if you want people around or if you would rather be alone. Tell them where you need help. If they say something that hurts you, correct them but in a kind way. You can use it as an educating experience. I can't believe all the stupid things I said to grieving people prior to my husband dying. I just didn't know any better. I tried to remember that when people said those same kind of things to me.

5. THIS WILL NOT LAST FOREVER

It's hard to believe this as when you are in the pit of grief and your heart hurts so much, you can't imagine a time when it could be better. How can you get through it? How could life ever be good again? It won't get better today or tomorrow, or for quite some time, but it will get better. I am living proof of that. I went from barely surviving to thriving. I have experienced happiness and joy again. My life will never be the same and I will always miss my husband, but life is good. Different, but good. And I work with people every day that have hope again. It does take time and there is no way around that but what you do with that time is important. There are specific action steps to help you heal your broken heart. And that's what the Grief Recovery Method is all about. Please remember - you hurt much because you loved much. Grief is the last act of love we have to give to those we have loved. Where there is deep grief there was great love.