

## Five Common Questions about Grief

### 1. **Am I crazy?**

If you're crying frequently, if you cannot concentrate, if you lose your keys, if you forget words, if you feel depressed, if you feel paralyzed or stuck, if you have trouble sleeping, if you have no appetite, if you eat too much, if you don't wish to talk to anyone, if you cannot stop talking, if you feel anxious, if you feel stunned, if you feel sad, if you miss your loved one, if you are afraid of the dark – all of these are common symptoms of grief. So no, you're not crazy. However, if your symptoms feel particularly acute, unbearable, or overwhelming **and/or** if they don't seem to be lessening even after the year anniversary, you might find talking to a counselor helpful.

### 2. **Should we talk about him or her?**

Yes! Don't be afraid to mention your loved one. Feel free to reminisce, share memories, share feelings, share your grief. A common fear is that talking about your deceased loved one will upset others. However, they're most likely already thinking about him or her and are feeling upset anyway. In fact, some people get *more* upset if no one mentions the loved one, as if everyone has forgotten him already. Give someone the opportunity to talk and share. Remembering is a gift. Feeling upset together is also a gift and offers a much needed opportunity to process the grief.

### 3. **When will I be myself again?**

The truth is that you will never be quite the same old self again. You are changed by a major loss and you are changed irrevocably. That can feel like bad news or good news, depending on your perspective. The world will never quite be the same without your loved one's physical presence either. The best way to cope with all these changes is to accept that change is an inevitable part of life and ultimately to embrace it.

The new 'You' has yet to unfold. It's possible that the new 'You' will have compassion, strength, and depth in ways that were never possible before. There is potential for the new 'You' to grow in profound and meaningful ways.

### 4. **When will it be over?**

The first year of grief is often the most painful time for many people. The first cycle of holidays, birthdays, and seasonal changes can feel quite sensitive. On the other hand, for some people the *second* year of grief is actually even more painful as the reality of the loss deepens. Depending on the nature of the death and the nature of the relationship, it can take even several years for acute grief to begin to recede.

Grieving is often described as like the ebb and flow of the ocean's tide. Feelings will come on strongly and then abate. Acute grief will begin to recede as more and more energy begins to focus on life again.

However, it is normal for periods of grief to arise throughout the years as you remember your loss. Fortunately, the essence of your loved one resides forever in your heart and in your spirit. Just as you will continue to live with the impact of loss, you will always live with the impression of their love.

**5. How do I move on?**

Gradually as you face your loss, experience your feelings, and express your grief, you will begin to heal. Your focus will naturally start to shift toward life again. At some point, you will need to make a conscious choice to reinvest your energy into life. By strengthening your spirituality, reaching out to others, allowing your attitude to change, and choosing to reinvest in living you will begin to transcend your loss. Amazing growth is possible as a result of this journey.

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