



Appropriate Expectations for Yourself in Grief

You can expect that:

- Your grief will take longer than most people expect.
 - Your grief will involve many changes and be continually developing.
 - Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life: psychological, social, and physical.
 - Your grief will depend on how you perceive your loss.
 - You will grieve for many things both symbolic and tangible, not just the death alone.
 - You will grieve for not only what you have lost now but also for what you have lost in the past and future.
 - Your grief will entail mourning not only for the actual person you lost but also for all of the hopes, dreams, and unfulfilled expectations you held for and with that person, and for the needs that will go unmet because of the death.
 - Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions, not solely those that are generally thought of as grief.
 - You may have a combination of anger, depression, irritability, frustration, annoyance, or intolerance.
 - You may feel some guilt.
 - The loss will resurrect old issues, feeling, and unresolved conflicts from the past.
 - You will have some identity confusion as a result of a major loss.
 - You may experience grief spasms, acute upsurges of grief that occur suddenly and with no warning.
 - You will have trouble thinking (memory, organization, and intellectual processing) and making decisions.
 - You may feel like you're going crazy.
 - You may feel obsessed with the death and preoccupied with the deceased.
 - You may begin a search for meaning and may question your religion and/or philosophy of life.
 - You may find yourself acting socially in ways that are different than before.
 - You may find yourself having a number of physical reactions.
 - You may find that there are certain dates, events, and stimuli that bring upsurges of grief.
 - Society may have unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately to you.
 - Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense grief from you temporarily.
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Adapted from *How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies*, by Therese A. Rando, Ph. D.