

GRIEF: THE "FIVE LETTER WORD"?

First, we'd like to thank you for taking the time to find ways to care for yourself while you are grieving the death of someone you love. We know that grief is really hard work and finding ways to help you cope with that exhausting work is vitally important to your wellbeing. While coping with the death of someone you love can be very difficult, we hope that you will not only find ways to help yourself, but you will also find ways to honor the bond and love you share with your special person. Death does not end a relationship and our love will continue for our special person. Therefore, we need to help our heart refocus and find ways to continue that love and that bond in different ways.

GRIEF IS THE LAST ACT OF LOVE WE HAVE TO GIVE TO THOSE WE LOVED. WHERE THERE IS DEEP GRIEF, THERE WAS GREAT LOVE.



MUSIC



Music is such a powerful form of communication, and it helps process our feelings! Not only can music be an excellent way to bring feelings and memories to the surface, but it also provides a way to relax and change our mood. Think about songs that remind you of your special person. What was their favorite song or type of music?

What is your "grief playlist"?

Get Creative!!

Putting down on paper all that is swirling inside you is a great way to express yourself and get those thoughts and feelings out. Here are some ideas for topics you can write about in your packet notebook ...

Try to put into words the love you feel for your person....

When you are having a hard time come back and look at this

♥ Consider writing poems, songs, short-stories, or whatever feels helpful to you.

♥ Try jotting down short journal entries each day on how you are doing (*use the notebook included in this packet!*). This can help you see the changes in your grief as time passes.

♥ Make a bulleted list of your thoughts and feelings if that's easier than writing paragraphs.

♥ Write a 6 word story about your grief (*more can be found at whatsyourgrief.com*).

A Letter to my loved one...

Dear _____,

I miss...

If I could go back in time, I would...

The hardest part about our ending is...

I'm really sorry for...

If you were here right now, I would...

I am thankful for...

A letter to YOU from your loved one...

Adapted from Stephanie Elson Gunner

Dear _____

(insert your name):

I want to let you know...

I am sorry...

I never...

I hope you know...

I know it has been difficult lately, because...

My advice would be...

I miss...

I am so proud of you for...

The one thing I wish I told you before I died is...

I really want you to know that...

It is okay to...

What I want for you is...

What has been
hardest for you
in your grief?
What has helped
you through
those hard times?

A few more creative ideas...

- ♥ Make a collage of quotes or lyrics that speak to you.
- ♥ What other creative outlets do you like? Making crafts? Woodworking? Painting? When you make something in honor of your person, it becomes a beautiful keepsake that you can treasure.

Physical Expression of Grief

One fact that some people are not aware of is that we experience grief within our body, so finding ways to physically release it is a great way to express some of our intense emotions!

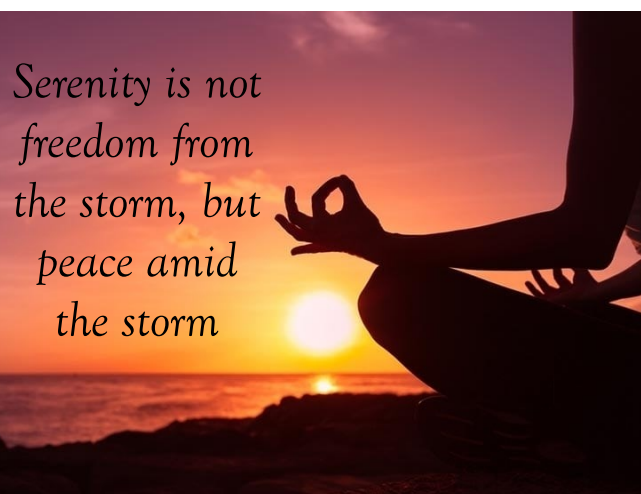
What physical activities do you enjoy?

- ♥ Do you prefer being in nature?
Go for a walk or run on a trail. Gardening is also a great way to be active outside.
- ♥ Do you enjoy dancing?
Take a class (online or in-person), or else put on some tunes and dance in your home!
- ♥ Do you want to take it easy on your joints? Try swimming, water aerobics, chair yoga, or stretch classes.
- ♥ Do you feel limited with time or other resources?
Cleaning, cooking, and other household chores keep us moving.
- ♥ Do you feel worried about where to start?
No worries! Many fitness organizations have variety of classes dedicated to specific age groups and levels.

There are so many different ways we can move in the world! Think about what you enjoy, or else, pick a new activity to try.

Movement helps us burn energy, release feelings, and increase our sense of control in the world.

List some activities you want to try:



GRIEF RITUALS AND HONORING

Often termed “rituals”, the activities we do to honor our loved ones after they have died are an extremely important part of our healing process as they help us to express our grief in purposeful and meaningful ways.

Rituals don't have to be big declarations or done in a certain time frame. (So, if you didn't get to be a part of the funeral, you can still DO something!) For example, rituals can be as simple as lighting a candle. When we do that on a significant day (such as an anniversary or birthday), add spoken words (saying, “I light this candle in honor of...” and share a memory), it becomes something much bigger than just the action: it becomes a ritual, honoring someone special. These kinds of personal rituals are powerful because they are meaningful to you and emphasize the unique relationship you had with the person that died.

Thinking about the rituals you've already done...are there ones you want to continue to do?

What new ideas do you have?

What about rituals for upcoming special days?

Are there other people you want to include in your rituals or do you want them just for you?

Some ideas for honoring your person who has died:

- ♥ Plan ahead for special days – especially birthdays, the anniversary of the death, wedding anniversary, etc. – and be purposeful about what you do to celebrate your loved one on those days.
- ♥ Visit the place of burial or the place where cremated remains were scattered.
- ♥ Do something/go somewhere that was meaningful to your special person.
- ♥ Create a sacred honoring space in your home for keepsakes and other items that remind you of your person.
- ♥ Have a balloon, dove, or butterfly release.
- ♥ Make a material or monetary donation to an agency or organization (that was important to your person or is important to you) in their name.
- ♥ Create (or have a professional create!) a special keepsake for yourself and/or to give to others in your family – a video, scrapbook, shadow box, or something using their clothing such as a teddy bear, pillow or quilt.
- ♥ Wear an item that honors your special person, such as a watch or a favorite piece of jewelry, clothing that belonged to them, or a piece with the logo of their favorite sports team.

For more information on coping with grief for all ages and additional resources, visit www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com



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