

# Grief & How to Heal

Any loss in life is painful. Grief is the response to that loss and everyone responds differently. It is easy to feel lost and alone in our grief. Some people reach out and surround themselves with others. More often than not, however, after a loss we tend to become isolated. The burden of sadness and trying to cope with everyday life becomes very heavy as we try to handle it all on our own. Still, there are resources that are easily accessed to help ease the loneliness and help us express our grief. Below are two brief lists. The first one is a list of places to turn when you feel the need for a community of people who understand what you are going through. The second is a list of activities that help us express the inexpressible and begin to heal from the unimaginable.

## Supportive resources:

### [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org)

Grief Share can assist you with finding a grief support group near you. Support groups are an effective way to stay connected with other people when we need them the most.

### [griefwatch.com](http://griefwatch.com)

Grief Watch is a spiritual resource that offers support during times of grief.

## Activities:

*Some people find that carving out a peaceful, comfortable space to work on these activities and projects enhances the experience.*

**Journaling:** Do you ever find that you just can't seem to make others understand what you are feeling? Sometimes we may not even be sure what we are feeling. Nothing in life is designed to prepare us for grief. Journaling can be a very helpful way of expressing our thoughts without fear of judgment and without the pressure of making anyone else understand. This is an activity just for you. Here are some ideas to get you started.

### *Quote Journaling*

Find a quote you like - perhaps on the Internet. When you find a quote that speaks to you, start writing about it. How does it make you feel? Why does this quote remind you of who or what you have lost? Would you change the quote in any way to make it more personal?

### *Scrapbook Journaling*

This type of journaling works well for us regardless of the type of loss we have experienced. Anytime you see a picture, a word, or a sentence that reminds you of who or what you have lost (OR that stirs feelings about that loss) cut it out, tear it out, pick it up, write it down. Take a scrapbook, a notebook, or a journal

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More on Page 2

and begin pasting these things on paper. You can write about these things; but, you certainly don't have to for it to be a powerful visual expression of your journey through grief.

### *Letter Writing*

When someone dies, so many things are left unspoken. This type of journaling can help us say the things we never got to say. We can use it to tell them what we miss about them, why we are angry or sad, or to "catch them up on" what they are missing out on by not being here (the birth of a grandchild, a wedding, or a Thanksgiving dinner).

### *Six Word Stories*

This practice presents us with a way to "get to the heart of the matter." It was inspired by Ernest Hemingway and his own six word story, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." Here you might find some ideas for journaling about your loss without spending exhausting amounts of time writing. Visit [sixwordstories.net](http://sixwordstories.net).

For more helpful information related to and for examples of grief journaling, try visiting: [journey-through-grief.com/grief-journaling](http://journey-through-grief.com/grief-journaling)

**Grief Art:** Don't think you're artistic? Wonderful! Creating art as a visual representation of our grief experience doesn't require us to be artists. The act itself has been shown to be calming and healing. Try making a memorial t-shirt quilt. (You can search this on the Internet and find many websites to help with instructions.) Maybe you can only draw stick figures or color in a coloring book. That's okay! The value in grief artwork is in the doing, not in the final product. For more helpful information on grief art visit: [recover-from-grief.com/creativity-grief](http://recover-from-grief.com/creativity-grief)

**Physical Activity:** Exercise is always good for us. We hear this all the time, right? At times – when we are experiencing intense negative emotions like sadness, anger, or fear – physical activity is even more important to our overall well-being. The problem is that when we are emotionally exhausted, it can be especially difficult to find the motivation just to get out of bed – let alone break a sweat. It's hard and nothing really makes it easier except doing it. The good news is that exercise promises to improve our mood, energize us, and promote a sense of control over our uncontrollable lives during times of grieving. It's one of those things in life that the doing of it creates the desire to do it more. Just remember: You don't have to hike the Rocky Mountains or run a marathon to enjoy the benefits of physical activity. Go for a walk, take a swim, stretch out to a video, or bike a lap around the park.

This toolkit is just that, a sampling of tools. It is by no means an exhaustive list of resources and none of these tools are an instant cure for the heart that breaks. We will always feel the loss; but, the best medicines are supportive and compassionate friends and family along with taking the time you need to heal.

If you feel you need additional help with your grieving, remember that another tool in your toolkit is your EAP. We are always available to provide supportive counseling.

## #GrowThroughGrief #GriefSupport

If you or someone you know is struggling with a loss and needs support, you can find more resources at [Good Grief](http://GoodGrief.com).