

Chapter 1 : The Mourning Handbook – Trish™'s Mental Health Resources Blog

The Mourning Handbook is written as a companion to those mourners in need of practical and emotional assistance during the trying times before and after the death of a loved one.

Her mourning continued as she cried with her family, expressed her anger, discharged her feelings of regret for not coming sooner, and took part in the wake and funeral. When you are expressing your grief, you are mourning. In all these cases mourning is an appropriate and often necessary response. If you have suffered a particularly severe loss, you may need to mourn just as much as someone who has lost a loved one. While this book focuses on the grief following a death, it can be helpful in dealing with other losses as well. Grief can begin whenever there is a loss or a perception of impending loss, but the three most common occasions are: Sometimes grief begins at the time of death. A young man whose mother was estranged from the family had rare, treasured contacts with her. When she died in an auto accident, it was several weeks before the family was notified of her death. His grief began when he got the belated news. Since grief is painful, you undoubtedly want to know how long you will have to endure this powerful emotion. A shorthand answer concerning the duration of grief is that it will take as long as it needs to take. It will take longer for some people than others, depending on the nature of their relationship to the deceased, the circumstances of the death, their support systems, how they cope with adversity, what else is going on in their lives, and the resources they have available to them. A young man called me one day to say that he was worried about his mother. His father had died and he was wondering just how long his mother would be acting so upset. I asked him how long his father had been dead and he replied, "Two weeks. You may encounter loving and well-meaning friends who hate to see you hurt and want to see your mourning end. They may not understand that the worst thing you can do is to try to shut off or deny these powerful feelings. If you have friends pushing you in this direction, simply tell them that you can recover from your grief but that you need time to work it out; when you have done so, you expect to be back on track again. See Chapter 10, "A Friend in Need. Commonly grief is sporadic. You will have good days as well as bad days. A father whose son had died a quarter century earlier said, "If I were an actor on stage and needed to produce tears, I would only have to think of my son to cry. Part of it is true, and part is myth. Time will aid in recovery from grief, but it is time that needs to be used well. Eventually, you will run out of places to go or things to do, and at that point you will have to face the void created by the death of your loved one. On the other hand, if you use your time to mourn your loss, to adjust to a different kind of life, and to get acquainted with your now somewhat altered maybe greatly altered identity, healing will occur faster. You may feel that your grief is unique. You are right, it is unique; the circumstances of your life will make it so. There is no standard recipe for grief that will apply to your situation. However, there are factors that will influence the length of your grief, and you can gain some reassurance from knowing what they are. See Chapter 6, "Differences That Matter. On the other hand, when an elderly person dies, one may feel some comfort in knowing that the person had lived a long and productive life. Cause of Death When loved ones know in advance that death is approaching, they may experience much of their grief long before the actual death. Thus, they may actually feel a somewhat guilty sense of relief when the death occurs, and what grief remains may be of short duration. Alternatively, the more sudden or violent the death, such as an unexpected fatal heart attack, car accident, or suicide, the longer one may expect grief to last. Not only will the bereaved person have had no time to prepare for the death or to say good-bye, but the suddenness and possible violence of the death will add to the burden of grief. Nature of Relationship Was your relationship with the deceased a loving, fulfilling one? Has it left you with a sense of completeness, filled with memories to be treasured? Or was your relationship with the deceased stormy and volatile? The emotions generated by those relationships will play a part in determining the length and intensity of your grief. A very common story goes like this: When this happens, the need to mourn is still there and will emerge at a later date, perhaps weeks or months later. Such complications will lengthen your grief and mourning period. Support Systems The support and understanding you have around you will make a big difference in how you experience and handle your grief. Do you have a family that has rallied to your needs, or do you feel isolated

and abandoned? Do you have care and understanding at your workplace, or are you expected to be percent productive immediately? How about your friends? Are they loving and supportive, or are they making comments such as, "Come on now, put this behind you"? The more support you have, the quicker your recovery from grief will be, but you will still need time to reflect on your loss, to mourn, and to become comfortable with the changes in your life. Resources One Can Command Communities are becoming more aware of the needs of the bereaved and are developing more resources to help people like you recover from their grief. Check your library or local bookstore for appropriate books. Watch for announcements of lectures that may be informative. Search out any support groups that would apply to your needs by checking with your local newspaper, mental health center, library bulletin board, library reference desk, church, temple, or local hospice. Support groups are informal gatherings of people who are dealing with similar situations in their lives. It is often very comforting to be with others who can "really understand" how you feel. For more help, see the Bibliography and Resources at the back of this book. At times of crisis what was your response? Did you seek out information and help, or did you simply try to ignore what was happening and hope that it would pass? Did you get activated in solving the problem, or did you bury yourself in your work? Refining your coping skills can help shorten your grief. Sexual Differences "Vive la difference," said the Frenchman about the sexes. But the differences are not as great as some would have us believe. Popular culture allows women to show their emotions and seek support but requires men to be "strong," which is defined as not showing any emotion. Men are expected to make the tough decisions, take on the unpleasant jobs, and never cry. This need not be so. In fact, it is unhealthy for anyone to lock up his emotions; they need to be expressed. Chopping wood, physical exercise, or building a guest room on the house are outlets that may be more comfortable to a man. Years ago the father of two dead sons poured his sorrow into creating a beautiful azalea garden in Washington, D. Also, it is now quite common for men to attend support groups to help them deal with their grief. There they find other men to talk to who share their feelings of anger and remorse. Keeping in mind the definition of grief as "intense emotional suffering," you can look forward, at some point, to an end to these overwhelming emotions. This does not mean that you will cease feeling sad or wistful, nor does it mean that you will forget your loved one. However, it does mean that the intense emotional conflicts which you may be experiencing today can be brought to an end as you integrate this loss into your changed life. See the introduction to Chapter 9 and sections 9. The answers lie, not in theory, but in observed human experience. People who try to ignore the powerful, deep-seated emotions of grief usually see them reappear later in disturbing forms: There are no more powerful feelings than those arising from grief--ignore them at your peril. However, by learning to identify these feelings you can learn how to express them and thus avoid all those unpleasant alternatives. Understanding the Grief Process There is more to grief than what you may be feeling right now. While writers have approached the subject in different ways, there is general agreement that grieving is a process and that grieving people can help themselves by better understanding what is happening to them. Writers on the subject of grief have attempted to identify different aspects of the process. Her book *On Death and Dying*, although written for the dying person, is really a book on grieving, helpful not only to the dying but to the bereaved as well. Her five stages consisted of the following:

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The Mourning Handbook is written as a companion to those mourners in need of practical and emotional assistance during the trying times before and after the death of.

Chapter 3 : The Grief Recovery Handbook - The Grief Recovery Method

The Mourning Handbook: The Most Comprehensive Resource Offering Practical and Compassionate Advice on Coping with All Aspects of Death and Dying by Helen Fitzgerald in FB2, FB3, TXT download e-book.

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"The Mourning Handbook" is excellent and it hits the nail on the head when it comes to the pain of grief! This book has brought me a lot of comfort and relief as I dealt with the unexpected deaths of several loved ones in my life.