

Your Own Best Friend

Adapted from **Life After Loss** by Bob Deits

You have experienced grief for only one reason. You are alive. You don't deserve the pain or exhaustion, the emptiness, sadness or frustration that accompanies grief. **But, as long as you are alive, you will experience loss from time to time.** Some losses will be small and you will soon forget them. Others will change the course of your life. It is up to you whether your major losses destroy you or help you grow into a stronger, better person. No one can make you grow through loss, but nothing can keep you from growth either.

When you can say, "I made it through this year," you will be acknowledging the greatest accomplishment of your life! You have been in the depths. You have faced the worst experiences in your life. You have endured more emotional pain longer than you dreamed you could. You have made decisions that a few months earlier were unthinkable. In the midst of your own hurt, you have reached out to others who were also grieving.

You are now beginning to look at the possibilities of a new life. You didn't ask for a new life. You didn't want it. But now that it's here, you will make the most of it. It seems to offer its own joys. In spite of the ongoing loneliness, you are regaining your balance in life. Here's a three-word formula for shaking off that loneliness: Release....Reorient....Reconnect.

Release – It is painful to release the emotional ties to that part of your life that has been lost, but you will never fully recover your balance until you do. To release your attachment doesn't mean to forget or to deny the importance of that part of your life. It means you understand this person will not be a part of your present life, but will live forever in your memories.

Reorient – The next step in reaching out to a new life involves giving yourself permission to begin reorienting your interests and activities in new directions. You will not overcome loneliness by thinking about solutions. You overcome loneliness by becoming concerned about other people. Once you discover that you are your own best friend, you can share your friendship with other people. You don't just think about it, however; **You do it!**

Reconnect – Begin opening doors to new experiences. Think of something you wanted to do before your loss, but could not. Do that thing now. Make an effort to **begin meeting new people.** You will sense that it is time to leave the past and get on with the present and the future.