

APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS YOU CAN HAVE FOR YOURSELF IN GRIEF

Your grief will take longer than most people think

Your grief will take more energy than you would have ever imagined

Your grief will involve many changes and will be continually developing

Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life: psychological, social, physical, spiritual

Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss

You will grieve for things both symbolic and tangible, not just the death alone.

You will grieve for what you have lost already and for what you have lost for the 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

You will grieve the needs that go unmet because of the loss

Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions. Not solely those that are generally associated with grief such as sadness and depression.

The loss will resurrect old issues, feelings and unresolved conflicts from the past

You will have some identity confusion as the result of this major loss

You may experience reactions that are quite different for you

You may have a combination of anger and depression, such as irritability, frustration, annoyance and intolerance

You will likely experience feelings of guilt

You will have a lack of self-concern

You may experience grief spasms, acute upsurges of grief that occur suddenly with no warning

You may have trouble thinking clearly, problems with memory and difficulty with decision making

You may feel like you are going crazy

You may be obsessed with the death and preoccupied with the deceased

You may begin a search for meaning and may question your religion and philosophy of life

You may find yourself acting socially in ways different from before

You may find yourself having a number of physical reactions

Society will have unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately to you.

Others may judge the “length” of your grieving – too much, too little, just right

You may find that there are certain dates, events, and stimuli such as music, aromas, and other stimuli that bring upsurges of grief

Certain experiences later in life may temporarily resurrect your grief

In summary, your grief will bring, depending upon the combination of factors above, an intense amount of emotion that may surprise you and those around you. Most of us are unprepared for the global response we have to a major loss. Our expectations tend to be unrealistic. More often than not, we receive insufficient assistance from friends and society. Your grief may not only be more intense than you expected, but it will also be manifested in more areas and ways than you ever anticipated. You can expect to continue to experience brief stimuli that remind you of what you have lost. Your grief will be very individual and dependent upon the meaning of your loss, your own personality characteristics, the manner of death, your social support, and your physical state.

From: How to Go On Living When Someone Dies Therese A. Rando, PH.D.