

When Someone You Love has Died: Steps to Survival

Healing has progressions and regressions. Healing and growth is not a smooth upward progression, but full of ups and downs.

Take good care of yourself. Get plenty of rest. Stick to a schedule. Plan your days. Activity will give you some sense of order.

Keep decision-making to a minimum. Expect your judgment to be clouded for a while. You are going through change; don't add additional ones.

Seek comforting. Don't just accept support from others - seek it. It's human and courageous.

Surround yourself with living things. A new plant, pet, or bowl of fresh fruit.

Re-affirm your beliefs. Use your faith right now - explore it, lean on it - grow.

Weekends and holidays are the worst. Schedule activities you particularly enjoy.

Do your mourning now. Allow yourself to be with your pain - it will pass sooner. Postponed grief can return later to haunt you. Grief feelings will be expressed one way or another.

Be gentle with yourself. You have suffered a disabling emotional wound - treat yourself with care.

Let yourself heal completely. Give yourself time. You are a convalescent right now. Don't jump into new things too quickly.

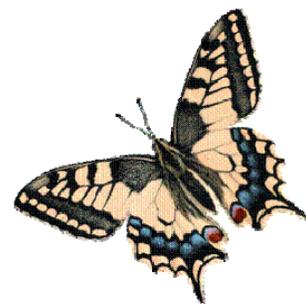
Keep nutrition in mind. Good eating habits help the healing process.

Recognize your vulnerability. Your resistance will be low - invite help from only those who are trustworthy.

Beware of the rebound. There's a hole. Be careful about rushing to fill it.

Be alert to addictive activities. Alcohol, drugs, food diversions - can all momentarily help us escape from pain. We can become addicts, and these never help us to heal.

Keep a journal. Putting your thoughts and feelings on paper is a good way to get them out. You can also look back and see just how far you've come.



Heal at your own pace. Never compare yourself to another grieving person. Each of us has our own time clock.

Begin to look to the future. Begin to experiment with new lifestyles- new ways of filling the day. They might even turn out to be fun.

Give yourself praise. You are a richer, deeper, wiser person. You may begin to understand that change and separation are a natural part of living. You are a better person for having loved.

Be open. Give yourself opportunities to meet new people, places, ideas, experiences, but don't forget to build on the past. Don't throw out what has been worthwhile to you. Small changes are the best at first.

Begin to give of yourself. Giving can bring you the greatest joy. It is healing.

Expect relapses. There will always be certain things that will trigger sadness again. This is normal.

Enjoy your freedom. You are now in control. Make the most of your choices - you can even learn to take risks.

Celebrate your survival.