

15 Things I Wish I'd Known About Grief

After a year of grief, I've learned a lot. I've also made some mistakes along the way. Today, I jotted down 15 things I wish I'd known about grief when I started my own process. I pass this onto anyone on the journey.

- 1.** You will feel like the world has ended. I promise, it hasn't. Life *will* go on, slowly. A new normal will come, slowly.
- 2.** No matter how bad a day feels, it is *only* a day. When you go to sleep crying, you will wake up to a new day.
- 3.** Grief comes in waves. You might be okay one hour, not okay the next. Okay one day, not okay the next day. Okay one month, not okay the next. Learn to go with the flow of what your heart and mind are feeling.
- 4.** It's okay to cry. Do it often. But it's okay to laugh, too. Don't feel guilty for feeling positive emotions even when dealing with loss.
- 5.** Take care of yourself, even if you don't feel like it. Eat healthily. Work out. Do the things you love. Remember that *you* are still living.
- 6.** Don't shut people out. Don't cut yourself off from relationships. You will hurt yourself and others.
- 7.** No one will respond perfectly to your grief. People—even people you love—will let you down. Friends you thought would be there won't be there, and people you hardly know will reach out. Be prepared to give others grace. Be prepared to work through hurt and forgiveness at others' reactions.
- 8.** God *will* be there for you perfectly. He will never, ever let you down. He will let you scream, cry, and question. Throw all your emotions at Him. He is near to the broken-hearted.
- 9.** Take time to truly remember the person you lost. Write about him or her, go back to all your memories with them, truly soak in all the good times you had with that person. It will help.
- 10.** Facing the grief is better than running. Don't hide from the pain. If you do, it will fester and grow and consume you.
- 11.** You will ask "Why?" more times than you thought possible, but you may never get an answer. What helps is asking, "How? How can I live life more fully to honor my loved one? How can I love better, how can I embrace others, how can I change and grow because of this?"
- 12.** You will try to escape grief by getting busy, busy, busy. You will think that if you *don't* think about it, it'll just go away. This isn't really true. Take time to process and heal.
- 13.** Liquor, sex, drugs, hobbies, work, relationships, etc., will not take the pain away. If you are using anything to try and numb the pain, it will make things worse in the long run. Seek help if you're dealing with the sorrow in unhealthy ways.
- 14.** It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to need people. It's okay, it's okay, it's okay.
- 15.** Grief can be beautiful and deep and profound. Don't be afraid of it. Walk alongside it. You may be surprised at what grief can teach you.

What are things you've learned about grief that you wish you'd known when your loss first happened?

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