

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 be continually developing.
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life: psychological, social, physical.
- Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss.
- You will grieve for many 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 in 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, and for the needs that will go unmet because of the death.
- Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions, not solely those that are generally thought of as grief, such as depression and sadness.
- The loss will resurrect old issues, feelings, and unresolved conflicts from the past.
- You will have some identity confusion as a result of this major loss and the fact that you are experiencing reactions that may be unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable.
- You may have a combination of anger and depression, such as irritability, frustration, annoyances, or intolerance.
- You may feel some anger and guilt or at least some manifestation of these emotions.
- You may have a lack of self-concern. This is one reason why it is important to have people around who care for you.
- You may experience grief spasms-acute upsurges of grief that occurs suddenly with no warning.
- You will have trouble thinking (memory, organization, and intellectual processing) and making decisions (commonly referred to as "grief fog").
- You may feel like you're going crazy.
- You may be obsessed with the death and fixated on the deceased for a long time.
- You may begin a search for meaning and may question your own religion and/or philosophy of life.
- You may find yourself acting socially in ways that are different from before.
- You may find yourself having a number of physical reactions.
- You may find that there are certain dates, events, and stimuli that bring upsurges in grief.
- **Society will have unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately to you.**
- Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense grief for you temporarily.

Source: Rando, TA (1991). *How to go on living when someone you love dies*. Bantam Books.