

**Recommended Resource:**

**Daya Counselling Centre**

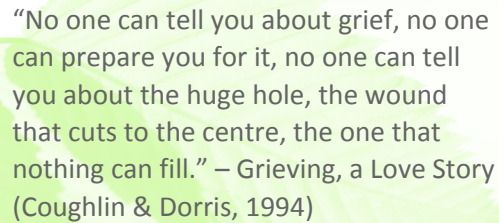
[www.dayacounselling.on.ca](http://www.dayacounselling.on.ca)

This website offers several resources including books, videos, helpful links, and contact information for resources across the region. To view this list of resources, click on 'Bereavement', then 'Resources', and lastly 'Seasons of the Heart'.



# LIVING THROUGH Grief

What grieving people have shared from their experience



“No one can tell you about grief, no one can prepare you for it, no one can tell you about the huge hole, the wound that cuts to the centre, the one that nothing can fill.” – Grieving, a Love Story (Coughlin & Dorris, 1994)

### **Living with sorrow and joy**

Surviving through grief is difficult. Life can feel hopeless and one can feel terribly alone. The sadness we experience with the death of a loved one comes as a painful reminder of how important relationships are in our lives. Your relationship with them had its own special meaning. It may feel that when they died, so did a part of you. As a result, you may feel that you will never be the same again. You were changed by their life and you are changed by their death.

However, it is also true that the world would be worse without grief. Before grief, there is deep love. Sorrow and joy seem connected in this experience we call life and the challenge is in living both, fully and deeply because the one awakens us to the other.

### **The emotional, spiritual and physical feelings of grief**

We certainly do not ‘get over’ grief. We move *through* it. It can cause emotional and spiritual pain, including feelings of sadness, anger, guilt, loneliness, shock, fear, and regret. Grief also has physical

### **Grandy’s Recipe for Tear Soup**

#### ***Helpful ingredients to consider:***

- A pot full of tears
- One heart willing to be broken
- A dash of bitters
- A bunch of good friends
- Many handfuls of comfort food
- A lot of patience
- Plenty of exercise
- A variety of helpful reading material
- Enough self care
- Season with memories
- Optional: one good therapist and/or support group
- Buckets of water to replace the tears


#### ***Directions:***

Choose the size pot that fits your loss. It’s okay to increase pot size if you miscalculated. Combine ingredients. Set the temperature for a moderate heat. Cooking times will vary depending on the ingredients needed. Strong flavors will mellow over time. Stir often. Cook no longer than you need to.

#### ***Suggestions:***

- Be creative.
- Trust your instincts.
- Cry when you want to, laugh when you can.
- Freeze some soup to use as a starter for next time.
- Keep your own soup making journal so you won’t forget.

***Serves: One***



a new life emerging from within the darkness. Trust the process that is taking place within. One day, you will realize that you are living once again, that your laughter is different and your sense of peace and balance seems to be returning.

### **An unforeseen gift**

You may also discover an unforeseen gift: that your whole way of being in life has changed from their death. You are living life more richly, you are paying greater attention to what is truly important and not sweating over the stuff that used to bother you. Your loved one's death may have awoken you to a richer life. That is a gift the grief journey can bring to us. Your loved one becomes woven into the fabric of your being and you take them with you into your new way of being alive. This is the miracle we call 'life.' Spring follows winter. In the winter of your grief, be as gentle in the process with yourself as you would with a dear friend and hold onto the trust that spring will find its way through once again.

The following passage is a unique recipe that has served many over the years from a storybook for children and adults called, "Tear Soup," by Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen.

*May your heart be  
comforted and gently healed.*

symptoms; you may lose your appetite, have difficulty concentrating or performing a simple, everyday task. Sleeping can become a challenge and we may find ourselves awakening from disturbing dreams throughout the night. You may feel a whole range of physical sensations such as tightening in the throat, heaviness in your chest, headaches, stomach troubles and feeling tired.

### **Healthy grieving**


Grieving is hard work. You may hear the person's voice, set a place at the table for them, see them in a crowd, and find yourself still saying "we". You are not losing your mind, this is healthy grieving. Talking about our loved ones with those who are wise enough to just listen can be very healing. We cannot simply erase them from our lives.


### **There is no right way to grieve**

It is important to remember that there is no right way to grieve; everyone's grief has their own special needs and timing. We need to be gentle with ourselves and put aside the inner voices that say, "I should be over it by now." Take it one day at a time. On the really hard days, take it one breath at a time.

### **Sharing memories as a healing process**

As you move through your healing journey, there may be moments when emotions and memories will arise. Let the good memories comfort you. You may discover that other people hold a memory





no one else does. Share these memories with each other and you may gain a more complete picture of their life. Memory sharing can be a very healing experience and way of honouring their life.

### **Grieving what cannot be**

Part of the grieving process may involve grieving the loss of shared dreams for the future and life experiences you hoped to share with your loved one. If you expected a long future ahead of you with your loved one, you may mourn for what now cannot be shared together.

### **Feelings of Guilt**

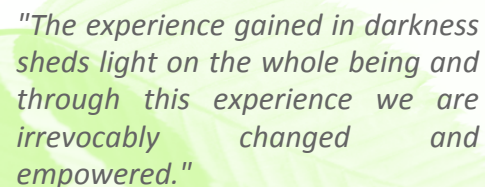
Your grief may also include feelings of guilt. Your mind may replay your loved one's process of dying and the time of their death. While you replay such thoughts, you may find yourself asking, "Did I do the right things?" or "Could I have done more?" Witnessing the suffering of someone we love brings heartache that can last for a long time after their actual passing. It can cause painful guilt, anger and a feeling that somehow we could have or should have done more to lessen their suffering. Remember that you did your best and that compassion for yourself is the only response that is needed.

### **Listen to your feelings**

An important thing to keep in mind as you live through your grief is to 'keep feeling.' There are a many ways that our intuition will guide us towards our healing if we

listen to it and act upon what feels right in that moment, no matter how crazy or unusual it may seem. People have shared stories about gardening at midnight, re-arranging their furniture ten times, or writing a letter to their loved one at 4 a.m. saying all the things they wished they had said. Perhaps you find yourself going through photos or videos over and over, or choosing not to clean out the closets ...just yet. Your instincts are not crazy; they will guide you to your healing journey.

### **Will life be joyful again?**



*"The experience gained in darkness sheds light on the whole being and through this experience we are irrevocably changed and empowered."*

Tsultrim Alione

As we move through our grief, breath by breath, we discover that over time we are transforming into a new sense of being alive. During the worst times of your grieving, you may doubt whether life will ever seem joyful and worthwhile again. It will.

Just as it takes months to create the new life of a baby within the darkness of a womb, hidden away, so is the process of healing through times of pain. This ongoing journey with your loved one, including their death, becomes woven deeply into your life story and you will find

