Loss and Grief

A Gentle Guide to Healing Your Heart

Barbara's Psychic Mediums – Free E-Books

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Introduction

Grief and loss are universal experiences that everyone will encounter at some point in life. It may involve the loss of a loved one, a relationship, a job, or even a pet.

These experiences can have a profound emotional impact and can disrupt our sense of stability and security in life.

Grief is the natural process that follows loss. It is an emotional reaction that can range from sadness and anger to guilt and even relief.

Everyone grieves in their own unique way, and there is no “right” way to grieve. It is important to recognize that grief is a personal and often unpredictable process.

Loss can also affect us in unexpected ways. It can cause physical symptoms such as fatigue, insomnia and changes in appetite.

In addition, it can affect our ability to function in daily life, making it difficult to work, maintain social relationships or even perform simple tasks.

Grief and loss are incredibly personal and painful experiences. It is perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed, sad or even confused. Everyone processes this in their own way and at their own pace.

There is no “right” way to grieve, but there are steps and tips that can help make it more bearable.

We share some suggestions below, based on insights from our experts at barbara-psychicmedium.com, to support you during this difficult time.

Remember: be gentle with yourself, and it is okay to ask for help.

Grief and Loss Felt in Your Body

Grief and loss can literally manifest in your body, and that is completely normal and understandable. It is as if your emotional pain translates into physical sensations, because grief is an intense stress response that affects your entire system.

Many people experience this, and it can range from mild to overwhelming. It is a sign that your body is also grieving, and it deserves attention and care.

We list the most common symptoms below, based on expert insights, so that you can recognize them. Remember: this is not a diagnosis, but a helpful tool. If it feels heavy, talk about it with your GP or therapist.

Common physical symptoms of grief

These complaints often occur and can come and go, sometimes in waves.

Fatigue: Extreme tiredness or listlessness, as if your battery is empty. This is one of the most common complaints.

Sleep problems: difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much; dreams or nightmares can also occur.

Headaches or dizziness, tension headaches, migraine-like pain or a fuzzy feeling in your head.

Chest pain or tightness, pressure on the chest, shortness of breath, a lump in your throat or sighing tendencies. It can feel like a panic attack.

Stomach complaints: a hollow feeling in your stomach, stomach pain, heartburn, changes in appetite (eating less or more), or bowel problems.

Increased heart rate or tension. Faster heart rate, tense muscles, or a general restless feeling.

Concentration problems, difficulty focusing, forgetfulness or poorer memory – your brain is in “survival mode”.

Reduced resistance, Easier to get sick, such as colds, due to a weakened immune system.

These symptoms often arise because grief releases hormones and stress chemicals, such as cortisol, which throws your body out of balance.

They can last for weeks to months, but usually become milder over time. If they are intense or do not diminish, it is wise to seek professional help.

Tips to Relieve Physical Grief Symptoms

It is so important to support your body during grief. These complaints are a normal part of the process, but with gentle self-care, you can often make them a little milder.

We share practical tips below, based on reliable insights, that help many people. Remember: always listen to your own body and start small. What works for one person may not work for another.

Practical tips to relieve physical grief symptoms

Sleep and rest. Maintain a regular rhythm: go to bed and get up at the same time every day, aim for at least 8 hours of sleep. If fatigue strikes, take short naps or rest moments, such as a warm bath. This helps against exhaustion and sleep disturbances.

Movement Stay gently active, such as daily walking, cycling or yoga. It doesn't have to be intense. Movement reduces tension, headaches and tightness by releasing endorphins.

Nutrition and hydration: Eat a healthy, balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids, even if you have no appetite. Choose nutritious meals and drink plenty of water. This supports your energy and reduces stomach complaints or dizziness.

Relaxation and breathing Practice deep breathing: breathe calmly in through your nose and out through your mouth to reduce tension. Try mindfulness, yoga or a relaxing hobby to calm your nervous system.

Emotional expression: Cry when the tears come, talk to someone or write down your feelings. This can relieve physical pressure, such as a lump in your throat or chest tightness.

Distraction and structure: Build a daily routine with pleasant distractions, such as a hobby or time in nature. This helps with concentration problems and gives your body rest.

These tips are not a quick fix, but they can bring relief step by step. Be patient with yourself; grief is heavy, and you deserve all the gentleness.

Mindfulness Apps for Grief and Loss

Mindfulness can help you observe your emotions without judgment, and some apps offer special meditations for loss and grief.

We have made a selection based on reliable sources, focusing on apps that are often recommended for emotional healing.

Below is an overview with short descriptions of why they fit with grief.

Try one that appeals to you and start small: a few minutes a day can already make a difference.

Insight Timer is a popular app with thousands of free meditation sessions. It is ideal for processing grief, with themes such as acceptance and healing. Community support makes it extra comforting.

MyLife Meditation asks about your mood (such as sad) and offers tailored meditation. It helps you become aware of emotions and provides tools for acceptance. Free with premium options.

Buddhify Meditation on the go, with sessions for different moments, including dealing with grief. The wheel design makes it easy to choose a suitable exercise with a one-time payment.

The Kübler-Ross Model – 5 Stages

The Kübler-Ross model is a valuable tool for understanding grief, although it is not a perfect blueprint for everyone.

The model helps many people recognize their emotions, but remember: your grief is unique, and it is okay if it does not fit exactly. Let's look at it step by step.

Origin and basis of the model

The Kübler-Ross model, also known as the "five stages of grief", was introduced in 1969 by the Swiss-American psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her book "On Death and Dying".

She based it on her work with terminally ill patients, but it was later applied to grief in a broader sense, such as the loss of a loved one.

The idea is that people often go through emotional stages with major loss or change, but Kübler-Ross herself emphasized that this is not a fixed order: it can go back and forth, and not everyone experiences all stages.

The model has become popular because it normalizes grief and gives words to complex feelings.

The five stages are explained.

Each stage describes a possible emotional reaction, with examples of how it can manifest in grief. Remember: this is not a linear process; you can skip stages, repeat them or experience them simultaneously.

Stage of Denial: You refuse to accept the reality to buffer the pain. It feels like a protection mechanism.

Example: "This can't be true, it must be a dream."

Stage of Anger: Frustration and anger arise, directed at yourself, others or fate.

Example: "Why is this happening to me? It's unfair!"

Stage of Bargaining: You try to make deals with a higher power or rewrite the past to avoid the pain.

Example: "If I had paid more attention, this wouldn't have happened."

Stage of Depression: Deep sadness and hopelessness set in; you grieve for what has been lost.

Example: “Everything feels meaningless without them.”

Stage of Acceptance: You begin to accept the loss and find a way to move forward, although the missing remains.

Example: “It happened, and I’m learning to live with it.”

These stages are meant as a tool to recognize emotions, not as a checklist.

In later works, such as *On Grief and Grieving* (2005), Kübler-Ross, together with co-author David Kessler, wrote that grief is messy and does not fit neatly into packages.

Criticisms and modern insights

Although the model helps many people, it is not without criticism. Researchers point out that it is not strongly supported by empirical evidence.

Grief does not follow a predictable path, and the idea of “stages” can make people feel they are doing it “wrong” if it does not go linearly.

Originally, it was about the dying, not the grieving, and studies show that emotions tend to rise and fall like a rollercoaster, sometimes repeating.

Some experts, including an analysis in Psychology Today, emphasize that acceptance is not always the end and that grief varies across individuals and cultures.

Modern adaptations make the model more flexible. For example, it is now also used in change management, including organizational changes, under the name “Kübler-Ross Change Curve”.

David Kessler later added a sixth stage: “meaning” (finding meaning), in which you integrate the loss into your life and gain growth from it.

Criticisms also warn against the model as a “myth”. Not everyone reaches acceptance, and emotions can fluctuate rather than progress.

Books on Grief and Loss for Children

Whether you are looking for picture books for young children, stories for older children or guides for adults on how children grieve, we have made a selection based on recommendations from experts and parents.

We focus mainly on children's books that make grief discussable, but we also add a few titles for guidance. Choose what suits the age and situation; it is okay to read them together and share emotions.

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst (3–8 years).

A beautiful and comforting picture book about the invisible string of love that connects us to the people (and pets) we love, even after they are gone.

The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld (4–8 years).

A gentle story about a child who is sad after a big loss: the rabbit listens – a wonderful example of how being present can help.

Ida, Always by Caron Levis (4–8 years).

A touching book about two best friends (bears) and how one of them deals with the loss of the other. Honest, warm and full of love.

The Memory Tree by Britta Teckentrup (4–8 years).

A beautiful story about remembering a loved one who has passed away and keeping their memory alive in your heart.

When Dinosaurs Die by Laurie Krasny Brown (5–9 years).

A clear and honest guide for children that explains death and grief in a simple, age-appropriate way.

Books on Pet Loss

Saying goodbye to a beloved pet can bring such deep sadness, and it is completely understandable if you want to seek comfort in books.

Pets are often like family members, and their loss deserves attention and care. We have selected a range of valuable English books, both for adults and children, based on recommendations and insights.

The Invisible Leash by Patrice Karst (all ages).

The beautiful sequel to *The Invisible String*. It helps children (and adults) understand that love for a pet never disappears, even after the pet has passed.

Dog Heaven by Cynthia Rylant (all ages).

A warm and comforting picture book about what heaven might look like for dogs. Full of love and hope.

Cat Heaven by Cynthia Rylant (all ages).

The same loving message, but for cats. Gentle and reassuring for anyone missing a feline friend.

Goodbye, Friend by Gary Kowalski (adults & older children).

A practical and heartfelt guide with rituals and comforting words for grieving the loss of a pet.

I'll Always Love You by Hans Wilhelm (all ages).

A classic and very touching story about a boy saying goodbye to his dog. Simple, emotional and beautiful.

Afterword

The Importance of Offering Support

Offering support to someone who is grieving is of immeasurable value. The loss of a loved one or a significant change can have a deep impact on someone's emotional and mental well-being.

It is crucial to realize that grieving people often do not want to be alone in their pain, and that the presence of friends and family can be an enormous source of comfort. Offering support means actively listening, showing empathy and offering practical help.

It is important to understand that every person's grieving process is unique and that there is no "right" way to grieve. Therefore, it is essential to be flexible and patient.

Sometimes offering support means being present and listening without trying to solve the problem. Recognizing a grieving person's feelings and giving them space to express their emotions can be enormously healing.

In addition to emotional support, practical help can also make a big difference. This can range from preparing meals to helping with daily chores.

These small gestures can take a huge burden off the grieving person's shoulders and give them space to focus on their healing process. Showing practical support and care can often be just as valuable as emotional support.

How to Deal with Your Own Emotions While Supporting Others

Supporting someone who is grieving can be emotionally exhausting, and it is important to also work on your own well-being. It is normal to experience feelings of sadness, frustration and powerlessness when you witness the suffering of someone you love.

It is crucial to recognize your own boundaries and know when you need a break or extra support.

Self-care is essential. This can mean taking time for activities you enjoy and that help you relax, such as exercising, reading or spending time with friends.

It can also be helpful to share your own emotions with a trusted friend, family member or therapist. Expressing your feelings can help relieve the pressure and enable you to better care for the grieving person.

It is also important to have realistic expectations of yourself. You cannot take away all the pain and sadness of the grieving person, and that is okay. What you can do is be there, listen and offer support in the ways you can. Remember that your presence and care can have a big impact, even if it sometimes seems like you are not doing enough.

Common Misconceptions About Grief

Many misconceptions about grief can make it difficult to offer effective support. One common misconception is that grief is a linear process with a clear beginning and end. In reality, grief is a complex and changeable process that is different for everyone. It is important to understand that grief has no fixed time frame and that it can come and go in waves.

Another misconception is that people should be "over" their loss after a certain time. Grief is not something you overcome; it is something you learn to integrate into your life. The loss of a loved one can affect someone for years or even a lifetime, and that is perfectly normal. It is important to be patient and understanding, no matter how long the grieving process lasts.

Some people may think it is better not to talk about the deceased so as not to burden the grieving person further. In fact, sharing memories and honoring the deceased can be comforting. It can help the grieving person feel that their loved one is not forgotten and that their life had a lasting impact.

With love,

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