



Myths of Grief

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Myth #1: Grief and mourning are the same experience.

Most people tend to use the words grief and mourning interchangeably. However, there is an important distinction between them. We have learned that people move toward healing not by just grieving, but through mourning. Simply stated, grief describes the internal thoughts and feelings we experience when someone we love dies. Mourning, on the other hand, is taking the internal experience of grief and expressing it outside ourselves.

Myth #2: There Is a predictable and orderly progression to the experience of grief.

Stage-like thinking about both dying and grief has become an appealing idea to many people. somehow the “stages of grief” have helped people make sense out of an experience that isn’t as orderly and predictable as we would like it to be. Each person’s grief is uniquely his or her own. It is neither predictable nor orderly.

Myth #3: It is best to move away from grief and mourning instead of toward it.

Many grieverers do not give themselves permission or receive permission from others to mourn. We live in a society that often encourages people to prematurely move away from their grief instead of toward it. Many people view grief as something to overcome rather than experience. the result is that many of us either grieve in isolation or attempt to run away from our grief.

Myth #4: Tears expressing grief are only a sign of weakness.

Unfortunately, many people associate tears of grief with personal inadequacy or weakness. Crying on the part of the mourner often generates feelings of helplessness in friends, family and caregivers. Out of a wish to protect mourners from pain, friends and family may try to stop the tears. Comments such as “Tears won’t bring him back ”and “He wouldn’t want you to cry” discourage the expression of tears.

Myth #5: The goal is to “get over” your grief.

We have all heard people ask, “Are you over it yet?” To think we as human beings “get over” grief is ridiculous! We never “get over” our grief but instead become reconciled to it.