

# Working Through the Grief Process

Any significant change in life, large or small, represents a loss. And loss prompts a well-documented grief process. Learn to recognize the stages and move through them with intention, allowing yourself to “feel the feelings.” Failure to move through the process thoroughly can bring self-management to a standstill, leaving you stuck emotionally. Unresolved grief can stunt your ability to experience authentic relationships or enjoy a peaceful and purposeful life.

Journaling can help you process your grief therapeutically. Writing is important. Invest in your own healing process by writing out your responses to the following questions. Take your time. Do as much or as little each day as you wish.

## **DENIAL: “This can’t be happening.”**

- What do I know about what happened?
- What were the circumstances, and how did it happen?
- Did I have any warnings that this loss was a possibility?
- What am I most afraid of?
- How am I feeling physically and emotionally right now?

## **ANGER: “Why is this happening to me?”**

- Whose fault is this, really? Who am I blaming?
- Am I angry with myself, another person, or God? Describe.
- What can I do about this anger to “let it out” appropriately?
- Am I ashamed or embarrassed about anything related to this loss?

## **BARGAINING: “IF ONLY...”**

- Am I hanging on to a person, place, or thing that is unhealthy or unrealistic?
- Am I refusing to accept reality and instead fantasizing about “what if...?”
- Am I pretending nothing has changed?
- Am I afraid to feel the sadness, doing whatever I can to delay the impact?

## **DEPRESSION: “LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.”**

- Am I allowing myself the time and privacy I need to mourn fully?
- What am I feeling at this time? (Describe in detail.)
- Am I allowing myself to fully feel my feelings, or am I avoiding them?
- If I’m avoiding my feelings, what am I using/doing to numb them? What is this costing me?
- Who do I know who can support and comfort me during this time? Do I need to ask for help?
- Am I eating properly, getting enough rest, and getting a little exercise daily?

## **ACCEPTANCE: “IT WILL BE OK. I WILL BE OK.”**

- What can I say about my readiness to accept what has happened and what it means for my future?
- Have I come to terms with the loss, recognizing what it means for me and my life? Describe.
- Am I beginning to see a path forward? What options do I have? What steps do I need to take?
- Do I need help to develop a plan for the future? Who can I discuss this with and what resources do I have?

## **SURRENDER: “EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON.”**

- Are my emotions surrounding this loss less intense and more peaceful?
- Can I say for sure that I am harboring no resentment or bitterness? Have I forgiven fully?
- What about this loss can I express gratitude for? Has it brought about any new insights or strengths in me?
- How can I use what I’ve learned and experienced to help others? Am I willing to do that?

