

# DOWNLOAD PDF TWO PARENTS, AND AT LEAST TWO WAYS OF GRIEVING

## Chapter 1 : Grief - Wikipedia

*Nanette Klinect lost her amazing daughter Katie in a bike accident in April of She graciously agreed to share this list of ideas of things people did for her family, things she wished people had done and some suggestions from a support group for grieving parents that she is a part of.*

The Tragic Loss of a Child Parents grief In our previous discussions about the different types of losses by death that may occur, we have made note of how difficult and trying most of them can be. Grief following sudden death, trauma, suicide or murder can be very hard to deal with due to the emotional overlay usually present. But no matter how one loses a child, whether by prolonged illness or sudden death, the loss of a child is perhaps the most profound, the most overwhelming, the most inconsolable of losses to deal with. There are many reasons for this: It violates the natural order of things your children are not supposed to die before you. Your love for your child is unconditional and pure perhaps the most profound of attachments you will ever have. You as a parent are responsible for the well-being of your children. No matter how random the accident was, you will probably feel like you let your baby down. You may feel responsible for the death, even if that blame is not justified. A woman may blame a miscarriage or stillbirth on something she did during pregnancy. The uncertain causes of a SIDS death brings a special kind of guilty hell for parents who think there was something they could have done to prevent the death. Guilt is almost always present in the death of a child. We are so very sorry for the loss of your child and wish you strength to make it through. You must take care, however, to avoid unfairly blaming other family members or your spouse. Following the loss of your child, you may find that some of your friends avoid you. The death will make them very uncomfortable. It may force them to contemplate the mortality of their own kids It could happen to them. If only they knew that all you wanted was for them to listen! Sadly, emotional and social support is often withdrawn when you need it the most. If they do show up later in your mourning, it will be to encourage you to get over the loss. Grief due to losing a child is so painful that they just want it to go away. If only it were that easy! It has been said that a major tragedy will either bind a couple together, or tear them apart. If your marriage or relationship was conflicted or on shaky ground before this tragedy happens, it may be difficult to save it. In lashing out at the injustice of the loss, you may well blame your partner for the death, which can be devastating. People also grieve in different ways, so try not to misunderstand motives, reactions and feelings that may be different from yours. Marriage counseling may help you two see what is happening to you, and perhaps help save the marriage. Hopefully, after the initial shock has worn off, you will reach for each other for support at this most difficult time. Try to share your feelings with your mate, and talk about it often. The Death of a Baby: Now, you know how absurd this is, but try to understand; that is the reason for their lack of empathy. They may not understand your intense grief, or not know what to say. In their efforts to comfort you, they may say something incredibly stupid or hurtful, like: Try to find it in your heart to forgive their ignorance. They surely do mean well. Tragedy can be awkward and foreign to them. Even in an early term miscarriage, it is important for you to affirm your great loss and mourn fully. It was not "just a miscarriage" to you Mothers and fathers begin emotional bonding long before they get to know a child on the outside. The fluttering of life inside you You have experienced the loss of a loved one, and you may grieve for a very long time. This is normal and should be encouraged. Often, abortion is a secret loss that you would rather forget. You may feel relieved on the surface, but loss by abortion must be mourned, too. Do not rob yourself of the much-needed period of grief to bring resolution to the experience. Due to circumstances, you may not have many physical "remembrances" of your lost child. Try to find some. Photos, hospital records, certificates, a baby blanket or knit cap, footprint, lock of hair, nursery bracelet, and sympathy cards can all help enforce the importance of your loss. Make a baby book or keep your mementos in a special box. Name the baby, no matter what age of gestation. Have a funeral or memorial service. Claim your right to grieve fully. Fathers need to grieve, too. Parents who have lost a child can feel alone and unsupported in their grief Support groups of other bereaved parents can be

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especially helpful to you, because those folks will understand better than anyone else the pain you feel. While friends and acquaintances may feel uncomfortable listening to you express your grief, support groups will be much more apt to lend a sympathetic ear. Those who have "been there" can truly understand and accept your grief. You may find much-needed support here: [American Childhood Cancer Organization](#) -- for parents of very sick or dying children:

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## Chapter 2 : Death and Grief

*I was 12 years old, my older sister was 15 and my younger sister was two. That night was the beginning of our grieving process that held a grip on our People deal with pain in different ways.*

Experiencing death as a child becomes a lifelong experience of processing and understanding the loss. Children grow up with grief, understanding more as they get older. Fear of death or dying is common. Anxiety or worry about getting sick may become prevalent. In young siblings, guilt for provocative behavior or for unacceptable feelings jealousy is common. In many ways, siblings often experience a double loss: I know this from experience. Though my parents did the best they could, after my youngest sister died, our entire family was different. My mom retreated into her own grief, staying in her room, depressed and sick for years. My dad retreated into work and anything to take his mind from his pain. At 9, 11, 14, and 17 years old, they grew up with a completely different set of parents than I had. It profoundly influenced my life. It profoundly changed our family. Especially in young children, symptoms like stomachaches, headaches, nightmares, body pain, digestive symptoms, and trouble sleeping are common. These should be seen as symptoms of grief, and hopefully, an adult in the family can help siblings work through their feelings and show them how to grieve. Feel the loss as long as you need to, and give yourself time to heal. But you will always remember your brother or sister—the missing piece of your life. When a child dies, you lose the future. When a sibling dies, you lose the past and the future. Just remember these things, my friends. Remember to be there for siblings in grief. You can be the difference in helping them create a bright future, even if they now must do so without their beloved sibling.

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## Chapter 3 : Grieving Multiple Losses - Ways to Cope and Avoid Grief Overload

*No one way of grieving is better than any other. Kubler-Ross noted that everyone experiences at least two of the five stages of grief. She acknowledged that some people may revisit certain.*

The loss of a child is generally considered the worst possible grief, making it one of the leading causes of prolonged grief. In the natural order of life, children are supposed to outlive their parents. A child is a symbol of the future and losing that child represents a loss of hopes and dreams. While the experience of pain and loss is universal, transcending culture and class, the grieving process is still a very individual and personal experience. Grief is affected by how quickly a parent breaks his or her bond with the deceased, how quickly he or she returns to the diminished living environment, and how quickly he or she forms a new way of connecting with the child who died. The circumstances surrounding the death of a child also greatly affect how parents and survivors grieve. Research has shown that when the death is traumatic or when the parents witness the death or find the body of their child, they are likely to be more traumatized by the experience, become obsessed with the death, and replay the events over and over in their heads. Conversely, if the parents do not see the body of the deceased or if the child disappears, as in child abduction, they are likely to stay in a state of denial and disbelief for a longer period of time. If a child is sick for a period of time, the family has time to come to terms with the idea of losing the child. They experience anticipatory grief. Anticipatory grief is also seen in terminally ill patients. It is a time of mourning and preparing for a loss before it happens. When the loss is sudden or unexpected, parents are left in a state of shock and disbelief even greater than that which is normally expected. People regret they had no time for goodbyes. They are unprepared, although nothing could actually prepare them for the feelings they will experience. Suicides, murders, and accidents are especially difficult for parents to process. The age of the child at the time of death also affects grieving. It is a mistake to assume that someone is less attached to an infant than they are to an older child. Miscarriages, stillbirths, and abortions all carry their own extremely painful emotions. They are emotions loaded by societal expectations, expectations of the carrying mother, and the pain of losing a child before it begins its life. Oftentimes, in cases of abortion, extreme feelings of anger as in the case of rape and guilt are present. Other important factors affecting the grieving process are individual to the griever. How has the person handled traumatic experiences in the past? Additionally, each parent commonly has a different grieving style and timing for dealing with grief, known as incongruent grieving. The Grieving Father Similar to when a sibling loses a brother or sister, the father of a deceased child is sometimes referred to as a forgotten griever. The nature of the parental bond affects the level and duration of the grief experienced. The maternal bond is established before childbirth, is more immediate, more physical, more intimate. Therefore, mothers are more susceptible to depression after the loss of an infant. Fathers often feel a sense of disappointment, failure, and resentment. The paternal bond is traditionally one of future dreams and expectations. The loss is a blow to these hopes and dreams, or even to his ego. The loss of a toddler, teenager, or older child will sometimes affect a father more than an infant death, but not always. Today, fathers are more involved in the pregnancy and birthing process as well as in child rearing, and caring for the infant. Fathers must give themselves permission to grieve. In many cultures, society says that men are not supposed to cry. They must support the grieving mother and be strong for the surviving siblings and other family left behind. They attend to the practical matters of the death and the household. Men oftentimes have a determination not to grieve, which leads to emotional distress, anger, depression and eruptions years later. A grieving father could feel ignored, abandoned, isolated or overwhelmed. He must seek out comfort in friends, family, and co-workers - wherever he can find support. Ideally father and mother will be able to grieve together and help each other work through their feelings, support each other, and find ways to memorialize the child in their lives. Other Factors Affecting Parental Grief When we think of the death of a child, we often picture mother and father, sitting in their home, holding and comforting each other. But what happens when there is only one parent? What if there is no home? Complicated family situations affect how a

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parent grieves. According to the National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Resource Center, all of the following situations put people at risk for prolonged grief, depression, and guilt: Parents in stressful financial situations will now be faced with additional emotional and financial stresses, and another perceived loss in their life. Teenage parents may already be ostracized from family and school support systems. A single, divorced or unmarried parent lacks the emotional and physical support of a spouse and constant companion. Adoptive parents, foster parents and stepparents are sometimes not expected to have the same feelings as birth parents. A parent with a history of substance abuse may feel extreme guilt over neglect, lost time, or physical effects of drug use on the child. Parents living in incarceration, institutions, or homeless shelters will often be neglected and not receive the support they need. When the child is one of a multiple birth and parents must grieve the lost child, and still care for the surviving child without resentment or guilt. When a parent loses the only child he or she will ever have because of the age or a medical condition of the mother. Symptoms of Grief Commonalities documented among grieving parents include: It takes time to work through these feelings. According to psychologists, parents often experience more physical symptoms and more extreme emotions over losing a child than people grieving other types of losses. Change in sleeping patterns.

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## Chapter 4 : Loss of a Child - Helping a Grieving Parent

*The gesture meant a lot to my sister, and not only because she was trying to cope with her grief while working full-time and caring for two other children. It was a simple way to say "Your loss."*

The stages model, which came about in the 1960s, is a theory based on observation of people who are dying, not people who experienced the death of a loved one. This model found limited empirical support in a study by Maciejewski et al. The research of George Bonanno, however, is acknowledged as debunking the five stages of grief because his large body of peer-reviewed studies show that the vast majority of people who have experienced a loss are resilient and that there are multiple trajectories following loss. Philadelphia Museum of Art Studies of fMRI scans of women from whom grief was elicited about the death of a mother or a sister in the past 5 years resulted in the conclusion that grief produced a local inflammation response as measured by salivary concentrations of pro-inflammatory cytokines. These responses were correlated with activation in the anterior cingulate cortex and orbitofrontal cortex. This activation also correlated with the free recall of grief-related word stimuli. This suggests that grief can cause stress, and that this reaction is linked to the emotional processing parts of the frontal lobe. Among those persons who have been bereaved within the previous three months of a given report, those who report many intrusive thoughts about the deceased show ventral amygdala and rostral anterior cingulate cortex hyperactivity to reminders of their loss. In the case of the amygdala, this links to their sadness intensity. In those individuals who avoid such thoughts, there is a related opposite type of pattern in which there is a decrease in the activation of the dorsal amygdala and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. In those not so emotionally affected by reminders of their loss, studies of fMRI scans have been used to conclude that there is a high functional connectivity between the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and amygdala activity, suggesting that the former regulates activity in the latter. In those people who had greater intensity of sadness, there was a low functional connection between the rostral anterior cingulate cortex and amygdala activity, suggesting a lack of regulation of the former part of the brain upon the latter. Several researchers have proposed functional explanations for grief, attempting to solve this puzzle. Sigmund Freud argued that grief is a process of libidinal reinvestment. The griever must, Freud argued, disinvest from the deceased, which is a painful process. John Archer, approaching grief from an attachment theory perspective, argued that grief is a byproduct of the human attachment system. However, in the case of death, the response is maladaptive because the individual is not simply lost and the griever cannot reunite with the deceased. Grief, from this perspective, is a painful cost of the human capacity to form commitments. Other researchers such as Randolph Nesse have proposed that grief is a kind of psychological pain that orients the sufferer to a new existence without the deceased and creates a painful but instructive memory. The authors argue that throughout human evolution, grief was therefore shaped and elaborated by the social decisions of selective alliance partners. Risks[ edit ] Bereavement, while a normal part of life, carries a degree of risk when severe. Some researchers have found an increased risk of marital breakup following the death of a child, for example. Others have found no increase. John James, author of the Grief Recovery Handbook and founder of the Grief Recovery Institute, reported that his marriage broke up after the death of his infant son. Many studies have looked at the bereaved in terms of increased risks for stress-related illnesses. Colin Murray Parkes in the 1960s and 1970s in England noted increased doctor visits, with symptoms such as abdominal pain, breathing difficulties, and so forth in the first six months following a death. Others have noted increased mortality rates Ward, A. Individuals with PGD experience severe grief symptoms for at least six months and are stuck in a maladaptive state. Critics of including the diagnosis of complicated grief in the DSM-5 say that doing so will constitute characterizing a natural response as a pathology, and will result in wholesale medicating of people who are essentially normal. Complicated grief is characterised by an extended grieving period and other criteria, including mental and physical impairments. The Mayo Clinic states that with normal grief the feelings of loss are evident. When the reaction turns into complicated grief, however, the feelings of loss become

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incapacitating and continue even though time passes. They are also considered to be complicated because, unlike normal grief, these symptoms will continue regardless of the amount of time that has passed and despite treatment given from tricyclic antidepressants. The Mental Health Clinical Research team theorizes that the symptoms of complicated grief in bereaved elderly are an alternative of post-traumatic stress. These symptoms were correlated with cancer, hypertension, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, increased smoking, and sleep impairments at around six months after spousal death. These inhibitors have been found to reduce intrusive thoughts, avoidant behaviors, and hyperarousal that are associated with complicated grief. In addition psychotherapy techniques are in the process of being developed. For other uses, see Bereavement disambiguation. This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. Death of a child can take the form of a loss in infancy such as miscarriage or stillbirth [30] or neonatal death, SIDS, or the death of an older child. In most cases, parents find the grief almost unbearably devastating, and it tends to hold greater risk factors than any other loss. This loss also bears a lifelong process: Parents who suffer miscarriage or a regretful or coerced abortion may experience resentment towards others who experience successful pregnancies. Suicide[ edit ] Suicide rates are growing worldwide and over the last thirty years there has been international research trying to curb this phenomenon and gather knowledge about who is "at-risk". When a parent loses their child through suicide it is traumatic, sudden and affects all loved ones impacted by this child. Suicide leaves many unanswered questions and leaves most parents feeling hurt, angry and deeply saddened by such a loss. Parents, family members and service providers have all confirmed the unique nature of suicide-related bereavement following the loss of a child. They report a wall of silence that goes up around them and how people interact towards them. One of the best ways to grieve and move on from this type of loss is to find ways to keep that child as an active part of their lives. It might be privately at first but as parents move away from the silence they can move into a more proactive healing time. A spouse often becomes part of the other in a unique way: The days, months and years after the loss of a spouse will never be the same and learning to live without them may be harder than one would expect. The grief experience is unique to each person. Sharing and building a life with another human being, then learning to live singularly, can be an adjustment that is more complex than a person could ever expect. After a long marriage, at older ages, the elderly may find it a very difficult assimilation to begin anew; but at younger ages as well, a marriage relationship was often a profound one for the survivor. A factor is the manner in which the spouse died. The survivor of a spouse who died of an illness has a different experience of such loss than a survivor of a spouse who died by an act of violence. The grief, in all events, however, can always be of the most profound sort to the widow and the widower. Emotional unsteadiness, bouts of crying, helplessness and hopelessness are just a small sample of what a widow or widower can expect to face. Depression and loneliness are very common. Feeling bitter and resentful are normal feelings for the spouse who is "left behind". Immediately after the death of a spouse, there are tasks that must be completed. Planning and financing a funeral can be very difficult if pre-planning was not completed. Changes in insurance, bank accounts, claiming of life insurance, securing childcare are just some of the issues that can be intimidating to someone who is grieving. Social isolation may also become imminent, as many groups composed of couples find it difficult to adjust to the new identity of the bereaved, and the bereaved themselves have great challenges in reconnecting with others. Widows of many cultures, for instance, wear black for the rest of their lives to signify the loss of their spouse and their grief. Only in more recent decades has this tradition been reduced to a period of two years, while some religions such as Christian Orthodox many widows will still continue to wear black for the remainder of their lives. This is more likely if the adult carers are struggling with their own grief and are psychologically unavailable to the child. Studies have shown that losing a parent at a young age did not just lead to negative outcomes; there are some positive effects. Some children had an increased maturity, better coping skills and improved communication. Adolescents valued other people more than those who have not experienced such a close loss. This allows the adult children to feel a permitted level of grief. Others may shut out friends and

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family in processing the loss of someone with whom they have had the longest relationship. This is especially true when the death occurs at an important or difficult period of life, such as when becoming a parent, at graduation, or at other times of emotional stress. It is important to recognize the effects that the loss of a parent can cause, and to address these effects. For an adult, the willingness to be open to grief is often diminished. A failure to accept and deal with loss will only result in further pain and suffering. It is an essential part of healing. Despite this, sibling grief is often the most disenfranchised or overlooked of the four main forms of grief, especially with regard to adult siblings. Adult siblings eventually expect the loss of aging parents, the only other people who have been an integral part of their lives since birth, but they do not expect to lose their siblings early; as a result, when a sibling dies, the surviving sibling may experience a longer period of shock and disbelief. If siblings were not on good terms or close with each other, then intense feelings of guilt may ensue on the part of the surviving sibling guilt may also ensue for having survived, not being able to prevent the death, having argued with their sibling, etc. A very young child, under one or two, may be found to have no reaction if a carer dies, but other children may be affected by the loss. At a time when trust and dependency are formed, a break even of no more than separation can cause problems in well-being; this is especially true if the loss is around critical periods such as 8â€”12 months, when attachment and separation are at their height information, and even a brief separation from a parent or other person who cares for the child can cause distress. For example, younger children see death more as a separation, and may believe death is curable or temporary. Reactions can manifest themselves in "acting out" behaviors: Adolescents may respond by delinquency , or oppositely become "over-achievers": It is an effort to stay above the grief. For example, children who have been physically, psychologically or sexually abused often grieve over the damage to or the loss of their ability to trust. Since such children usually have no support or acknowledgement from any source outside the family unit, this is likely to be experienced as disenfranchised grief. Initial support involves reassuring children that their emotional and physical feelings are normal. Schools are advised to plan for these possibilities in advance. It may be found among survivors of combat, natural disasters, epidemics, among the friends and family of those who have died by suicide, and in non-mortal situations such as among those whose colleagues are laid off. Other losses[ edit ] People who become unemployed, such as these California workers, may face grief from the loss of their job Parents may grieve due to loss of children through means other than death, for example through loss of custody in divorce proceedings; legal termination of parental rights by the government, such as in cases of child abuse ; through kidnapping; because the child voluntarily left home either as a runaway or, for overage children, by leaving home legally ; or because an adult refuses or is unable to have contact with a parent. This loss differs from the death of a child in that the grief process is prolonged or denied because of hope that the relationship will be restored. A person who strongly identifies with their occupation may feel a sense of grief if they have to stop their job due to retirement, being laid off, injury, or loss of certification. Those who have experienced a loss of trust will often also experience some form of grief. Lay out three sets of five pieces of note paper on a table.

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## Chapter 5 : Parenting While Grieving - What's Your Grief

*After having lost two children, both of my parents and various other special relatives and friends I can whole heartedly say that all grief is not the same.*

Keepsake Store Falling in Love While Grieving Whether you are grieving the death of a partner, or the loss of a loved one through divorce or separation, there are many questions and issues which can arise when you meet someone new and fall in love. Quite apart from the judgements and opinions of others in these situations, our own emotions can be really confusing and we can be quite vulnerable while going through the grieving process. These factors can make it even more of a minefield than relationships are at the best of times. Here are some of the issues and questions that we consider in this article to try and take away some of the angst you might be feeling about falling in love while grieving. Can you love two people at the same time? Is it too soon to fall in love again? What about the fear of losing the new partner too? What will people think? How will children cope with your new partner? Is it different for men and women? Grief expert Elizabeth Postle, author of this website has been helping people with death, grief and other family issues for over 45 years. She shares her thoughts on these issues. If you have had a happy relationship and experienced love, in my view, it is a compliment to your partner if you want to experience that again. The love for your lost partner will be ever present, but our human hearts are capable of unlimited love and have room for future relationships. No two relationships will ever be the same, neither will the love of your new partner be the same as for the person you lost. But you can be happy again. They would have wanted you to carry on, make the most of your life and be happy again. It is a healthy thing to want to share the love of which you are capable with someone else. How soon after the loss of a beloved partner should someone start a new relationship? No-one plans these things. It often just happens that you are lucky enough to meet someone with whom you can bond, perhaps over shared experiences. Life can be lonely and difficult after a bereavement. You might be a single parent. There is no-one to talk to about day to day issues or school problems, and all the household tasks fall upon your shoulders. You and any children are all grieving and there may be little support. To find someone who can support you and your children at this difficult time is a bonus. Two of my friends were lucky enough to meet such a caring, supportive person during their first year of bereavement and both have been happily married to their new partners for many years. Another friend lost her husband when her children were toddlers. Her husband had been ill for months and a friend of his had been a tower of strength for the family. He continued to help her after her husband died, and they married within the year. They too had a long and happy relationship. Friends and family may say it is too early and you are on the rebound. Children may not accept the new partner and cause friction. But be guided by your own feelings. You know what is right for you. Only you can know that meeting this new lover was the best thing that happened to you. Take the relationship slowly and carefully. Time will tell whether it will work long-term. The fear of entering into a new relationship Those who have lost a partner to death or divorce are often very hesitant about entering into a new relationship as they are not sure they would be able to handle another loss. There is an anxiety about letting someone get too close or falling in love with them in case you lose them too. There is no doubt that grief is tough. But it makes you strong. We humans are very resilient, and in addition to that, we have an unlimited capacity for love. You will know when the time is right. Let yourself be guided by your inner feelings. Society seems to judge widows more harshly than widowers in this circumstance and there are so many tales in history of evil widows preying on men or of women who fell in love very soon after losing their husbands and were heavily criticised. In my experience men are more likely to marry again quite quickly after the loss of their wives than women do. Family focused men who have lost their wives can feel totally devastated. Their worklife, home and children were their whole lives and they find it difficult to function without a family around them. Their marriage or relationship form an essential part of their identity. In the end, we all experience love and grief in our own individual ways, and there is no right or wrong way to cope with loss.

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We should all be open minded and supportive to those who have lost a loved one, and be understanding when they find love again. Grief is not a competition. I believe that making the most of life and moving on is a good way to honour our lost loved ones. What will people think when you fall in love while grieving? It is common to experience judgement and opposition from relatives and friends when a new relationship starts soon after a bereavement but it is not for them to judge. There is no time limit for grief, and because you re-marry or start a new relationship does not mean that you have forgotten your first love. You can love again. It may be that family and friends take the news of a new relationship badly, especially close family members of the lost loved one. They may feel that their son or daughter is forgotten or given no respect. Children may be upset if their mother or father re-marries. But grief is not a competition. When we have lost someone, they would not have wanted us to be unhappy and alone for the rest of our lives. Our loved ones would have wanted us to find someone to love. It is fortunate when we meet someone early in our grief journey. It is better for children too, as they will experience their parent being happier and feel part of a family again. What will the children think if you fall in love again while grieving their mother or father? They can be rude to new partners, not only after a death, but also after a divorce. This is a natural reaction to the unhappiness of the loss they have suffered and the change in their lives. They will need support and understanding to cope with this. It is an emotional time in their lives anyway. To them this change is very challenging and they will need time to accept it. But often, the new partner will become a great friend to the children and they will, in time, accept them into the family. When we lose someone, we tend to remember only the good things about them, which makes it pretty difficult for any new relationship to live up to the memories of the partner you lost. All relationships are different. When we are grieving, we are in turmoil and experience a roller coaster of emotions. Your new relationship will be different. It is another person in another time, with different life experiences. Try not to judge them by the same criteria as your previous relationship. Accept their love and support and take it slowly. Share and talk to your family and friends so that they understand. It is your life. Take up the challenge and have the confidence to build a new relationship. You might be one of the lucky ones, who have not one, but two great loves in their life. Where to Find Help:

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## Chapter 6 : Falling in Love While Grieving - What Are the Issues?

*Those are the two words that grieving parents - and grieving people in general - wish you would stop using. Imagine yourself in these scenarios, if you will: You are 6 weeks/2 months/however early in your pregnancy.*

Supporting a Grieving Child: The Importance of Modeling Readers with children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews, or any child-age friend or family member, I want you to envision the following scenario: You are flipping through the television channels with your young friend sitting nearby. You look at the child to gauge their reaction and are relieved to see they appear relatively unaffected. You resolve that from now on when the kiddos are around you will keep your channel surfing within the bounds of family-friendly channels. Protecting a child is adaptive behavior. Despite your best efforts to keep everyone safe, healthy, and happy, life sometimes has other ideas. They are left with a hellish scene playing in their head and, in the absence of guidance and support, they have little idea how to deal with the tornado of emotion and confusion felt inside. Social learning is the well researched mode of learning that occurs simply by observing the actions and behaviors of others. When we learn by watching or imitating others, we are engaging in what is called observational learning or modeling. As a trusted adult, your behavior is a stimuli for modeling. Additionally, it is more likely for your behavior to be imitated if: You are perceived as warm and nurturing You reward the child for their behavior in any way remember, rewards are often emotional You are a person in a position of authority You are the same sex The situation is confusing, ambiguous or unfamiliar. Check, check, check, and check. These instincts might seem to make sense, but in this instance they are far from beneficial. Here are a few reasons why: This one is out of your control, they will experience tough emotions. We wrote a pretty comprehensive post on the ways in which habitual avoidance can complicate grief. Long story short, it is beneficial for children to learn how to tolerate and cope with their emotions as opposed to learning how to avoid them. When a person feels that certain emotions and emotional expression are unacceptable or should be avoided, the implicit message is that these emotions are bad. The child might feel discouraged from continuing their bond with their loved one: An important part of grief is finding ways to continue a relationship with the person who has died even though they are no longer fully present. We have written quite a bit on continuing bonds with deceased loved ones and we believe this is an important part of grieving. When talking about a deceased loved one is discouraged or avoided, the child is denied the opportunity to continue their bond with that loved one within the familial context. They may find ways to continue their bond on their own, but given the fact that the child is young, you will always be an important source of memories and information about the person who has died. Instead I will suggest three simple things: Grieve openly and in your way: Perhaps there will be moments of anger and despair that you would prefer to experience privately or amongst adults. Help the child find outlets for their grief: Everyone grieves in their own way and at their own pace. That being the case, you may not feel ready to provide the child with certain types of support. Make your loved one a part of every day family life: Continue to find ways to talk about your loved one and to make them a part of your life. If you are a grief professional looking for print resources on supporting a grieving child or teen, please head here.

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## Chapter 7 : About Your Privacy on this Site

*Supporting a Grieving Child: The Importance of Modeling Readers with children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews, or any child-age friend or family member, I want you to envision the following scenario.*

Grief is the reaction we have in response to a death or loss. Grief can affect our body, mind, emotions, and spirit. People might notice or show grief in several ways: These might be things like changes in appetite or sleep, an upset stomach, tight chest, crying, tense muscles, trouble relaxing, low energy, restlessness, or trouble concentrating. These may be happy memories of the person who died, worries or regrets, or thoughts of what life will be like without the person. For example, sadness, anger, guilt, despair, relief, love, or hope. This might mean finding strength in faith, questioning religious beliefs, or discovering spiritual meaning and connections. Grief is a healthy process of feeling comforted, coming to terms with a loss, and finding ways to adapt. Healthy grief is about finding ways to remember loved ones and adjust to life without them present. People often experience grief reactions in "waves" that come and go. Often, grief is most intense soon after someone has died. They may feel numbness, shock, or disbelief. It can take time for the reality to sink in that the person is gone. Grief Rituals Rituals, like memorial services and funerals, allow friends and family to get together to support and comfort the people most affected by the loss. These activities can help people get through the first days after a death and honor the person who died. People might spend time together talking and sharing memories about their loved one. This may continue for days or weeks following the loss as friends and family bring food, send cards, or stop by to visit. Many times, people show their emotions during this time, like crying. Being among other mourners can be a comfort, reminding us that some things will stay the same. When the rituals end, some people might think they should be over their grief. But often the grief process is just beginning. People may go back to their normal activities but find it hard to put their heart into everyday things. Although they may not talk about their loss as much, the grieving process continues. A lot depends on how a loss affects your life. How intensely you feel grief can be related to things like whether the loss was sudden or expected, or how close you felt to the person who died. Every person and situation is different. Feeling better usually happens gradually. The grieving process takes time, and grief can be more intense at some times than others. As time goes on, reminders of the person who has died can intensify feelings of grief. At other times, it might feel as if grief is in the background of your normal activities, and not on your mind all the time. As you do things you enjoy and spend time with people you feel good around, you can help yourself feel better. Grief has its own pace. Every situation is different. Try to put it into words. Notice how it feels to think about and write about your experience. Think of someone you can share your feelings with, someone who will listen and understand. Notice how you feel after sharing and talking. We can learn a lot from the people in our lives. When family and friends get together, it helps people feel less isolated in the first days and weeks of their grief. Being with others helps you, and your presence and words can support them, too. Find Meaning We can learn from loss and difficult experiences. To help get started, you can try writing down answers to these questions: What did the person mean to you? What did you learn from him or her? What good has come from this difficult experience? What have you learned about yourself, other people, or life? Are there things you appreciate more? Who are the people who have been there for you? Were they the people you expected? What have you learned about them? In what ways have you grown or matured based on this experience? Take Care of Yourself The loss of someone close to you can be stressful. Take care of yourself in small but important ways: Sleep is healing for both body and mind, but grief can disrupt sleep patterns. Focus on building healthy sleep habits, like going to bed at the same time each night or establishing bedtime routines like doing gentle yoga or breathing exercises. Exercise can help your mood. Even a gentle walk outdoors can help to reset your perspective on things. You may feel like skipping meals or you may not feel hungry. Your body still needs nutritious foods, though. Avoid overeating, loading up on junk foods, or using alcohol to "soothe" your grief. Grief is a normal emotion. It can help to know that you will

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always remember the person you lost, but you can feel better with time.

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### Chapter 8 : The Two Words Grieving Parents Wish You Would Stop Using - Her View From Home

*With Christmas less than two weeks away, I'm reblogging this post, with an addition or two. If you know someone who has lost a child, here are some ways you can bless them this holiday season. Most parents feel a little stressed during the holidays.*

From Foster Parent to Adoptive Parent: This worksheet is designed to be completed by foster parents who are considering adopting a child who has been living with them through a foster care program. If there are two parents, it is helpful for both to complete the worksheet separately and then compare the strengths and needs. Designed as a self-assessment tool, the worksheet should provide some ideas to be discussed with the agency social worker for next steps in the decision making process toward a foster parent adoption. Needs will indicate tasks to be accomplished. Please note that this worksheet touches only a few of the critical issues important to foster parents who are considering adoption. Foster Parent Adoption Task Strengths: What I have done to accomplish this task. What I still need to do. I have discussed the entire placement history of my child with at least one social worker and believe I have all information that is available. I have identified several strengths and several potential problems with this adoption. I have discussed ways to solve the potential difficulties with those I consider to be family. I have considered levels of "openness" in adoption and have planned for a level of openness that will meet the needs of this child and work for our family. I have discussed the difference between attachment and commitment with those I consider to be family. Those close to me understand that I am making a lifetime commitment to a child who may later in life have challenges and difficulties as a result of early experiences. This child has a lifebook which I plan to use to help him or her understand the differences between foster care and adoption as well as to help with developmental grieving. I have considered the ways this child expressed loss earlier in life and have anticipated and planned for ways this child may grieve at the time of adoption and at other important milestones during life developmental grieving. I have planned ways to help this child maintain a tie to his or her cultural, racial, or ethnic roots. I have planned ways to talk with other children in the family about this adoption, including ways to help the family understand the differences between foster care and adoption. I have planned for the future financial and medical needs of this child and have thoroughly discussed subsidy with at least two social workers. I have identified people who will support me if I become discouraged. I am pursuing adoption willingly and at this time do not feel coerced by a loved one or the agency. I have talked with at least one family who has adopted through the foster care program. I have considered this decision for several months and believe that adoption of this child is important for the well being of this child, my family, and myself.

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## Chapter 9 : PARENTS GRIEF - THE LOSS OF A CHILD

*The specific challenges facing children who have lost a parent include: Accepting the significance of the loss (it changes them forever) Allowing the grief process to unfold on their own terms as.*

Keepsake Store Grieving multiple losses – how do we cope? Grieving multiple losses is far more common than we might imagine and can lead to grief overload. How many times do we say that troubles all come together? Elizabeth Postle looks into the ways we might end up with an overload of grief and then suggests ways of coping. Multiple grief comes in many different forms. There may be multiple deaths within a short period of time either within a family, or among friends. The combination of a death in the family, a divorce or separation, loss of a job, an accident, or diagnosis of a chronic illness can also lead to bereavement overload as these are all important and stressful losses. Loss of a baby through miscarriage or having to give up a child to adoption might be other examples of grief which can come on top of other losses. Loss of a pet or a home can be important causes of grief too. The children leaving home can lead to feelings of empty nest syndrome or loss of identity. All these create feelings of grief, and combinations of any of them can be very stressful and put much pressure on people and their families. Even a happy occasion such as a wedding can become a source of stress in combination with any of these difficult life events. Read more about the different types of grief here. A Wedding and a Funeral My father died suddenly two weeks before my nephews wedding. We had the funeral, and then had to dismantle his home quickly as it was rented. We attended the wedding, where everyone tried to put on a cheerful face. All this trauma happened several hundred miles distance from my own home whilst also caring for our two children. I had lost my father and my family home and then on top of that had to move house to another county, all within weeks. Multiple Losses due to Separation So many couples separate and often one partner loses not only their wife or husband, but the home, the children, the dog, plus the lifestyle they enjoyed. Many of their partners friends and extended families are lost too as it is often difficult to keep in touch with in laws and shared friends. There is shock, anger, loneliness, pain and a sense of worthlessness. A loss of confidence often accompanies anxiety, as they wonder how to cope with the future alone. Add to this, the death of a family member during this already very stressful episode and the stress levels become extreme. It is a difficult time when lots of support is needed. Sadly this is all too common. The stress of losing a husband or wife can often kill someone whose health is not good either. My cousin lost his father after many years of chronic illness. His mother had been the full time caregiver and she was only in her middle years. Sadly within weeks she had died too as she had undiagnosed cancer. She had been too busy caring for her husband to check out her own symptoms. My cousin was an only child and had been looking forward to spending more time with her. Within weeks he had lost both parents and his old family home which had to be sold. Only this week there was a story of a child who walked out of a plane crash having lost all her close family. We wonder how she will ever get over this horrific trauma. But we human beings are incredibly resilient. I believe that much of our recovery depends on our own decisions to try and find meaning and to make the most of every minute of this precious life that we have on earth. Can You Die from a Broken Heart? A friend lost her mother recently, who had suffered from dementia. Within two weeks of the funeral her father died suddenly. When elderly couples lose a lifelong partner the shock can cause complications and sometimes a heart attack. Only today I read an article which said: It shows that it is really important for caregivers and partners of those with chronic disease to look after themselves as well and get regular check-ups. How do any of us ever cope with grieving multiple losses? The shock and numbness helps in the beginning. Then organising all the day to day details gets us through some of the difficult times. But they will, sometimes with help from counsellors, friends, family and their own willpower to overcome the trauma. The one certainty is that when you have lost your loved ones you have no choice but to cope as best as you can for the children or family who are left, and for your own sake too. Everyone will be grieving, that is the fact that we have to accept. We owe it to ourselves to get on with our lives. Do it for your loved ones who have died, live life to

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the full for them, would they like you to spend the rest of your life being miserable? No one is ever expected to forget a loved one, just learn to cope with another day without them. Some people put all their energy into working long hours. Others give more time to their hobbies - golf or fishing for example. It is important to find an activity which helps to reduce your stress levels. Yoga , or sewing, painting or walking, whatever gives you pleasure. None of us can grieve 24 hours a day. We have pages here on how to relax , and some ideas for activities. There is no doubt that life will never be the same again. But we will learn to live with the new reality, and gradually find some small pleasures again. I will share again this image I made a while ago because it sums up how we can progress and find the magic in life again. Find others in the same boat in an online forum or local grief support group and share with others. People can be so supportive, often just reading how they coped and survived is a comfort. Our site has many positive pages to help during the difficult days and many guest writers have shared their experiences and coping mechanisms. We have had a lot of positive feedback and hope the site will be a support for you too. We have recommended an excellent online grief counselling service below. It can be tough when you are stuck in grief to find the motivation to get the most out of your precious life. You can have someone to talk to anytime you like, a kind and understanding person who will help you to find meaning in life again, to treasure the memories of your loved one without being overwhelmed and to enjoy your activities, family and friends again. Simply fill out the online questionnaire and you will be assigned the expert grief counselor most suitable for you. Contact your counselor whenever you like by chat, messaging, video or phone. You can change counselor at any time if you wish. Or read more about how online counseling works here.