

13 Pieces of Advice While Grieving

REFERENCE SHEET

Why This List and Where Did it Come From?

When I lost my first husband in 1995, I was 28 years old and didn't have a clue how to process grief, especially with someone that close to me. Both my parents were alive (and remain so) and I'd never experienced loss like this before.

And as I travelled down this path of recovering from grief, I learned lessons along the way. Some I stumbled upon, some I read about, and some were offered to me.

Nearly 20 years later, I lost my second husband. The world had changed and there were a lot of online resources to learn from, as well as social media support groups. I would share these pieces of advice with others, and I was somewhat surprised to see a universal truth with them all and I feel they're adaptable to every situation where loss is involved, and we need to recover from it.

There are 13 pieces of advice, presented in no particular order other than how they came out of my head while writing as a lay person and not a licensed therapist. Many are written about with anecdotes in *Life After Losses*, and all are included and expanded upon further as part of the *Thirteen Strategies to Help you Heal from Loss* workbook, available at the [lifeafterlosses.com website](http://lifeafterlosses.com).

The bottom line: It is critical to take care yourself in every way when mourning the loss of a loved one.

Number One

Don't listen to anyone else tell you how and when to grieve - this is your journey, not theirs.

Number Two

Don't compare your journey. It's yours. It may take you 3 months or 3 years before you choose to do "X," whatever "X" is (move, buy a car, date, etc.). It's all on your comfort and YOUR timeline.

Number Three

There is no timeline. You will progress and regress until you die.

Number Four

Do what you can to take care of yourself. Drink water, get rest, eat healthily, move. It's easy to fall into bad habits and self-destructive behavior.



Number Five

Be prepared for triggers. Every day, every hour, every month, something is going to trigger you. Be prepared. For me, it was simple triggers: At the grocery store, realizing I'm shopping for one; hearing a song on the radio; watching a movie; or seeing the calendar turn to one of the many days that held meaning to me

Number Six

Anticipate those dates and decide ahead of time how you want to feel that day. If you decide you want to feel sad and cry, then do it. If you decide you want to feel happy with memories, then do it. You choose how you want to celebrate your anniversary or your loved one's birthday. But planning ahead of time lets you think through what you may experience.

Number Seven

You never get over it. It shapes who you are and what you become. It's easier to manage with time, but it will always be there.

Number Eight

It does get better over time. At least it feels like it. That's not to say you won't feel sad again. See the next point.

Number Nine

Grief isn't linear. There's no direct path from anger to acceptance -- and once you reach acceptance, you may fall right back into one of the other states of grief. Acceptance, I'm afraid, doesn't mean you are done grieving.

Number Ten

Feel what you feel when you feel it. Don't stifle emotions; it's unhealthy. Feel it, recognize it, and determine how you want to deal with it. Especially anger. Don't feel guilty about being angry at your loved one.

Number Eleven

Don't be afraid to talk about your loved one. It keeps the memory alive and helps to recall positive feelings. If others are uncomfortable talking about your loved one, it's not your problem. It's theirs. You have a right to talk about your loved one.

Number Twelve

Find a way to forgive yourself when you're feeling guilty about something like survivor's guilt.

Number Thirteen

There's no stigma in seeking professional help. I can only share what helped me, and part of that journey included professional counseling and grief support groups.

