

THE STAGES OF RECOVERY

- Recovering from a loss takes place in three distinct – yet overlapping – stages. They are:
 - Shock/denial/numbness
 - Fear/anger/depression
 - Understanding/acceptance/moving on
- Each stage of recovery is:
 - Necessary
 - Natural
 - A part of the healing process

The first stage of recovery is shock/denial/numbness.

- We cannot believe or comprehend what has happened to us.
- The mind denies the loss
- Often the first words uttered after hearing of a loss are, “What?” or “Oh, no.”
- We forget that a loss has taken place, and find ourselves stunned each time we remember again. (This is especially true after awakening from sleep.)
- Meanwhile, the body’s natural protection against intense pain – shock and numbness is activated.

The second stage of recovery is fear/anger/depression.

- Fear, anger and depression are emotions and reactions most often associated with loss.

And finally, understanding/acceptance/moving on.

- We have survived
- Our body is well on the way to healing
- Our mind accepts that life without what was lost is possible.
- We move onto a new chapter of our life.

- We go through the three stages of recovery no matter what we lose.
- Loss is loss, no matter what the cause. When someone or something we love is taken from us or denied us, that is a loss.
- The only difference in recovering from one loss, or another is the intensity of feeling and the duration of the healing process.
- The greater our loss:
 - the more intensely we feel each of the stages of recovery
 - the longer it takes to pass from one stage to another

- With small losses, the three stages of recovery can be moved through in minutes. For large losses, it can take years.
- The body, mind and emotions have enormous wisdom. They know how to heal themselves, and the amount of time they will need to do it.
- Give them what they need to heal.
- Trust in the process of recovery.

For more information, check the website each week for more articles on grief. If you have any questions or need to talk with Jo about issues pertaining to a loss, you may email Jo at aftercare@havenbrookfuneralhome.com or call: (405) 329-8327.