

REACTIONS TO GRIEF

Grief has a physical and mental impact. The load of grief takes a toll, both physically and mentally: your body is weak, and each movement seems to take more energy than you have. Your mind is numb with pain and responds so slowly to what others say. You often feel as "helpless" as a newborn during the first weeks of life, "unable to more than beg for help."

Grief produces eating difficulty. For many months after the loss, you may have no appetite. Friends who stop by often insist you eat. But many people are not interested, and merely go through the motions from habit. Even as friends continue to urge caring for your body through nutritious meals, often, the mind rebels, you are not hungry.

Grief is softened as friends respond. You will quickly discover the healing power of friendship. Each person who joins in bearing your distress and grief, lightens it by that much. Sadness is dissipated as it is shared. Every compassionate response from other people - words and acts of love; tears to share in your suffering; embraces; prayers offered on your behalf - each kind act reminds you that, although you have suffered a great loss, you are not without love and friendship.

Grief can result in feelings of guilt and regret. As you think back about your family life, other sorrows may emerge over words spoken and unspoken. Often you may bow your in shame as you consider the times you insisted on your way and left unhappiness written on a loved one's face. You may think of words spoken in anger and wish you could unsay them. Feelings of guilt and regret can weigh heavily on the bereaved for many months.

Grief leaves a person easily irritated. Nerves are on edge and things can easily be blown out of proportion for the bereaved. You may be irritated so easily by all sorts of things and people. Situations and comments that a few days ago would not have bothered you at all now assume major proportions. You cannot cope in a mature way with annoying events or well-meaning people who rub you the wrong way. It may take some time for balance to be restored and before perspective becomes more realistic.

Remember that you are not alone. Loss is a part of life, of being alive, of being human. Everyone experiences loss. You will get better. The healing process has a beginning, a middle and an end.

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.

