

Tapping Your Own Resources

Death forces us to change. We have no choice. Yes, grief is painful, but if you are willing to risk sharing your grief and allowing your pain to surface, you can work through it and become a better person, live productively and be happy again.

We all have resources within us of which we are unaware. Usually, they lay dormant until a crisis occurs in our lives. We can tap our internal resources to cope with the loss of our loved one. Here are some suggestions.

Have confidence in yourself. In your pain, there will be times you will not think that you can cope with life without your love, believe that you can. Make the decision to survive. Believe that you have both the inside and outside resources necessary. Make a commitment to a productive and meaningful life.

Pay attention to what you are feeling, thinking and imagining. Your mind and body can heal. Help yourself by getting plenty of rest, relaxation, sleep and exercise. Eat well and drink at least a quart of water daily. Allow yourself to cry when you need to and to laugh when you can. Take time to think about what you have lost, but also what you have left. Keep expectations of yourself realistic.

Do not isolate yourself. Find helpful friends and relatives to walk with you while you grieve. Attend a bereavement support group. Trust that being with others who understand because they have "been there" is very healing. Believe that others can help you if you let them. Share your thoughts and feelings with them. Remember, you alone must do it, but you cannot do it alone.

Use your faith. It can be a great source of comfort. Question and seek the truth. A deeper faith can result. Talk with your clergy person.

Grief has no timetable. The process of recovery is so gradual that we do not always see our progress. Face problems in little chunks. Stay in the present.

While we cannot "stop" grief, we can give ourselves an occasional respite by doing something we enjoy such as crafts or yard work. Laughing helps more than we realize, and by doing so we are not betraying our loved one.

Relax. If necessary use relaxation tapes.

Avoid drugs and alcohol.

Music or writing can be a good resource for working through grief. Read some of the many good books on grief.

Reach out to others with your time and energy. Volunteer. Call a shut-in. Make another person's day with a smile or hug.

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