

Coping with Grief

14 WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFICULT DAY BRIGHTER

No words can express how much the world owes to sorrow. Most of the Psalms were born in the wilderness. Most of the Epistles were written in a prison. The greatest thoughts of the greatest thinkers have all passed through fire. The greatest poets have learned in suffering what they taught in song. (George MacDonald)

GRIEF TAKES TIME

1. MAKE TIME FOR TEARS – Tears are a necessary emotional release, but they can sometimes feel as if they'll drown us. Setting a timer to weep can create a safe boundary for overwhelming emotions.
2. TELLING OUR STORY – There are many ways to express grief, though words, painting, sculpture, music, movement, wood carving, gardening, photography … and the list goes on. God will lead us as we lean into Him.
3. ASKING FOR WHAT WE NEED – It's okay to ask for what we need, even if it's requesting that others simply listen, offer a hug, or steer clear of unhelpful clichés.
4. KEEP MOVING – Grief is hard. Sometimes all we want to do is curl up in a ball—but movement is important! All movement counts, including getting out of bed, taking a shower, folding laundry, making dinner, walking to the mailbox, or trekking up and down the stairs. Movement helps our brains process grief.
5. SPLURGE ON SOFT TISSUES – Softness is comforting when we're hurting.
6. CUDDLE UP – A soft flannel shirt, a favorite sweater, or a warm blanket can comfort us on difficult days.
7. FAVORITE FOODS – Stock the cupboards with healthy food that is quick and easy to prepare.
8. SPEND A LITTLE TIME OUTSIDE – Fresh air is so good for us when we're grieving. It lets us breathe and gives our brains a needed mental break, reminding us that the one who created the world is still in control.

9. TAKE A SHOWER OR BATH – Feeling clean makes a difference, even if all we do is put on fresh pajamas and crawl right back into bed.
10. SHARE A GOOD LAUGH – Call a friend or loved one who can share the precious gift of making us laugh.
11. NOURISH THE MIND – Keep a list of books, podcasts, and TED Talks that can offer an easy break for grief-weary minds
12. THANK GOD FOR ONE GOOD THING – Gratitude in grief can be difficult to express, but there is always one small thing we can be grateful for: sunshine through a window, a phone call from a friend, a handwritten card, a great cup of tea, or our favorite sweet treat.
13. STAY CONNECTED – Time with others can make a big difference on hard days.
14. BEING GOOD TO OURSELVES – Giving ourselves permission to take a nature hike, splurge on a good cup of coffee, or stop for an ice cream might be a perfect pick-me-up on a difficult day.

GRATITUDE IN GRIEF

Gratitude can become a beautiful thread in our grief journey. It doesn't ease the pain or injustice of grief, but it does remind us that there is still good in God's world, that God is still good, and that no matter how we feel, we are not alone. Let gratitude become a touchstone, a reminder that we will survive this grief and one day find joy in life again.

LET GRATITUDE LEAD THE WAY

In grief, even small things can be significant. Each evening, look back over your day and name:

- one thing you are grateful for.
- one thing that surprised you.
- one moment of joy.

30 DAYS OF GRATITUDE IN GRIEF

Consider starting a 30-Day Gratitude Journal. Each day, look for one thing you are grateful for: a comfort food, a sweet co-worker, an easy parking spot, a helpful cashier, a soft blanket, a walk on a sunny day. The moments are there, just waiting to be noticed.

We are seen, known, and loved beyond imagining. God is with us. We are His precious children, and He is gathering every heartbroken tear.

We are not alone. God is as close as the beating of our hearts. God delights in us!

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. (Psalm 56:8)