

## The Loss of a Loved One.

I can't stop replaying what happened. The pain just doesn't go away.  
I miss you so much - it literally hurts.  
It feels like there's a hole in my heart.

Losing a loved one is one of the most emotionally challenging experiences. A lingering question echoes in your mind:  
How do I live in the World now?  
It's not fair.  
Who will be on my side?  
Who will do the things we used to enjoy together?  
Who can I call now?  
Who will listen to me?  
I need you back.  
I can't make it without you.

When we fall in love with our partner, we form a deep bond in our brains. There's no longer a "me" or a "you" - only "us". When they're gone, it feels like a part of us is missing. The chain-link is broken, leaving a void in our hearts.

Grieving involves navigating through five stages - denial, anger, analyzing, depression, and acceptance/letting go. These stages don't follow a strict order, and not everyone experiences all of them.

1. **Denial:** You may feel numb, avoidant, or emotionally shut down.
2. **Anger :** feelings of injustice and frustration arise because you're still here while they're gone.
3. **Analyzing:** You might experience guilt, fear, and anxiety, questioning what you could have done differently.
4. **Depression:** sadness sets in, manifesting as hopelessness, low energy, or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed.

5. **Acceptance:** this stage brings peace. Feeling whole again doesn't mean being okay with the loss - it means knowing you'll be okay in this new reality.

These stages are an emotional roller coaster. There's no right or wrong way to grieve. Take the pace that works for you. Losing a love done differs from going through a divorce or heartbreak; this grief runs deeper and can take years to accept. Often, the first year is the hardest, and by the third year, people start to adapt to a new way of life.

To navigate these stages, self-care is crucial.

Prioritize rest, nourish your body with healthy foods, and establish a daily routine. Focus on aspects you can control. Surround yourself with people who knew your loved one - it can be comforting. Accept your emotions and talk about them when you're ready.

Create a memory box - with quotes, photos, or letters to your loved one. Writing can be therapeutic.

When you're ready, sort through their belongings, making piles to keep, give away, or set aside for later decisions.

If you have children, remember they're grieving too. It takes time to adjust to life without your loved one. Go through their belongings together, as each of you may cherish different memories. Keep their memory alive.

Don't suppress your sadness. Let it out. Attend church, take walks, volunteer.

Avoid major life changes and don't rush anything.

Trust that things will come together in time.

Believe, trust and receive.

Knowing that they're always a part of you, and you a part of them, can be soothing.

Consider a daily prayer for yourself. Repeat it, even if you don't feel like it. It can release something within you - bringing forgiveness, grace, and freedom.

*May you be happy.*

*May you be loved.*

*May you be at peace.*

*May you find meaning and purpose in your life.*

Reflect daily on your new identity ;

I am....

I have....

I love....

I want to leave you with this:

When I lost her six years ago, I thought I would go crazy. The first two weeks felt like hell. Every time I closed my eyes, I saw countless moments of her. I couldn't look at her photos without tears for many months.

Even now, six years later, I miss her deeply. BUt knowing she's a part of me, and I'm part of her, has been helpful.

Time doesn't heal empty spot, but it helps me accept that they're no longer here with us.