

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	v
Ideas on How to Read This Book .....	1
<b>Emotional Reactions</b> .....	2
Shock .....	2
Hyperactivity .....	4
Denial .....	6
Emotional Numbness .....	8
Deep Sadness and Depression .....	10
Guilt.....	12
Self-Punishment .....	14
Reminders .....	16
Anger.....	18
Fear.....	20
Anxiety Over Fading Memories.....	22
<b>Physical Reactions</b> .....	24
Body Numbness .....	24
Changes in Eating and Drinking .....	26
Easily Fatigued.....	28
Physical Problems .....	30
Sex .....	32
<b>Reactions of Others</b> .....	34
Center-Stage .....	34
Feelings of Intimidation .....	36
Dealing with Law Enforcement .....	38
If You Had a Difficult Relationship with This Person.....	40
Everyone...Life as Usual .....	42
Society's Reactions .....	42

## A FEELING THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS CARRYING ON WITH "LIFE AS USUAL"

- At this time in your life the world may look different:

Artificial	Frightening
Indifferent	Callous
Insensitive	Cold
Uncaring	Dreary
Dull	Lonely

- You may find yourself angry, hurt, and astonished that, despite the fact that your life has totally changed, the rest of the world appears to operate just as it always has. Every day you see people going about their business as if nothing has changed.
- A common, but unexpressed feeling among bereaved people is their wish to say to the world, "Hey everybody, don't you understand that my life has been turned upside down and that everything is different?"
- You may have feelings of self-pity as you look at your life and feel sorry for what has happened to you. This is understandable.
- You will find yourself trying to put up with people who gush over their children, their grandchildren, their spouse, or other loved ones while you are coping with the death of yours.
- Even those people who know you well will not understand some of your grief reactions.
- You may find that you will receive support from some of the people around you during the first few months after the death. But, after a while some of your friends and family members may expect you to be "over" your loss. It is a common reaction by people in our society partly because they are concerned that you might "hang onto your grief too long." Because of their own discomfort watching your reactions to the death, they may want you to "get better."
- Another reason some people in your life don't want to be around you is because they do not want to deal with your pain or somehow think that it is *catching*.

## Suggestions

Ask people to tell you stories of your loved one. You can write, audio or video them. A way to stimulate their memories is by asking them to remember:

- Embarrassing and funny moments
- Restaurants, meals, foods, smells
- Vacations, holidays, shopping, school
- Favorite songs, instruments
- Organizations, groups, clubs, scouts, sports, hobbies
- Outings, parties, picnics, concerts
- Favorite pets, toys, clothing, games, car
- Relationships with parents, siblings, friends
- Spiritual beliefs, church experiences, readings, prayers
- Support given to or received from your loved one
- Talents, idiosyncrasies, important values

Here is one way to get people to respond to your request for memories and stories:  
On the next holiday ask for written memories of your loved one when you send out cards or emails. You can use the list above.

On the other hand, be ready for some of the awkward things that well-meaning people say because they may not know what to say:

- |  |                            |                                    |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>You'll get over it.</i>   | <i>It was God's will.</i>  | <i>He lived a long life.</i>       |
| <i>I know how you feel.</i>  | <i>Don't worry.</i>        | <i>It's for the best.</i>          |
| <i>At least ___ didn't suffer.</i>   | <i>Life goes on.</i>       | <i>Things happen for a reason.</i> |
| <i>Count your blessings.</i>   | <i>You must accept it.</i> | <i>It's time to move on.</i>       |
| <i>You can always remarry.</i>   | <i>You are so strong.</i>  | <i>You can have more children.</i> |
| <i>If you <b>really</b> had faith in your religion (or God), you wouldn't feel this way.</i> |                            |                                    |

Remember, they are looking for words that they hope might ease your pain and they are not sure what else to say. Try to bear with them. For the special people who have helped you in your time of need consider writing a thank you note.

Here are examples of things you might say to those around you to garner support:  
*When you visit the gravesite, leave a note or some indication to say, "I was here."*  
*Keep a picture of my loved one in your home.*  
*Please remember the birthday.*  
*Call me. Call me. Call me.*

Continue to look for ways to get the kind of support you need.