



“Rules” for Grieving

It is not linear.

It can't be contained, it can't be shaped, it can't be controlled like you so desperately want it to be. Some days you will be fine, other days you won't. You will backtrack, you will find yourself propelled forward, sideways and upside down. It is all a part of the process.

It takes time.

More than you want it to, more than you think it will, sometimes more than others think it “should”. Just when you think you are “done” comes another layer.

Everyone walks their grief journey differently.

Some run, some go around it, some plow through to the middle and through. Each person takes their own path, their own time, their own way.

Listen to everybody.

You find that everyone has a story, different pain, different ways of healing, or not, but everyone has a story.

Don't listen to anybody.

Although everyone has something to offer, they are not you, they did not have your unique relationship to your loved one, they did not have the same struggles and experiences that you do. You have your own story. Grief can't be compared.

Talk to people.

Find someone to hear your story, find people that will listen to the same things over and over. It takes a long time to believe in the new reality, and it can be hard to say things out loud. It takes a long time to process everything. Find your safe person/people and let them be there for you. Tell them what it felt like to hear the news, tell them what it feels like to walk into the places you once went together, tell

them it is hardest in the morning when you expect to hear their voice down the hallway when you wake up. Tell them the truth of your pain, your experience.

Allow yourself ALL of the emotions.

Let them come as they do, the sadness, the anger, the betrayal, the love, the laughter, the memories. They will come and go, and after awhile they will be less of your focus... but it takes time. One of the best analogies I was given is that your insides feel like "tossed salad".

You will not feel like yourself for a long time.

It comes back in the little things. The day you realize that you didn't have to carry Kleenex with you when you stepped out of the house, the day that you smiled again because the sun was shining, the day you wore mascara again, in all these little ways you begin to create your new normal.

You will feel like you are going crazy.

Your body responds in very physical ways to the heavy burden of grief. Insomnia, depression, sleeping all of the time, muscle soreness, fuzzy thinking, dissociative moments. All of these things are normal, and will tend to change over time, but it never hurts to check in with your doctor or close friends if they are concerning you.

Be Gentle With Yourself.

The hole that the person left in your life, in your heart, can't be mended in a moment. You have loved fully, allow yourself to honor the time, the love that was shared... and that can't be rushed.

Buckle in for the ride.

There are no rules.

Only you know what you need, what you feel, how many tears you need to cry, how long you need to retreat from the world, how many times you need to tell your story, how many times you need to avoid the memories, how many times you need to look at pictures, tell the stories, how much you need from other people.

Allow those that want to help to help, be needy, be vocal, be quiet, read, write, reflect, hope, pray, love... you are in the club that no one wants to be in, and there are other club members that want to give you what they have been given.

Allow them.

You are not alone.