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### Remember

..Take time to check in and see how you are on the inside as well as the outside.

..Ask yourself what you need to feel better that is possible right now and get those needs met.

..If you feel stuck in one place in your grief, at any time, even years or decades later, it is never too late to ask for help.

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### Western Australia Bereavement and Grief Support Services

#### Compassionate Friends

[www.compassionatefriends.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriends.org.au) | (08) 9486 8711

**Road Trauma Support Services WA** – (08) 9420 7262

[www.rtswa.org.au](http://www.rtswa.org.au)

**Red Nose Foundation** – 1300 998 698

**Victims Support Agency** – (08) 9425 2850

**Griefline** – (03) 9935 7400

Celebrant

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## Dissolving Grief

Imagine you're walking on a frigid windy day  
With just the bitter cold, you've nothing to say  
You huddle down to protect yourself to stay afloat  
As you do up the buttons at the top of your coat

It's hard to focus on anything but pain and fears  
As the stinging squall draws out hidden tears  
You wear the heavy coat and a constant frown  
With your shoulders tight and your head bent down

But as you turn a corner, to feel the wind cease  
Just a subtle change, the pre-cursor to peace  
You look up, still encased in a dark shroud  
Only to see the sun breaking through a cloud

Amazed at the transformation, the timing's got you beat  
As the cloud dissolves, you embrace perfect heat  
The next stage you notice, as if from an inner call  
You relax your shoulders and start to stand tall

By now with a childish grin, the relief to flow  
You remove your coat and bask in the warm glow  
The brilliant sunshine was, and is always there  
No sense of loss, just a connection with love and care

So how do you turn a corner, remove the weight of dust  
True friends and family are the key, open with trust  
The grief of loss is replaced by humour and guile  
As pleasant memories are reflected, by an inward smile

So consider your lost loved one, and now will find  
They are ever smiling, ever gentle on your mind.

MDD 2017



[www.afcc.com.au](http://www.afcc.com.au)

# THE PROCESS OF GRIEF

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## WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

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"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths.

These persons have an appreciation, sensitivity and an understanding, which fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."

- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Bereavement is the experience of loss after a death. Grief is the natural healing process after any loss. Our brains physically change when we are in grief and due to these changes we can be forgetful, disorientated, confused, impulsive and emotional. If we could see how we feel, we may have a limb missing or perhaps gaping wounds in the chest or stomach. That is why we need time to heal and transform and grief gives us that time. Grief is an individual experience and it is up to us to acknowledge how big our wound is and what we need to heal and transform. Just like a wound there are phases to healing and ups and downs.

The grief process will vary for each person due to:

- Personal meaning and worth attached to that which is lost.
- Age.
- Previous grief and life experiences.
- Trauma associated with the loss.
- Culture.
- Associated guilt.
- Associated anger and resentments (displaced grief).
- Expected or sudden loss.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, there is only what works and doesn't work for the individual. What works is anything that supports our healing and does not cause harm to us or others.

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We can use the pain of grief to:

1. Understand, reflect on, love and honour what was.
2. Let go of what no longer serves us.
3. Accept what is.
4. Make decisions about what is important and how life will be from now on.
5. Grow into a new way of being and find a life with new meaning.
6. Remain connected to our loved one.

Grief is a normal part of life. We are all different; some people need a lot of time alone while others like to keep busy doing things. The outward behaviour of a person does not tell us if they are grieving or not, it is what they are processing on the inside.

As we respond to grief, it is normal to alternate between times of focusing on what is lost and then on what we have. This focus can change all the time as new waves of emotion drive us to reach out and keep going, or to stop and withdraw.

Overwhelming feelings of pain, chaos and exhaustion are normal. These feelings can return suddenly, even years later, because grief integrates and becomes part of who we are. It is not something to get over or stop, but something to feel, connect with, learn and grow from.



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### Supporting Yourself

Life has changed and with that change you will have new needs and so you will need new skills.

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These new needs may be:

Autonomy and Independence

New Meaning or Purpose

Isolation: for contemplation, self-expression, prayer meditation.

Connection: Affection, compassion, being heard, supportive friends, practical friends.

Security: Finances, a safe place, commitment from others.

Physical needs: Nourishment, exercise, sleep.

Emotional needs: Talking with family, friends, support groups, writing.

Movement: Exercise, walk, dance, yoga, etc.

Creative expression: Form a foundation, art or craft, renovations, gardening, make a memory box or book.

Meditation/Prayer

Acknowledging and Validating your feelings

Find the people and information you need to support you with these changes. You do not need to do it all on your own. See below for resources.

It is normal, and helpful, to keep your connection to your loved one who has died through talking to them, visiting special places, taking action in their name, making things with them in mind, looking at photos, having keepsakes.