Grief is a Response to Loss

Loss is never having again something you once had or hoped to have.

Initial Phase of Grief:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shock</th>
<th>Bad Dreams</th>
<th>Loss of Identity and Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Sleeplessness</td>
<td>Physical Distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Difficulty Concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervousness</td>
<td>Death Wishes</td>
<td>Need to Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Energy</td>
<td>Question Sanity</td>
<td>Disorganization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase of Letting Go Gradually:

- Much sharing of feelings and thoughts about the deceased and the death
- Visiting places that have meaning for you
- Disposing of belongings
- Permitting tears and letting go of guilt and anger
- Accepting yourself as widow or widower, orphan or single parent
- Replacing idealized focus of the dead person with genuine memory
- Reducing and gradually changing emotional ties to the person who has died

Phase of Accepting Aloneness and Making Peace:

- Realizing the experiential difference between lonely and alone
- Learning to be alone
- Going places alone without being embarrassed about it
- Making own decisions about purchases, trips, etc., with confidence
- Recognizing personal blessings
- Accepting unchangeable conditions (aging, dying)
- Accepting life with all its ups and downs

Phase of Rebuilding and Expanding One’s Life:

- Making new goals and aspirations
- Appreciating being alive
- Sharing your new self and understanding with others
- Living without fear of being hurt again because you believe that healing occurs
- Realizing you have grown stronger
- Recognizing limitations and understanding weakness and errors of others

HealthSpan Hospice, Roseville, Minnesota 651-635-9173