

## A FEW TIPS FOR PROCESSING YOUR EMOTIONS

- You have a right to grieve.
- Your grief will take as long as it takes.
- Don't bottle up your emotions.
- Let yourself feel what you feel.
- Realize and accept that your emotions are complex.
- Find a way to express yourself.
- Put your feelings into words.
- Try to talk through or write about what you feel.
- Give yourself time to grieve and process.
- There's no rush.
- If you need additional help, consider joining a grief support group or visiting a grief therapist.

Taking time to process and confront your emotions is a necessary part of every grief journey. Experiencing a variety of emotions, sometimes all at once, is normal. Emotions will be very intense at the beginning, but the intensity should lessen over time. The key is to find healthy ways to express your emotions while respecting the individual grief journeys of those around you. In time, if you do the work of mourning, you will find your way to a "new normal."



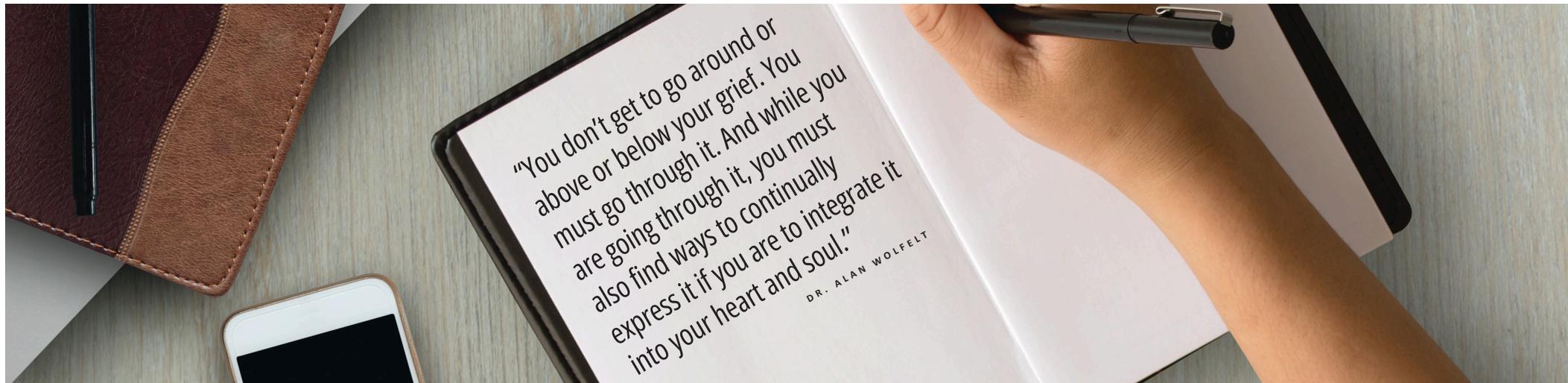
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FUNERAL DIRECTORS LIFE

**YOUR JOURNEY**  
THROUGH GRIEF





On the journey through grief, you may experience emotions that are sometimes overwhelming, confusing, heartbreaking, and even frightening. You may be tempted to try to suppress your feelings of grief or find a way around this experience.

As noted grief author and educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt says, "You don't get to go around or above or below your grief. You must go through it. And while you are going through it, you must also find ways to continually express it if you are to integrate it into your heart and soul."

Grief is never easy, but it helps to know a little about what you can expect along the journey. Here are a few emotions you may encounter on your own journey through grief.

## SADNESS

Sadness is the most common emotion people feel following the loss of someone loved. We grieve their absence. We acknowledge that our lives will never be the same, and it brings us an indescribable sadness. It is important to allow yourself to feel sad. If you find yourself crying, let the tears to flow. Take time to process what you loved most about the person and find ways to express your sadness outwardly.

## GUILT OR REGRET

Two other related emotions you may feel after a loss are guilt and regret. You may feel guilty or regretful for not reaching out more, for not doing enough, for not calling or visiting more often, or for not being able to prevent the death. It's normal to feel this way, but carefully think through the circumstances. Do you feel like you need to apologize to someone? If you do, try to express your feelings and seek forgiveness. You may also need to forgive yourself and determine how you want to change in the future.

## ANXIETY OR FEAR

For some, death can stir up anxiety or fear, which are often triggered by feeling that you're vulnerable or that your security is threatened. For others, fear and anxiety may be learned responses (a previous experience has conditioned you to respond this way) or you may not feel that you can cope with what has happened. Remember, grief is a journey, and you must take the time you need to process the feelings inside you. With time and effort, you will find a way to move forward.

## ANGER

Anger is a normal reaction to loss. Your anger may stem from feeling helpless, and it may be directed at someone or something in particular, like the doctors or your loved one's choices. If you are able to articulate what you feel, then consider writing it down or talking to a safe person. If your emotions are more explosive, try some form of physical activity to help you release your anger.

## RELIEF

Relief may be one of the most misunderstood emotions a person experiences following a death. We feel so strongly that we shouldn't be relieved that we sometimes hide the fact that we are. But relief is to be expected, especially after a period of intense or prolonged suffering. When a season of stress is complete and you feel relief, it doesn't mean you didn't love the person. It simply means that you have been through a difficult time and are now emerging on the other side of it.

