

Ten Commandments of Grief

Zusman Hospice Bereavement Support



Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain “rights” no one should try to take away from you.

The following list is intended both to empower you to heal and to help you decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

You have the right to experience your own unique grief.

No one else will grieve in exactly the same way as you. When you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.

You have the right to talk about your grief.

Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much and as often as you want.

You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.

Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

You have the right to experience grief “attacks.”

Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but it is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.

You have the right to...

1. **Experience your own unique grief.**
2. **Talk about your grief.**
3. **Feel a multitude of emotions.**
4. **Experience grief “attacks”.**
5. **Be tolerant of your physical & emotional limits.**
6. **Make use of ritual.**
7. **Embrace your spirituality.**
8. **Search for meaning.**
9. **Treasure your memories.**
10. **Move toward your grief and heal.**

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You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals and drink plenty of water. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

You have the right to make use of rituals.

The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More important, a funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you that rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.

You have the right to embrace your spirituality.

If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry with God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.

You have the right to search for meaning.

You may find yourself asking, "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. Watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you.

You have the right to treasure your memories.

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of a loved one. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.

You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.

Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember that grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. You and those around you must remember that the death of a loved one changes your life forever.

(Adapted from "Six Simple Weeks" by Eloise Cole and Joy Johnson, 2001 Compassion Books, Inc. Steps Towards Nurturing Yourself While Grieving)



Grief support is available to you and your loved ones from the Zusman Hospice Bereavement Staff.

We offer support through phone calls, individual counseling and group sessions.

Please contact us at **614-559-0350.**

Grief is like the ocean;
it comes on waves
ebbing and flowing.
Sometimes the water is
calm, and sometimes it is
overwhelming. All we
can do is learn to swim.

– Vicki Harrison

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 THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION

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