



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT (Adapted from Therese A. Rando)

- Your grief will take longer than most people think it should
- Your grief will take more energy than you can imagine
- Your grief will involve continual changes
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life and who you are. It will affect your social relationships, your health, thoughts, feelings and spiritual beliefs.
- Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss
- You will grieve for many things (both symbolic and tangible), not just the death itself
- You will grieve for what you have lost already as well as for the future; for the hopes, dreams and unfulfilled expectations you held for the person that died.
- Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions: some expected, some not This loss will resurrect old losses, feelings and unfinished business from the past
- You may have some confusion about who you are; this is due to the intensity and unfamiliarity of the grieving experience and uncertainty about your new role in the world
- You may have a combination of anger and depression; irritation, frustration, intolerance
- You may feel guilty in some form
- You may have a little sense of self-worth
- You may have experience spasms, waves of acute upsurges of grief that occur without warning
- You will have trouble thinking and making decisions: poor memory and organization
- You may feel like you are going crazy
- You may be obsessed with death or preoccupied with thought of the dead person
- You will search for meaning in your life and question your beliefs
- You may find yourself acting differently
- Society has unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately
- You have a number of physical reactions
- Certain dates, events, season and reminders will bring upsurges in your grief
- Certain experiences late in life may resurrect intense grief feelings for you

In summary, your grief will bring with it, depending upon the combination of factors above, an intense amount of emotion that will surprise you and those around you. Most of us are unprepared for the global response we have to a major loss. Our expectations tend to be too unrealistic, and more often than not we receive insufficient assistance from friends and society. Your grief will not only be more intense than you expected but it will also be manifested in more areas and ways than you ever anticipated. You can expect to see brief upsurges of it at anniversary and holiday times, and in response to certain stimuli that remind you of what you have lost. Your grief will be very idiosyncratic and dependent upon the meaning of your loss, your own personal characteristics, the type of death, your social support, and your physical state.

