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SUPPORT FOR HEALING

How To Survive A Loss (of any kind) by Carol A. Cassara

No one is immune to loss—it's part of life. Whether it's a friend or family member, a beloved pet, a job, our health, a family home or something else, the feelings are the same. It's still loss and it must be grieved.

At the same time, life goes on and so do our responsibilities. Still, it can feel like grief will never end. Here are some **ways to cope with grief over a loss of any kind:**

Don't stuff your feelings. Grieve, cry, feel the loss. Tears are normal and necessary. No matter how many times well-meaning people will ask when you are getting over it, know that grief takes as long as it takes. Stuffing our feelings only prolongs active grieving. Don't keep your feelings in, get them out: cry, talk about it, write about it.

Talk with trusted loved ones. Within your circle of family friends, there is likely to be at least one person who will lend a loving ear when you want to talk about it. Spend time with that person. Tell them you need to talk about your loss and ask if they would be kind enough to listen.

Don't try to forget about the loss. It happened. It's real. And you really can't forget about it, can you?

Don't judge yourself. Grief is a normal response to loss. There's nothing wrong with feeling it. If others have a problem with it, let it be their problem. Don't blame yourself, either.



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If you've lost a job, take active steps to find another. Update your resume or LinkedIn profile. Network with people who might connect you with opportunities. Cast a wide net so your chances of finding a new job quickly increase. Find ways to reduce expenses: most people can cut some fat from phone and cable bills.

If you've lost a home, it's nothing to be ashamed of. Get hold of your budget and consider ways to cut expenses.

Apply for government benefits. Don't be too proud to use any means at your disposal to support yourself and your family. But don't raid your 401K if you can help it. You'll need that money down the road.

Exercise if you can. Long or even walks or bike rides can help. Spending time in nature can be healing. Just keep moving.

Purge closets. Many people find it cathartic to shed things they no longer need. If you've lost a loved one, resist the urge to get rid of everything; be sure to keep some mementos you'll appreciate later.

Get help. If you are significantly depressed over a long period of time, see your doctor and if possible, a therapist. Many insurance companies offer a certain number of mental health visits in their benefit plan. Local colleges offer help from graduate students in psychology and often charge on a sliding scale, depending on what you can afford. There are also crisis phone lines and other community resources you can tap.

Meditate before medicating. Meditation can often provide relief without the need for medication. But, if your doctor or therapist suggests medication, consider it.

Online resources abound. From online support groups and message boards to helpful articles, podcasts and books, use the vast range of the web to connect you with helpful resources.