



BEGINNING GRIEF

Finding Your Footing in the First Days and Weeks After Loss

The beginning of grief can feel like stepping into a life you do not recognize. Someone you love has died, yet the world around you continues. In the first days and weeks, you may feel shocked, numb, overwhelmed, exhausted, confused - or many things at once.

WHEN LOSS IS NEW

Early grief can affect nearly every part of daily life. Thoughts may feel scattered. Ordinary decisions can seem difficult. Sleep and appetite may change. You may cry unexpectedly, feel restless or disconnected, or find yourself reaching for the person who is no longer physically there. Grief can include emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and physical responses, and each person experiences them differently.

WHAT YOU MAY NOTICE

- Shock, disbelief, numbness, sadness, anger, fear, guilt, relief, yearning, or moments when you feel very little at all.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, making decisions, or completing familiar tasks.
- Changes in sleep, appetite, energy, motivation, or the way your body feels from day to day.

GENTLE REMINDER

There is no single right way to begin grieving. In these early days, getting through the next hour or the next day can be enough.

THERE IS NO RIGHT WAY TO BEGIN

Grief does not unfold in neat stages or according to a schedule. You may have moments of intense pain followed by periods when you feel almost normal. You may want to talk about the person who died, or you may need quiet. You may want people nearby one day and need space the next. These shifts do not mean you are grieving incorrectly. They reflect the very personal way your mind and body are adjusting to loss.



FOCUS ON WHAT IS NEEDED TODAY

At the beginning, try not to demand too much of yourself. Your energy may be limited, and your attention may be divided between grief, practical responsibilities, family needs, and the many decisions that often follow a death. Small, manageable choices can help make the day feel less overwhelming.

GENTLE WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

Self-care in early grief does not need to be elaborate. It can simply mean tending to your most basic needs with patience and compassion. Support from trusted people can also make a meaningful difference.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

- Drink water, eat something nourishing when you can, and rest when your body asks for rest.
- Accept practical help. Let someone bring a meal, make a phone call, run an errand, or sit quietly with you.
- Give yourself permission to postpone nonessential decisions and to say no when something feels like too much.

A THOUGHT TO CARRY WITH YOU

You do not have to understand everything today. Grief asks us to live one moment at a time while our hearts slowly learn the shape of a changed world.

A GENTLE CLOSING

Beginning grief is not about finding a way to quickly feel better. It is about finding a way to live through a profound change, one day and sometimes one moment at a time. There may be no words that make the loss easier, but you do not have to solve your grief. Allow yourself time, support, rest, and room for whatever feelings come. As the days unfold, you can begin to discover what helps you carry both your loss and your love.

With heartfelt compassion, Linda Findlay

