



Resolving Grief: For a Lost Companion or Loved One

by Staci Newring



As a previous Hospice Volunteer, I am familiar with and even comfortable with helping people make their transition. I was with our 15 year old dog, Jewel, in June, when the vet put her down because of bone cancer. I was there when two grandparents, and my father took their last breath. Still, nothing prepares you for loss. Our brains tell us that the person's death is for the best. He or she is in a better place, and yet our hearts are broken. My

heart still breaks each time I walk into the house expecting my dog to greet me at the door, wag her tail, and nuzzle against me. There are days when the realization that I haven't spoken to my beautiful mother in eleven years becomes unbearable, and not seeing my father's face brings me to tears. Resolving grief after the loss of loved ones and companions can bring your life to a stand still; while living in a society where the message is "Life must go on."

Kristine Carlson, the wife of the deceased Richard "Don't Sweat The Small Stuff" Carlson, wrote the most heartwarming book about how she dealt with Richard's sudden death. The book is called *Heart Broken Open: A Memoir Through Loss To Self Discovery*. I would recommend this book to anyone experiencing grief. Kristine shows us that it is ok to be where you are during the grieving process. Never let anyone tell you how to grieve. Sometimes you may want to be around people, and other times you may choose to stay in bed all day. Either way is okay, just trust your intuition.

Resolving your grief is personal, and only you know what works for you, but here are some suggestions:

1. Listen to music: ...That reminds you of your loved ones, or music that your loved ones listened to. My family played the music of Gregory Porter, a jazz musician, during my father's final days. Although he was on morphine, dad tapped his fingers to the music. My drive to work takes almost an hour, but sometimes I put on a little Gregory Porter and pretend my father is in the car beside me. I imagine him bobbing his head to the beat of the music.

2. Dance: There is nothing like moving your body to shake up those feelings. The dance you create might leave you in a heap on the floor, as you let go of your tears, or fill you with joy and laughter. The tears or the laughter is good.

3. Read a book: *Passed and Present: Keeping Memories of Loved Ones Alive* by Allison Gilber. Allison shares ideas about how to repurpose objects and heirlooms from loved ones. Prior to reading this book I dedicated an altered book to my mother, and put together a book of love letters my father wrote to her from Korea. Last Christmas, I collected all of my dad's acting memorabilia and created scrapbooks and shadow boxes for my family.
4. Connect with your purpose: Often times we become caretakers of our loved ones and companions, and when they pass away, we are left without a purpose. I use numerology and meditation to help others connect with deceased loved ones on the other side and share their messages. I also use numerology to help people re-connect with their purpose or to discover a new purpose that will help them navigate through this difficult time.
5. Be present and look for signs: Recently I had an experience during an appointment with a client on my mother's birthday. That client happened to have the same name as my mother. She was playing easy-listening music, which was mostly contemporary. Suddenly the song, *At Last* By Etta James came on. The person told me it was their wedding song. I suddenly got chills because it was my mother's favorite song. As I was being mindful, I realized that my mother was sending me a message. There was no reason that particular song should have come on in the mix of music being played and very unusual that the client would share with me the fact that this was her wedding song.
6. Find a listening ear: Find someone that you can talk to, such as a good friend that won't mind you telling your story again and again as you process your loss. Speak with a Minister that will pray with you, a Mentor, or even a Grief Support group. Resolving grief for a lost companion, or loved one is never easy, but by keeping a strong support system nearby, trusting your intuition about how to deal with your grief, and by taking it one day at a time, the pain will lessen and you will find joy again.

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