



Why Is This Happening to Me? Why Can't I Recover from My Grief?

By Karen Gottschall

Are you waking up each morning with this thought: **Will this pain ever go away?** Grief recovery can be a very tedious journey; a recovery that is not dependent on a timetable, or the passing from one stage to the next. Have you ever heard folks ask this question: How did you get over your grief? One of those things you know in your deepest chamber of your heart is that you never totally "get over" the grief of a loved one. However, what you can do is recover from the **pain** of losing our dearest one.

Much of our recovery from pain is the understanding of how and why grief works. Let me point out, that this grief article is geared to those of you are actively participating in your grief. In other words, *if you are stalled by fear or emotional pain or overwhelmed with deep anger and resentment, it will be difficult to participate in active grieving. If you have been traumatized by the violence of the death of your loved one, your grief will be complicated by those issues.*

Okay, enough said! How about some tips for recovery?

#1 Tip: Do a survey of your own grief and pain! On a spectrum, are you more at the "not recovered-I'm still in shock" pole or are you more at the "fully recovered-I'm back to living fully" pole? Wherever you fall on the spectrum of grief, begin to evaluate your pain. What causes you the deepest pain? You really need to release it from your body by talking about it. See if you don't feel eased.

#2 Tip: Every family has a style of grieving. When you were a child, what did you observe about how your family grieved? We have the tendency to carry family grief styles along with us as we grow to adulthood and have families of our own. I need to remind you that even families who show no grief outwardly have their own style. What family behaviors have you continued in your own style of grieving? What would you like to change about your style of grieving, if anything? (*Yes, you can give yourself permission to change how you grieve*). A good way to evaluate your style is to ask yourself this question: Am I modeling a healthy style of grieving for my children?

#3 Tip: Sometimes, a death can cause us to experience something called grief reaction (this is just a high-fallutin' term for fear and anxiety!) Grief reaction can occur in families when a child or parent is accidentally killed or takes their own life. Basically what happens is that the survivors become very over-protective and frightened that someone else in the family could die as well. In some ways, the death of that loved one

has taken away the freedom to live fully as a family. Again, you may need to do a survey of your grief reaction. What are you fearful and anxious about? Are you transmitting this fear/anxiety to other members of your family? Is your grief holding you captive?

On Saturday, November 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Companions on a Journey Grief Support, St. Susanna and St. John's will be offering a workshop "Why Is This Happening to Me?" We will be exploring grief recovery in a deeper way. We will be helping folks who attend to make their own grief recovery plan so that they can live more fully and in much less pain. For further information see the St. Max website or visit companionsonajourney.org