

Am I getting better?

Everyone handles their grief work in their own way and time. So how can you measure your progress, and be sure your grief is “healthy” and “normal”? Your life may still seem unfocused, and lack clear purpose or direction. But by now you’ve probably begun to feel a new sense of identity and security. If you haven’t yet, you will. And it may happen so quietly that you hardly notice. Are you getting better yet? Take inventory. Look at what you’ve accomplished since your loss. If you keep a journal, this is a good place to go back and look at how you felt during those first few months.

Or use this checklist to see how you’re doing:

- I’ve made some new friends or gotten closer to my old ones
- I’ve taken part in some outside activities
- I laugh more often now
- I don’t cry or feel depressed as often as I used to
- When I’m ‘down’ or depressed, it doesn’t last as long as it used to
- It’s easier now to talk about my loved one
- It’s easier now to relax and have some fun
- It’s easier now to make decisions than it was a few months ago
- I have more energy now
- I’m sleeping better
- I *feel* better



If you checked off at least half, you’re making good progress. And that means you’re paying tribute to your loved one. If you haven’t check any, you may need some extra help. Recovery from grief doesn’t dishonor their memory or mean you love them less or are disloyal. It just means you’re getting on with the business of living a life that is different than what it was.

If your progress seems slow, be patient with yourself. You may need to work a little harder, but give yourself time. There will still be days when the pain comes back. All wounds leave scars that don’t go away; they only fade.

There will always be times when you feel your loss more keenly, especially around holidays or other special days you shared together - birthdays, anniversaries, or other family events. But you’re growing stronger, and are better able to live with your loss. You are moving through the worst of your grief. You’ve changed and you’re getting better.