

After the first year... what... ?

It's been several months since your loved one died. You and those around you think you should be getting better. But instead you may be overwhelmed at times and feel that everything is "too much".

Alter time has passed, your feelings of grief and loss probably diminished. Around the anniversary of the death they often re-surface again for a while or seem more intense. This is natural, but can be difficult and stressed. After the first year, these feelings usually become less powerful.

There is a sense of easing. But the healing process may not be completed. It's often hard for others to understand this. They feel that by now all grief should be healed. We need to accept ourselves, and not expect too much too soon. Grief is different for everyone, so don't make comparisons or use someone else as a yardstick.

You're different, and when you look at someone else who's lost a loved one, what you see on the outside may be very different from what they feel on the inside.

Some guidelines for your second year:



1. Don't criticize yourself. Your expectations may be too high.
2. Remember: the long-term implications of your loss may hit you know. This is normal.
3. If you feel 'stuck' in your grief you may need to change your life patterns. If the methods you used your first year didn't help, you might try others: a support group, books on grief, strengthening your coping skills, or counseling help.
4. Be sure you have someone supportive to talk to.
5. Reflect on this quote from *Time Out For Grief* by Jean G. Jones: "Cry when you have to—laugh when you can". You may not cry as often as you did at first, up there are times when it still helps.
6. Have a check-up if physical symptoms appear or persist.
7. Backsliding HAPPENS. If it does, don't panic. You recovered before and you will again. Set realistic goals and meet them one at a time. Don't tackle too many things at once and set yourself up to fall.
8. Don't be surprised if depression enters your life or returns. A certain amount of depression is normal, and so is it's recurrence. If depression is severe, get help.
9. Make sure you keep balance in your life. . .a healthy mix of work, recreation and rest is good for the soul.
10. If you find you are having trouble, give us a call.

