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6 Tips for Grieving the Loss of a Spouse or Partner

In the Jewish tradition, the saying that "life is to be lived" couldn't be more true. After an intense seven-day mourning period following the burial, known as shiva, the full mourning period lasts a year, after which mourners observe the dead's *yahrzeit*, or yearly anniversary of the death. *THE HEALING POWER OF GRIEF: The Journey through Loss to Life and Laughter* takes readers by the hand during that year to provide a roadmap as it were to healing. It is then time to look forward, which embraces *THE HEALING POWER OF LOVE: Transcending the Loss of a Spouse to New Love* as readers meet twelve couples, each couple sharing their journey as they integrated loving memories of their late spouse and continue forward to new love.

"I adored my husband and when he died, my life felt over. I needed to learn how to transform this sadness into something positive. Not a "substitute," but a conversion, from a "we" to an "I." Not in a selfish way, but as a way of refocusing; to live my life in a positive way without him ... not losing the memory and loving feelings of him, but incorporating them and moving forward. My goal was to heal in a way that's positive and energizing instead of depleting," says Gloria Lintermans who co-authored these two new compassionate guides on grief with Marilyn Stolzman, Ph.D., L.M.F.T.

There is no set timeframe for grieving or healing. Each individual copes at a different pace with every loss. The following six discoveries can help you as you start your journey towards healing:

1. Recognize who among family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers are emotionally safe right now. Choose who you can be vulnerable with and confide in those who are "safe."
2. Honor yourself and put yourself first, at least for now.
3. Be open with your children. Encourage them to be open with you. Remind them it is not their responsibility to take away your grief, but that it is a process you all have to work through, individually and as a family.
4. Slow down. Make sure you are taking the time to smell the roses, nap, meditate or read. You will have time to think, which may be difficult—however you can start the healing process.
5. Exercise. Mother Nature blessed us with endorphins, our body's own feel-good high; it's natural and free. Allow this brain-chemical to neutralize stress hormones to help you feel better.
6. Timetables. Honor your own timetable for sorting out your spouse's personal things, for changing the message on the answering machine or other pending tasks. Don't be afraid to ask for help.