



**SOME COMMON  
NORMAL GRIEF REACTIONS**

**FEELINGS**

Sadness  
Anger  
Guilt and self-reproach  
Anxiety  
Loneliness  
Fatigue  
Helplessness  
Shock  
Yearning  
Emancipation  
Relief  
Numbness

**PHYSICAL**

Sleep disturbances  
Appetite disturbances  
Hollowness in stomach  
Tightness in chest  
Tightness in throat  
Oversensitivity to noise  
Depersonalization  
Breathlessness, feeling short of breath  
Weakness in muscles  
Lack of energy  
Dry mouth

**SPIRITUAL**

Disconnection  
Questioning, unbelief  
Searching for meaning  
Revisiting faith tradition  
Re-evaluating one's place in the world  
Addressing one's own mortality  
Worship as time of extreme feelings  
Anger at God  
Sense of deceased's presence

**BEHAVIORS**

Social withdrawal  
Dreams of deceased  
Avoiding reminders of deceased  
Searching and calling out  
Sighing  
Restless overactivity  
Crying  
Visiting places or carrying objects  
Treasuring objects

**THINKING**

Disbelief  
Confusion  
Preoccupation  
Loss of memory  
Absent-mindedness

**TASKS OF GRIEVING**

1. To accept the reality of the loss.
2. To express grief's pain and emotion.
3. To adjust to an environment where the deceased is missing.
4. To redirect emotional energy to other meaningful outlets in our outer world.

Four tasks of mourning were identified by William Worden as one model for viewing the grief process. Looking at the grief process as tasks to be worked through can assist the grieving person with healing.

From the ideas of William Worden ([Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy](#))

## Suggested Reading

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Bozarth-Campbell, Alla             | <i>Life is Goodbye, Life is Hello</i>  |
| Caine, Lynn                        | <i>Widow</i>   |
| Deits, Bob                         | <i>Life After Loss: A Practical Guide to Renewing Your Life After Experiencing Major Loss</i>      |
| Didion, Joan                       | <i>A Year of Magical Thinking</i> [for widows]   |
| Doka, Kenneth                      | <i>Living With Grief</i>   |
| Eldon, Amy and Eldon, Kathy        | <i>Angel Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance</i>  |
| Grollman, Earl A.                  | <i>Living When a Loved One has Died</i>  |
| Kreis, Bernadine and Pattie, Alice | <i>Up From Grief: Patterns of Recovery</i>   |
| Kushner, Harold                    | <i>When Bad things Happen to Good People</i>   |
| Rando, Therese                     | <i>How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Has Died</i>  |
| Schiff, Harriet Sarnoff            | <i>Beyond Grief</i>  |
| Staudacher, Carol                  | <i>A Time to Grieve: Meditations for Healing After the Death of a Loved One</i>                    |
| Stearns, Ann Kaiser                | <i>Living Through Personal Crisis</i>  |
| Temes, Roberta                     | <i>Living With an Empty Chair</i>  |
| Wolfelt, Alan                      | <i>Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for finding Hope and Healing Your Grief</i> |