

LOVING YOURSELF THROUGH GRIEF

Posted on February 12, 2019 by Jennifer Stern, LISW



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Loving yourself through grief, it's necessary. Self-love, self-care, self-compassion, patience and a lot of reframing from *I can't, I'll never* to *I can and I will*. From *I am a mess* to *I am doing the best that I can*. Every intrusive thought reframed to one of compassion.

Self-love through grief is a powerful and meaningful choice. One that takes courage, vulnerability, practice and the filtering of positive self-awareness.

Love yourself to buffer your pain, to remind yourself of your inherent value, in honor of those that are no longer able (or maybe never were able) to love you as you deserve.

Begin with your self-talk. For every thought of self-doubt respond with an affirmation. Be the voice of love, of care, of reassurance and compassion. Say to yourself what you wish others would know to say to you during this unimaginable time. Remind yourself of your strengths, of who you are, even as you struggle.

I am....

Capable of healing and of growth

Resilient

Strong

Trying

Adapting to change

Able to ask for and receive help

Human

Write yourself a love note. Yes, for real.

I am so proud of myself for_____.

I never imagined that I could make it through one moment without_____and here I am making it one day at a time. _____time has passed and I am still here. Still trying.

I did not know that I could_____but now I know that I can.

I am stronger than I believed possible. I just _____.

It isn't easy to live forward in grief yet I am learning that_____makes me feel more comfortable, competent, capable, resilient, (Make a list and try to do one thing from this list each morning and night).

I am strong even when I am feeling vulnerable, overwhelmed, tired. I am courageous even when uncertain or scared. I am grieving AND I am figuring it out every single day.

I am proud of myself.

Love yourself enough to not compare your life to how it was *before* the loss of your loved one. Instead, compare where you are now to where you were the day your loved one died. Try to focus on everyday since and what you are learning about yourself.

I am learning....

To be gentle with myself

To trust my instincts

To approach life one task, one decision, one choice, one interaction, one day... at a time

To practice self-care

To let go of what keeps me stuck (perfectionism, guilt, shame, regret, judgement of self and others, comparison, self-doubt)

To focus on and grow my strengths

Schedule daily care. A walk. Tea with a friend. A movie. Order in your favorite meal. Watch an hour of Netflix, Food Network, Hallmark, HGTV. Buy yourself flowers. Plant a garden. Get a massage. Join a support group. Speak with a Bereavement Counselor. Take a class. Engage in positive distraction (knitting, word searches, playing an instrument, painting, games on your phone...). Volunteer.

Your thoughts, feelings, environment, choices matter. You matter.

Loving yourself through grief will not take away the grief, the longing for what was, but it will help you to counterbalance grieving with living. Grief is lonely in unimagined ways, overwhelming, exhausting, unpredictable... Choose love. Choose to love yourself as you would your most cherished person. Treat yourself with compassion, understanding, support. Replace self-defeating and self-limiting thoughts with affirmations. Write yourself a love letter. Journal daily 3 things you are proud of, grateful for, that you accomplished. Schedule one thing a day that makes you feel cared for, connected, able to breathe. Love yourself. You are here and you deserve to feel loved.

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