



Tear Soup Cooking Tips

Reprinted from
Tear Soup, a recipe for healing after loss

Grandy's Cooking Tips

- Grief is the process you go through as you adjust to the loss of anything or anyone important in your life.
- The loss of a job, a move, divorce, death of someone you love, or a change in health status are just a few of the situations that can cause grief.
- Grief is both physically and emotionally exhausting. It is also irrational and unpredictable and can shake your very foundation.
- The amount of “work” your grief requires will depend on your life experiences, the type of loss, and whatever else you have on your plate at that time.
- A sudden, unexpected loss is usually more traumatic, more disruptive and requires more time to adjust to.
- If your loss occurred through violence, expect that all the normal grief reactions will be exaggerated.
- You may lose trust in your own ability to make decisions and/or to trust others.
- Assumptions about fairness, life order, and religious beliefs are often challenged.
- Smells can bring back memories of a loss and a fresh wave of grief.
- Seasons, with their colors and climate, can also take you back to that moment in time when your world stood still.
- You may sense you have no control in your life.
- Being at work may provide a relief from your grief, but as soon as you get in the car and start driving home you may find your grief come flooding back.
- You may find that you are incapable of functioning in the work environment for a short while.
- Because grief is distracting it also means you are more accident-prone.
- The object of grieving is not to get over the loss or recover from the loss but to get through the loss.
- Over the years you will look back and discover that this grief keeps teaching you new things about life. Your understanding of life will just keep going deeper.

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If you are the cook

- This is your grief—no one else's. Your friends can't feel your loss in the same way. It will not affect their life the way it affects yours. And you may resent them for that.
- At first you may think dying would be preferable to having to go through this pain. Just try to stay alive. Sudden mood swings are normal. You may suddenly be unreasonable and short.
- Try your best to educate your friends about what you need and how they can help. Be as honest as you can be about how you are feeling.
- Don't give up on your friends if they let you down. But if they continue to be insensitive to your grief you may need to distance yourself for a while until you get stronger.
- At first you will probably want to talk to as many people as possible, but after a month or so, find one or two people whom you can count on for the long haul to just be there and listen when you need to talk.
- Write your thoughts in a journal. It will help you to process and also to remember the new insights you are learning.
- Consider attending a support group. Go at least three times before deciding if it is helpful to you.
- Be open to counseling.
- Exercise, sleep, drink plenty of fluids, and eat a well balanced diet.
- Pamper yourself. Take bubble baths. Get a massage.
- Try not to compare your grief with another's. You don't earn points for having a more painful experience than someone else has. And you won't feel less grief if someone else's loss is worse.
- You deserve to feel happy again. Being happy doesn't mean you forget. Learn to be grateful for the good days.
- Don't be too hard on yourself.
- Long after everyone else has forgotten your loss, you will continue to remember. Learn to be content with your private memories.

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*If your friend is the one
who is making Tear Soup*



- Be there for your friend, even when you don't understand.
- Be a source of comfort by listening, laughing, and crying.
- Stick close to your friend and defend their right to grieve.
- Allow your friend to make mistakes... or at least to grieve differently from the way you would grieve.
- Send flowers. Send money if you know this would help.
- Send cards. The message doesn't need to be long. Just let them know you haven't forgotten them. Send one every few weeks for a while.
- Call your friend. Don't worry about being a bother. Let your friend tell you if they don't want to talk about their loss right now.
- Answering machines and e-mail are great ways to keep in touch allowing the bereaved person to respond only when they feel up to it.
- Try to anticipate what your friend may need. Bereaved persons sometimes don't know what to ask for.
- Avoid offering easy answers and platitudes. This only invalidates grief. Be patient. Don't try to rush your friend through their grief.
- Give your friend permission to grieve in front of you. Don't change the subject or tell them not to cry or act uncomfortable when they do cry.
- Ask them questions. But don't tell them how they should feel.
- Invite your friend to attend events together, as you normally would. Let them decide if they don't want to attend.
- Don't assume because your friend is having a good day that it means they are over their loss.
- Be mindful of holidays, birthdays and anniversaries.

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Soup Making and Time

- Grief work takes time. Much longer than anyone wants it to.
 - If a child or spouse dies it may be a year before the bereaved begins to gain a sense of stability, because the loss is highlighted by each season, holiday, anniversary or special day. The second year is not so great either.
 - You may be okay one minute but the next minute you may hit bottom.
 - Nighttime can be particularly difficult. Some people have trouble getting to sleep while others have trouble staying asleep. And then there are those who don't want to wake up.
 - Most people can tolerate another's loss for about a month before wanting the bereaved person to get back to normal.
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If a child is the cook

- Be honest with the child and give simple, clear explanations consistent with the child's level of understanding. Be careful not to overload them with too many facts. This information may need to be repeated many times.
- Prepare the child for what they can expect in a new situation such as, going to a memorial service, or viewing the body. Explain as best you can how others may be reacting and how you would like the child to behave.
- When considering if a child should attend a memorial service consult the child. Their wishes should be the main factor for the decision. Include the child in gatherings at whatever level they want to participate. Helping to make cookies for the reception may be all they want to do.
- Expect them to ask questions like, "Why does he have his glasses on if he's dead and can't read?" Or, "Why is her skin cold?"
- Younger children are more affected by disruptions in their environment than by the loss itself.
- Avoid confusing explanations of death, such as, "gone away", or "gone to sleep." It might be better to say, "his body stopped working."
- Avoid making God responsible for the death. Instead say, "God didn't take your sister, but God welcomed her." Or, "God is sad that we're sad. But now that your sister has died, she is with God."
- Don't assume that if the child isn't talking about the loss it hasn't affected them.
- Be consistent and maintain the usual routines as much as possible.
- Encourage the child to express their feelings and to ask questions.
- Children may act out their grief in their fantasy play and artwork.
- If children have seen adults cry in the past they will be less concerned about tears now.
- Show affection and let them know that they are loved and will be taken care of.
- Each child reacts differently to loss. Behaviors that you may observe include: withdrawal, acting out, disturbances in sleeping and eating, poor concentration, being overly clingy, regression to earlier stages of development, taking on attributes of the deceased.
- Sharing your grief with a child is a way to help them learn about grief.

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If you are a male chef

- The world may not see you the bereaved person that you are. Because of your gender, in our society you may be seen only as the support person—a role you probably play very well.
- If you have been taught from an early age that “big boys don’t cry,” you may feel ashamed of your own tears. Other people may also be uncomfortable with your tears.
- Don’t hold your grief in. Find a safe place or someone who is not afraid of your grief.
- People may tell you how strong you are when you hold in your grief. Don’t confuse grieving with weakness and not grieving with strength. In fact, holding grief in is very hard on your body and can weaken your health.
- Gender does not *determine* your grieving style, but it may *affect* the way you grieve.
- Assume that your initial response to grief is the right response for you at that time. Try not to behave as others think you should—but as you need to.

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If there are two of you cooking

- Grief is unique to the individual. You may both experience the same loss, but you won't grieve in the same way. In other words, you are in it together, but you are in it alone.
- At first you may feel closer to each other than ever before. But that may change the farther you get away from your shared loss.
- Try not to judge each other.
- Talk to each other when you can.
- Don't let your partner be your only source of comfort.
- Write each other notes.
- It is normal to want others to grieve the same way you grieve and to communicate the same way you communicate. But life is just not that easy.
- Sexual desire may be affected. You both need intimacy, but not necessarily sex. Talk about it.
- Remember the past, hope for the future, but live in the present.

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