

HOW TO SURVIVE THE LOSS OF A LOVE

1. **SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY.** Spend time with your friends and/or family members. Share your thoughts and feelings. Talk it through. The emotional support, companionship and opportunity to "ventilate" will help you greatly.
2. **PHYSICAL EXERCISE.** Regular cardiovascular/aerobic exercise (walking, swimming, jogging, bicycling, etc.) has the unique ability to reduce anxiety, depression and stress and to improve your energy and sense of well-being during this difficult time.
3. **THE STABILITY OF DAILY LIFE TASKS.** Going to school or work and doing what you normally do is very helpful when going through a major change. It also helps to provide you with other areas to think of, giving you a break. However, immediately following a loss, give yourself a brief period to recover and refocus your concentration.
4. **PLEASURABLE ACTIVITIES.** Push yourself to do your hobbies and interests that have given you pleasure in the past. You will probably not "feel" like doing these things, and you may feel guilty in doing them. However, you are worth it! You need to have some enjoyment, even mild, in hard times.
5. **THE POWER OF LAUGHTER.** Laughter and humor can heal a broken heart, help a troubled mind, a soothe a weakened body. Rent a funny movie. Spend time with people who can make you laugh. And, remember, it is ok to laugh during hard times. It helps.
6. **SLEEP, REST, AND DEEP RELAXATION.** Get a good night's rest (but do not sleep excessively). Spend 10-15 minutes a day relaxing-such as taking slow, deep breaths, tensing and relaxing muscle groups, or doing visualizations of pleasant places. Consider buying a relaxation tape or doing some other relaxing activity.
7. **PAMPER YOURSELF.** Give yourself some TLC. Do something to soothe a troubled heart. Take a long bath, treat yourself to a gourmet dinner, get a massage, listen to music, etc. Tell yourself you deserve it.
8. **IMPROVE YOURSELF.** This is a good time to invest in a little self-improvement. Learn how to do something new or work on yourself in ways you've thought of in the past. It will boost your self-esteem.
9. **AVOID HARMFUL SUBSTANCES.** This is not a good time to "drown your sorrows in a glass of booze." Avoid the temptation to use drugs, alcohol or excessive caffeine or nicotine as a way of altering your mood-they only create new problems you can't afford.
10. **TIME TO GRIEVE.** It is normal and necessary to grieve the loss of an important person in your life, even if there were problems in the relationship. Give yourself enough time to feel the loss, to hurt, to cry, and to talk it through.
11. **MOMENTOS TO THE BACK.** Move the photographs and reminders out of the way if this feels right and you are able. Don't "live in the past" if it feel unhealthy for you.
12. **AVOID THE BLAME GAME.** Everyone plays a role in life's events. Life is a learning experience. Don't focus on blaming the other person or yourself for what went wrong. It only creates more bad feelings.

13. **BEWARE OF THE REBOUND.** As much as you might like to quickly find refuge in a new relationship, this is full of pitfalls for all. Give your heart a chance to hurt, to heal, and to open again in its own time.
14. **GOOD NUTRITION WILL FORTIFY YOUR BODY.** On the other hand, over-eating, skipping meals, or eating "junk food" will deplete your body of essential nutrients that keep you healthy. Eat when hungry but do not skip meals. Eat fruits and vegetables.
15. **MEDITATION AND/OR PRAYER LIFTS THE SPIRIT.** Engage in activities which renew and inspire your heart and mind. Spend time in nature and enjoy its beauty. Look for meaning in your life or your own spiritual path. Find way to accept yourself and forgive your mistakes in life.
16. **SEEK COUNSELING.** Therapy can be helpful to process feelings, talk with someone, provide specific techniques for your situation, and return you to a more normal place.
17. **GET IMMEDIATE HELP IF FEELING SUICIDAL.** Sometimes a loss will trigger such thoughts as "I can't go on" or "Life has no meaning now." These thoughts are brought only by the immediate situation and are never correct. If feeling suicidal, look in the phone book for a local suicide or crisis hotline or call 911.