



**CHRONIC JOY®**  
Ministering to those affected by:  
Chronic Illness, Mental Illness,  
Chronic Pain, & Disability

## COPING WITH GRIEF

### 14 WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFICULT DAY BRIGHTER

“People experiencing deep loss are navigating a new normal and developing a way to deal with grief’s profound questions, unexpected moments, and complicated scenarios.” Whitney Akers and Sara Giusti.

- 1. MAKE TIME FOR TEARS** – Tears are cleansing, but can sometimes feel as if they’ll swallow us whole. Setting a timer can create a protective boundary for overwhelming emotions.
- 2. TELL YOUR STORY** – Expressing grief can be done through words — or we can paint, sculpt, sing, dance, bake, journal, knit, carve, craft, build, garden, or sketch. There are many ways to express grief.
- 3. PERMISSION TO ASK** – It’s okay to ask for what we need, even if it’s asking others to please just listen, offer a hug, or steer clear of helpful clichés.
- 4. CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO MOVE** – All movement counts, including getting out of bed, folding the laundry, making dinner, dancing to a playlist, walking around the block or up and down stairs, stretching, or even taking a shower.
- 5. SPLURGE ON SOFT TISSUES** – A little softness is comforting when we’re grieving.
- 6. CUDDLE UP** – A soft flannel, a favorite sweater, or warm blanket can help us feel comforted and protected on a difficult day.
- 7. FAVORITE FOODS** – Stock the cupboards with healthy food that is quick and easy to prepare.
- 8. SPEND A LITTLE TIME OUTSIDE** – Fresh air offers a change of scenery and a new perspective, reminding us that God is still in control.

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- 9. SHOWER OR TAKE A BATH** – Feeling clean makes a difference, even if all we do is put on fresh pajamas and crawl right back into bed.
- 10. SHARE A GOOD LAUGH** – Calling a friend or loved one who can make us laugh in the messy midst of grief is a precious gift.
- 11. NOURISH THE MIND** – Keeping a list of books, podcasts, and TED Talks offers an easy distraction for grief-weary minds.
- 12. THANK GOD FOR ONE GOOD THING** – Gratitude can be difficult to feel in the midst of grief, but there is always something to be thankful for: sunshine through a window, a phone call from a friend, a handwritten card, a warm sweater, a great cup of tea, or really good chocolate.
- 13. STAY CONNECTED** – Time with others on the phone or in person can make a big difference on hard days.
- 14. BEING GOOD TO OURSELVES** – Treating ourselves to a beautiful hike, lunch with a friend, a great cup of coffee, or a new book might be a perfect pick-me-up on a difficult day.

### MOVING FORWARD WITH GRIEF

“We don’t move on from grief. We move forward with it.” Nora McInerney  
“When grief is part of your life, you learn how to start all over again – over and over again. And that builds courage ...” Jennifer Williamson  
Continual, sustained loss (and the grief that follows close on its heels) is one of the most energy-depleting aspects of chronic illness and pain. In the face of constant loss, we begin to ask: “Who am I?” “What is my purpose?” “Where and how do I find new meaning?”

### GRIEVING WITH HOPE

God doesn’t condemn our grief and sadness. He knows they are a part of our human experience in this fallen world, but He gently reminds us that through His Son, *we grieve with hope.*

Grief is a journey requiring steady sips of hope, plates filled God’s unbroken promises, the comfort of community, replenishing rest, fresh air and sunshine, and the unexpected surprise of a blue-winged butterfly.

In this world, we will experience pain, loss, separation, and death, but a *better day* is coming, a day when death and brokenness no longer have sway. *That* is our bright hope as we experience grief and sorrow on this long and winding journey *Home.*

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