

Permission

There is no one correct way to mourn. Really. Honest. There isn't. Please, please, please do not think that you ought to do anything other than what feels appropriate to you. Do not try to do this or that to take care of other people. Take care of yourself. Give yourself the permission to mourn as it feels appropriate to you.

Waves

When you are mourning, emotions and memories come in waves. They will come and leave on their own accord. You cannot control waves in the ocean; neither can you control emotions or memories when you are mourning.

At times, emotions will be overwhelming and take you without warning. You won't be done with them until they are done. You may try to delude yourself that you are in control of them, but you're not.

It's the same with memories. Memories you didn't even know you had may arrive seemingly from nowhere; and, again like waves, you are not in control of them.

The List

As people dislike dealing with other people in pain, mourners will be consoled. Or, better put, people will often try to console mourners. Of course, it's an impossible thing to do, right? You can't really say anything. Consequently, the intended comfort will, often, miss the mark.

Let's think about it... Even under the best circumstances, kind words and deeds cannot take away the feelings of pain and loss that mourners face. Words intended to comfort don't work. What then happens, when the first bit of would-be comfort doesn't help, the would-be comforter will usually make a second effort to comfort which also doesn't help - this often leaves both feeling worse.

Here's my suggestion to mourners: maintain a list of the 5 least comforting things you hear while you are mourning. My rationale is that if you make it part of a game while you listen to some ridiculous things that are supposed to pass for comfort it might take a bit of the sting out.

Walk Around the Block

After a week of mourning (or a week after the death), take a walk around the block either by yourself or with loved ones. This ritual is ancient and unbelievably effective. The mourning doesn't end with the walk around the block, but something shifts.