

## **How to Take Control of Your Grief and Your Life**

Out-of-control is how most persons feel after the loss of a loved one. This is normal, but can be frightening. It is reassuring to have others take over responsibilities during this period. Slowly, beginning as soon as possible, however, the grieving person needs to orchestrate their own life again. If you are deep in grief, how do you begin?

- **Build a Support Network.** Family and friends may be sympathetic, but they may be submerged in their own grief or life problems. Maybe they have never experienced a deep loss such as yours. It is up to you to find others who are also mourning the loss of a loved one. Search in your family community, in grief support groups, or at community agencies. Foster a relationship with these persons. They understand.
- **Accept the Crying.** You may feel embarrassed when you cry. You need not. Tears are evidence that you have the courage to cry, the courage to show your grief in this way. When your sadness dams up, find something to release the tears. They will be both healthy and healing. Find someone who accepts your tears and let them come.
- **Start a Journal.** Write whatever comes to mind - thoughts, feelings, problems, solutions. Writing down worries that get stuck in your head can help release these anxious thoughts. Record good things that happen and times you have taken control. Keep your journal accessible. It is your “instant friend,” always there to “hear” your grief, your pain, your plans. Writing in your journal is a good way to close the day.
- **Walk Each Day.** If you have trouble sleeping and often feel depressed, you are like most persons in grief. There is a non-drug prescription that could help relieve both these conditions. Take a short walk each day, slowly increasing the number of walks per day and the speed, as you are able. Check with your doctor. Make walking a pleasure. Be sure to walk in safe places, and find a buddy with whom to walk
- **Prepare for Anniversaries and Holidays.** These days will never be the same again, so it is okay to plan for them to be different. Do this early. Decide what you will keep, get rid of, and add.. Talk with others who are involved and get their help. Be realistic and kind to yourself. Each celebration you survive will help you face the next.

These are directives taken from five of the 64 take-control chapters in Marta Felber’s newest book, **Finding Your Way After Your Spouse Dies**. It follows the prize-winning journal of her own grief work after the death of her spouse, **Grief Expressed: When a Mate Dies**. In this book Felber, a therapist, invites the reader to work through his/her own grief, by her side. Both books are available at local or online bookstores, and at [www.lifewords.com](http://www.lifewords.com).