



# Understanding Grief and Loss

The first step in understanding grief and loss is to realize that grief is a natural and essential part of human life, not something to be avoided or ashamed of. Looking at the below situations, check the ones that you consider to be a reason for grieving or feeling loss.

- |                          |   |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | the death of a loved one                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | being diagnosed with an illness       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | losing your job                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | ruining your favorite outfit          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | the death of a pet                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | being arrested                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | an automobile accident                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | having your parents divorce           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | being physically assaulted                | <input type="checkbox"/> | missing a party because you were sick |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | being robbed                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | discovering there's no Santa Claus    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | getting a low grade in an important class | <input type="checkbox"/> | moving away from your friends         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | being denied acceptance at a college      | <input type="checkbox"/> | not making the basketball team        |

If you checked all of the boxes, you have a better than average understanding of the grief process. Even a small loss can set the natural process of grief and mourning into motion, not just the ones most people consider serious.

Five major stages have been recognized in the grieving process. When there's loss of any kind, people experience shock, denial, anger, depression and acceptance. The more serious the loss, the greater the loss is felt and often the slower the healing.

Honor your feelings and trust the healing process. In time, you'll heal in the same way that a broken bone or a wound heals.

