

Dear Husband,

As someone that has spent several years helping survivors heal after a death by suicide, I am writing to you in an attempt to bring more understanding to the subject of grieving within marriages.

Statistics show 80% of parents that bury a child, divorce. When the death is a death by suicide other relationship losses are affected much the same way, and it takes much longer to work through the death because of the suicide issues. Statistics also prove that men & women heal in different ways.

God made men and woman different. Science has proven that our brains work differently and we are different in our emotions, thoughts, and the way we respond to things.

Often men make statements about their wives "dwelling" on the suicide, or "they just need to stay away from all those other survivors and stop crying," etc. (Crying is a necessary part of healing. Tears actually get rid of physical toxins resulting from negative stress) Let me share some thoughts with you...

There is great strength in gathering to talk about their loss with peers. That's the reason support groups have been successful for many years with organizations such as Hospice, and The Cancer Society. It helps survivors to understand that the things they are feeling and thinking are 'normal,' it reduces fears, and gives them ways to work through issues they don't yet understand. It's important for them to know that what they are feeling is all a normal part of the process, and they will make it to the other side. Because many others in the group have, it gives them hope. It's comforting for a woman just to have someone understand and acknowledge their pain.

*"The 'never ending, but ever changing' aspect of grief may be one of the least understood aspects of grieving. Most people are anxious for survivors to have closure and "put the death behind them" so that they can go on. But death leaves a vacuum in the lives of those left behind. Life is never the same again. This does not mean that life can never be joyful again, or that the experience of loss cannot be transformed into something positive. But grief does not have a magical closure. People report pangs of grief 40, 50, even 60 years after a death. **Grief is not a disease that can be cured, but a process we learn to incorporate into our lives.**" (Dougy Center Guidebook Series The Dougy Center, 503-775-5683 www.dougy.org)*

Because women are nurturers, they gain much healing in helping others. For most women it's an important part of the healing process to become involved- to volunteer, and do what they can to be involved in 'giving' ways. It also helps them to feel like their loved ones death wasn't in vain because something good is coming out of it when they reach out to help other survivors. It's like one last thing they can do for their loved one. That may not make sense to you, but to most women, it's simply a fact. Like I said, women are nurturers.

Husbands don't like to see their wives hurt, but please understand that women that become involved in groups heal much better than those who do not. And women that have husbands that are understanding and allow them to do what they need to do to heal, in whatever time frame it takes, progress much better than those that feel like their husband is "pulling against them."

It is my hope that during the pain of loss Survivors Road2healing can bring more understanding to families and help reduce or prevent more stress. This is a time when families need to draw closer together to heal, not build walls to lock each other out. Please allow each other to heal in their own way, in their own time.

If we can help in any way, Survivors Road2healing is here for you. Please let us know.

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