

Nine Myths of Grief

- 1. Asking what happened and talking about the deceased will increase the pain of the bereaved.**

On the contrary, telling their story over and over again and talking about the deceased are the most important prescriptions for grief recovery.
- 2. Most people want to grieve alone.**

No, they need and want the support of family and friends who will listen and not try to rescue them from their pain.
- 3. People (husbands, wives, children, and babies) can be replaced.**

Each person is unique and cannot be replaced. Having a baby will not replace a child that died. Or getting married again, will not replace the other spouse. To suggest replacement, suggests the deceased was exchangeable.
- 4. Normal grief takes 1 to 3 months.**

Normal grief often takes 1 to 5 years depending on the intensity and duration of the relationship, the type of death and social support.
- 5. You can reduce their pain by offering platitudes.**

You increase their anger with platitudes. Phrases like "she's in heaven with God," "well, at least you have another child," "he lived a full life" or "you're young, you can remarry," minimize their loss and increase their pain.
- 6. It is strange for the bereaved to laugh.**

They cannot and should not grieve all the time. It is no disrespect to the dead to have a good laugh; in fact, it shows healing has begun.
- 7. You are bothering them by calling to see how they are, especially on anniversaries, birthday and holidays.**

You are not bothering them. They feel very alone on those days and knowing someone is thinking about them is of tremendous help.
- 8. Your friend or relative is crazy and needs help if they think they hear or see the deceased, occasionally.**

To hear or see the deceased is common, especially among widows and widowers.
- 9. You never get over the pain of a loss.**

Although there may always be some pain, over time the experience of it becomes generally less intense, and for shorter periods of time. But to remember with less pain is the goal of grief recovery and is obtainable.