



## Living After Loss

Well meaning friends and family members often urge grieving persons to “let go” of those thoughts, memories and objects that seem to generate pain.

We can easily assume they want us to forget those loved ones who have shared such a large part of our lives.

“Letting go” may be described as the process of acknowledging the reality of what is and choosing to progressively loosen our grip on what has been so that we may more easily take hold of what can be.

“Letting go” can mean ...

- Accepting “what is”
- Affirming the freedom to embrace the new
- Experiencing increasing peace
- Refusing to judge others
- Refusing to judge oneself

We may hold back because:

- It is uncomfortable. It is predictable. Even if painful it feels safe.
- It is proper. We fear the disapproval of others whose expectations we may not meet.
- It is frightening. We don't know what will happen if we let go.
- It is habitual. We simply run on “automatic”.

We let go of:

- Unproductive guilt
- Unnecessary pain
- Unnecessary judgment
- Unhelpful attachment



We let go by:

- Granting ourselves permission to live.
- Refusing to pass judgment
  - Personally
  - Relationally
- Talking to someone about what we're thinking and feeling.
- Using ritual to express what we're thinking and feeling.
- Engaging in activity that symbolizes our entry into another dimension of life.
- Choosing to focus on the experience of each moment. Asking ourselves if there is a lesson to learn in this situation.
- Utilizing our complete repertoire of coping strategies to care for ourselves as we continue through the process.