

Rate yourself on each one as to whether or not:

1. I am here now
2. I am having a little difficulty with this
3. I can't do this yet

Learning to live with the death in terms of yourself

- You have returned to your normal levels of psychological, social, and physical functioning in all realms of your life.
- There is a general decline in all of your symptoms of grief.
- You are back to your normal level of self-esteem.
- You can enjoy yourself without feeling guilty, and you don't feel guilty for living.
- Your hatred and anger, if any, doesn't consume you and is not directed inappropriately.
- You do not have to restrict your emotions and thoughts to avoid confronting something painful.
- It is not that you don't hurt, but the hurt now is limited, manageable, and understood.
- You appreciate how you are similar to and different from other bereaved persons.
- You do not have to obsess about nor think solely of the deceased and the death.
- You feel that you have done what you needed to do, whether to atone for your guilt or to learn to live with it.
- You lead the pain; it doesn't lead you.
- You can appreciate the bittersweet quality of certain experiences, such as holidays and special events in which you feel the sweetness of those who are around you as well as the sadness of not being with your deceased loved one.
- You are able to meet and cope with secondary losses in a healthy fashion.
- You don't become unduly anxious when you have nothing to do. You don't have to be occupied all the time to be without tension.
- You can remember without pain, and can talk about the deceased and the death without crying.
- You no longer feel exhausted, burdened, or wound-up all the time.
- You can find some meaning in life.
- You do not have to hold time, or yourself, back.
- You have "accepted" the loss in the sense of not fighting the fact that it happened.
- You are comfortable with your new identity and the new adjustments you have made to accommodate being without your loved one in the world. While you wouldn't have chosen to have to change, you are not fighting it now.
- You know how and when to take time to mourn.
- You can look forward to and make plans for the future.
- You have a healthy perspective on what your grief resolution will and will not mean to you.

Learning to live with the death in terms of your relationship with the deceased

- You can realistically remember the good and the bad, the happy and the sad of both the deceased and your relationship.
- Any identification you have with the deceased is healthy and appropriate.
- You can forget the loss for a while without feeling like you are betraying your loved one.
- You have a comfortable and healthy new relationship with the deceased with appropriate ways to keep that person "alive."
- You are able to stop "searching" for your lost loved one.
- You do not have to hold on to the pain to have a connection with your deceased loved one.
- The rituals that keep you connected to your loved one are acceptable to you and healthy.
- You can concentrate on something besides your deceased loved one.
- In your relationship with your deceased loved one, you have achieved healthy amounts of holding on and letting go.

Learning to live with the death in terms of adjustment to the new world

- You have integrated this loss into your ongoing life. You are able to relate to others in a healthy fashion and to work and function at the same level as before.
- You can accept the help, support, and condolences of others.
- You are not inappropriately closed down in your feelings, relationships or approaches to life. For example, you do not overprotect yourself or fail to take any risks.
- You can let the world go on now without feeling it has to stop because your loved one has died.
- You can deal with others' insensitivity to your loss without becoming unduly distressed or overemotional.
- You are regaining interest in people and things outside of yourself or which don't pertain to your lost loved one.
- You can put the death in some perspective.

There may be other signs that would indicate to you that you now are learning to live with your loss in as healthy a fashion as possible. The ones listed here will give you some examples of the way in which resolution and recovery can be shown.

Please note that none of them suggest that you do not have some connection with your deceased loved one, or that you forget that person. They all center around learning to live with the fact of your loved one's absence, moving forward in the world despite the fact that the scar will remain and, on occasion, bring pain.

From "Hope for the Bereaved: Understanding, Coping, and Growing through Grief," by Therese S. Schoeneck.