

Grief Journaling Prompts
UIC Counseling Center

When I think about my loss, I feel...

Today my body feels...

Describe below your understanding of the difference between being a “passive witness” to your grief or an “active participant” in your grief...

The pain of your grief will keep trying to get your attention until you have the courage to gently, and in small doses, embrace it. How is the pain of your grief trying to get your attention?

How will you mourn this loss - that is, openly express your grief?

What does moving toward your pain mean to you?

How might you respond to others who suggest you move away from your grief?

(If relevant) Write about your understanding of the relationship between mourning and faith and/or spirituality.

List the secondary losses you are experiencing as a result of our loss. Examples may be related to loss of self (identity, confidence, health, personality), security (emotional, physical, financial, lifestyle), and/or meaning (goals, dreams, faith, will, joy). Choose one or two and write about them.

How do you feel about the concept of learning to reconcile rather than get over grief?

Who are three people who may naturally be good companions for you on your grief journey?

How attached were you to who/what you lost?

Describe the circumstances of the loss. How did you learn about it? Was it expected or unexpected?

Prompts adapted from: “Progressing through grief: Guided exercises to understand your emotions and recover from loss” by Stephanie Jose, LMHC, LCAT; “Understanding your grief: Ten essential touchstones for finding hope and healing your heart;” and “The understanding your grief journal: Exploring the ten essential touchstones” by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD.

Would it be helpful to create an additional ritual/ceremony to help you heal? In what ways can you continue to use ceremony to remember other special times (birthday/anniversary)?

Do you think your gender identity affects your grief? Why/why not?

How does your cultural background influence your grief and mourning?

Do you have any family rules about coping with loss/grief?

How has this loss affected your belief system?

Are there any other significant losses impacting your grief?

What are you most afraid of since the loss or since you started anticipating the loss?

Have you seen, heard, or dreamed about your loss or what you anticipate losing?

Have you felt anger, hate, blame, terror, resentment, rage, and/or jealousy in your grief? Have others around you been upset by your expression of these feelings? What are you doing to express these feelings in healthy ways?

How sad are you feeling in your grief now? How does this compare to your sadness earlier in your grief journey?

What can you do to embrace your sadness instead of move away from it?

Do you find yourself judging your grief-related symptoms/reactions? If so, how?

Do others in your life judge certain grief-related symptoms/reactions?

Have you had dreams or mystical experiences of your loss? If so, can you describe it and how you felt about it?

What do your Griefbursts or Grief Attacks look like for you?

Which, if any signs of reconciling with your loss do you see in yourself?

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Write what you are doing or have done as you move toward reconciling your loss.

Does faith help you as you move toward reconciling your loss?

How are you discovering transformation by grief?

What changes have you seen in yourself since grieving loss or anticipated loss?

Have your values changed since you started grieving? How?

How have your views of God and spirituality changed since grieving? (if applicable)

Do you believe you have a life purpose? If so, what? If not, why not?

Do you believe you have a responsibility to live partially on behalf of the person you grieve/the loss you suffered? Why or why not?

How can you honor the life of the person you grieve/the loss you suffered?

How will you most authentically live your transformed life?

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