

## The Stuff of Grief

**It is tough to deal with the “stuff of grief;”** the possessions, clothes, and other belongings of the person who has died. Well-meaning friends may advise you to clear everything out; others may make requests subtly, or not so subtly, for certain items.

**The first rule in dealing with the stuff of grief is that there are no rules.** You can make your own decisions on what to keep or what to give away. As in other situations of grief, there is no one right way to cope. And there is no timetable. You only need to tackle the stuff when it seems right, when you are ready.

Even when you do decide to clear out some of the belongings, **there are no rules.** You may need to go slowly, perhaps alone, stopping at times to confront memories. Or you may welcome the support and assistance of friends or family members who want to share in the process.

However you do it, having a system can help, such as dividing the “stuff” into categories. The first are things that clearly could be discarded; these items have no value to you, symbolic or otherwise. A second category is for things you may be unsure about right now but may want to consider keeping. Or you may need to recognize you can’t decide “right now;” in the midst of grief, some decisions just need to wait. There will of course be items that can be donated or given to others, especially items you know will be treasured by the recipient. Likewise, there will be special items you know you want to keep for yourself.

One of the things that is now understood about grief is that you keep the bonds with person who has died, even as they change in loss. Sometimes though, it is nice to have items that hold those memories close.

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**“Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness.**

**It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love.**

**The only cure for grief is to grieve.”**

**Earl Grollman**