



A Self-Care Quiz for Grievors

Medical claims, probate court, financial matters . . . grievors spend a lot of time taking care of "business." Unfortunately, in the process, many forget to take care of themselves, leaving them vulnerable to more devastating grief reactions. How well are *you* caring for yourself? Take this quiz and find out.

1. Each griever maintains an emotional "bank account" into which she makes "deposits" of comforting or even pleasurable experiences: listening to music that calms; watching a sunset; eating "comfort" food; wrapping herself in clothes that soothe, perhaps a sweater or the socks of the person who died; being with people who help him to laugh. On the other hand, taking care of others and doing the painful work of grieving constitute "withdrawals" from that bank account. As in our financial lives, when withdrawals outpace deposits, you can soon find yourself without the necessary resources to go on. How often do you make deposits in your emotional bank account?

- Daily (5 pts.)
- 2-3x/week (3 pts.)
- 1x/week (0 pts.)
- Less than 1x/week (-3 pts.)
- Almost never (-5 pts.)

2. How well do you care for your physical body?

a) How often are you exercising? Give yourself 5 pts. for 5x/week, 3 pts. for 3x/week, -3 pts. for anything less than 3x/week.

b) Are you eating healthy meals? Give yourself 5 pts. for always, 3 pts. for usually, 0 pts. for sometimes, -3 pts. for rarely, -5 pts. for never.

c) Are you sleeping as many hours as you used to consider optimal for yourself? Give yourself 5 pts. if you always do so, 3 pts. for usually, 0 pts. for occasionally, -3 pts. for rarely, and -5 pts. for never.

d) Do you use "recreational" drugs or prescription drugs beyond the recommended dosage? Take 5 pts. off your total score.

e) Do you drink alcoholic beverages more often than you

used to? Take 3 pts. off your score if you do so once or twice a week, 5 pts. off if you do so more than twice a week.

3. Grieving people need to "dose" their grief work. They need to feel and remember and experience whatever their grief presents them with, but they also need to give themselves "grief breaks," to distract themselves periodically. As with physical exercise, constant grief exertion and constant grief avoidance are equally unhealthy. How often do you "dose" your grief work?

- Always (5 pts.)
- Usually (3 pts.)
- Rarely (-3 pts.)
- Never (-5 pts.)

4. Grief is draining. Stress on top of grief can be overload. Give yourself 3 pts. for each of the following stress reduction techniques you regularly use: avoiding known stressors; exercise; prayer; music (listening or playing); meditation; yoga; self-expression in art or writing; breathing exercises; spending time actively imagining peaceful scenes or experiences; fostering deep laughter through funny books or movies; asking for help when you feel overwhelmed from a time or emotional perspective; other stress reduction techniques you've found that work for you.

5. Grief work takes a lot of time, energy and attention. Often, grievors are not able to do the work of grief *and* perform as well as they're used to in the worlds of work, friends and family. They need to relax their standards a bit, lower their self-expectations . . . just temporarily. How often do you cut yourself some extra slack because you are grieving? Give yourself 5 pts. if you do so regularly, 3 pts. if occasionally, -3 pts. if rarely, -5 pts. if never.

Scoring: More than 21 points: You're doing a great job of taking care of yourself while grieving. Congratulations!

12 to 20 points: You've made a good start. Help yourself even more by adding more self-care techniques or by doing what you're currently doing more regularly.

Less than 12 points: You're not being fair to yourself! You deserve the best opportunity to heal fully from your loss. Incorporate at least some of the recommendations above into your life. Help yourself heal. ■

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