

# Pathways

*through grief*

...fog moves on

Your life is probably forever changed, but it is possible to find your “new normal” and live a fulfilling life. In *The Grief Recovery Handbook*, John W. James and Russell Friedman define recovery:

**“What do we mean by recovery?”**

Recovery means feeling better. Recovery means claiming your circumstances instead of your circumstances claiming you and your happiness. Recovery is finding new meaning for living, without the fear of being hurt again. Recovery is being able to enjoy

fond memories without having them precipitate painful feelings of regret or remorse. Recovery is acknowledging that it is perfectly all right to feel sad from time to time and to talk about those feelings no matter how those around you react. Recovery is being able to forgive others when they say or do things that you know are based on their lack of knowledge about grief. Recovery is one day realizing that your ability to talk about the loss you’ve experienced is indeed normal and healthy.”

.....

*“Mountains cannot be surmounted  
except by winding paths.”*

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



# Grief Pathway Outlook

## Terrain:

Narrow, winding road.  
Watch for fog in low-lying areas

## Weather:

Poor visibility, fog will gradually lift

## Heartache Index:

High

## Travel Tips:

- You may question why your loved one died. There may never be any answers.
- Life will never be the same, but you can find your “new normal.”
- Grief is painful, but it will decrease. You can make it; you must. You are stronger than you think!
- Take your time about making decisions—major ones and small ones. If it is too painful to dispose of personal items or clothing, consider storing them until you are ready.
- Exercise can help lift depression; walking is a good exercise. Do things that you enjoy such as music, a good book, a movie, or a small treat.
- Your life still has a purpose; search for it.
- Writing your thoughts can be healing. Keep writing pads nearby.
- Grief is like riding a roller coaster with extreme ups and downs, but the ride will smooth out and the ups and downs will become gentler.

# The Fog Moves On

The fog was “as thick as pea soup,” and the poor visibility continued for about thirty miles. I was scheduled to attend an early morning meeting in a town about fifty miles from home. When I left my house that morning, I was unaware of what lay ahead of me. During those miles, I drove slowly. I felt vulnerable as I crept along, overwhelmed by the engulfing fog. My fingers gripped the steering wheel tightly—I was tense, feeling unsure of just where I was. Even though I was on a road that I have traveled frequently, the road no longer felt familiar, but strange and eerie.

I knew there was a one-lane bridge under construction ahead, and I was afraid I might not see the traffic light in the dense fog or that I might meet a car on the bridge. I remembered Carl Sandburg’s short poem about fog, one I had memorized in grade school. It reads:

*“The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.”*

The fog was silent all around me, sitting on “silent haunches.” I came to the bridge, and a green traffic light dimly beckoned me forward. I drove slowly and made it to the other side. A few miles later, I approached the interstate, turned on my left blinker, and slowly moved onto the highway, hoping there was no vehicle in the lane into which I was merging. I breathed a sigh of relief—again I was safe!

As I slowly drove southward, from time to time, the fog lifted momentarily, giving me a brief glimpse of the highway. Then the fog would close in around me again, thick, white and silent. Then ever so slowly the fog became less dense, and I could see the highway and the sides of the road! After a few more miles, the fog completely lifted in front of me but remained in the lower areas, sitting “on silent haunches,” hovering close to the

ground. Then the sun began to peek through the clouds in the southeast sky, displaying a pink sunrise with gold-lined clouds—a glorious and welcomed site after the fog!

Driving in the fog that morning reminded me of my life a few years ago when the pain of losing my husband to cancer was so acute. Life had felt unsafe, unfamiliar, and I was unsure if I could find my way—similar to driving in the fog. At first, my fog was so dense there was no clarity at all. Then I experienced some brief moments when the fog would clear and I could see the road ahead.



My fog of grief still lurked, but no longer confronted me head-on, totally obstructing my hope for life. Then, with time, the fog seemed to move on, leaving me with memories of the good times, and the sad memories began to fade. Like the pink clouds with the gold linings, there were still clouds, but my grief was less severe as the sun began to peek through.

If you have recently experienced the death of a loved one, perhaps the fog in your life is still very dense. You may feel unsure of where your path may be taking you. But as your heart heals, your “fog” will begin to dissipate. There will be more breaks, more sunlight. That is the nature of grief. Like the poem says, the fog does move on—it does not last forever, so hang on, and *just keep traveling*.

J. Dawn Rountree

*Even though mountain climbing may be difficult,  
oh, the view at the top!*