



# A Healthy Outlook!

240-314-1040 • FAX 240-314-1049 • [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP) • Vol.8 No.3

## Feeling Good: Moving Beyond Grief and Loss

### Stages of Recovery From Loss

There are some predictable stages that most people pass through after losing something or someone important. In her work on death and dying, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross outlined five stages of grieving:

**Shock and Denial** — The first reaction to loss is often the inability to feel anything. This may include feeling numb, weak, overwhelmed, anxious, not yourself, or withdrawn.

**Anger** — Blaming yourself or others for the loss.

**Bargaining** — “If you’ll just let him live, I’ll promise to go to church every Sunday for the rest of my life.”

**Depression** — Deep sadness, disturbed sleep and eating patterns, thoughts of suicide, excessive crying.

**Acceptance** — Beginning to look for the lessons of the experience.

Kübler-Ross said that the grieving process involves experiencing all five stages, although not always in this order. She also said that people often cycle back and forth through a number of the stages before coming to the stage of acceptance.

### Examples of significant losses

- Loss of a person through death
- Divorce
- Job loss
- Loss of your good health when you are diagnosed with a disease
- Loss of a body part through accident or surgery
- Loss of an ability, such as blindness
- Loss of a friend who has moved

- Loss of everything familiar when you move away
- Every kind of loss affects each person in a different way, but the recovery process usually follows Kübler-Ross’s five stages.

### Recovering from Loss: Some Key Points

1. You are responsible for your own grief process. No one can tell you how to grieve, and no one will do your grieving for you. It is hard work and you must manage the process by yourself.



2. The grief process has a purpose. It is to help you learn to accept the reality of the loss and to learn from the experience.
3. Remind yourself that your grief will end. You will not feel like this forever. You will heal.
4. Take care of your health. Grief is extremely stressful, and it requires energy to manage the stress.
5. Be careful with food and drink. While it may be tempting to numb the pain with food and drink, this can lead to the additional problems of alcohol dependence and being overweight. Also, numbing the pain means you are prolonging denial. This will make your grieving process longer.

6. Talk about the person who is no longer in your life. People sometimes avoid talking about the loss as a denial mechanism. However, this prolongs denial and the grieving process.

7. Take time to be alone. In the days and weeks following the loss of a loved one, there is often a flurry of activity with many visitors and phone calls. Added to the stress of your loss, this can be completely exhausting. People will understand if you don’t answer the phone for an afternoon or go to your room and close the door for a while.

8. Don’t make any important decisions until your life feels more balanced. It can be tempting to make some important changes right after a major loss as an effort to feel more in control. Put off such changes and decisions until later, if possible.

*continued on page 2*

## In This Issue

- 1 *Feeling Good: Moving Beyond Grief and Loss*
- 2 *The Fact Sheet of the Month: Antioxidants*
- 3 *Ten Tips on Managing Change*
- 4 *Upcoming Events*
- 4 *Ask EAP*
- 4 *Teamwork*

continued from page 1

9. Maintain as normal a routine as you can. You have enough changes in your life right now. Try to get up in the morning, go to bed at night, and take your meals at the same times you usually do.

10. Ask for help. You will need it. If you don't want to be alone, or if you want someone to take you somewhere, it is okay to ask. People don't expect you to be self-sufficient right now.

11. Let people help you. People want to help because it gives them a way to express their feelings. Staying connected with people is especially important now, and accepting help is a way of staying connected.

12. Keep a journal of your feelings and experiences during the grief process. Writing about your feelings helps you express them, rather than keep them inside. It also gives you something to remember and review in the future, which you will appreciate.

13. Don't hurry your grief process. People sometimes want to put their feelings and memories behind them because they are painful. But grieving takes time, and there are no shortcuts.

14. Remind yourself that, although grief hurts, it will not harm you. Grief is painful, but you will survive and even grow from the experience.

15. Expect to regress in your recovery process from time to time. This is normal. It may happen unexpectedly, but it probably won't last long.

16. Acknowledge the anniversary of your loss by taking the day off or doing something special. Have supportive people ready to be with you. It could be a difficult day and it is better not to be alone.

### How to Help Someone Who Is Grieving

1. Don't try to get the person to feel or be anything other than who he/she is.
2. Don't reward the person for acting cheerful or "like your old self." This teaches the person to suppress his/her feelings around you.
3. Don't avoid the person. He/she needs your support.
4. Let the person tell about the loss again and again, if he/she needs to.

5. Recognize that unexpected, perhaps inappropriate, behavior is part of the grieving process. It means the bereaved person is moving forward.

### Suggested Reading

Bob Deits. 1992. *Life After Loss*, Tucson, AZ: Fisher Books.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. 1969. *On Death and Dying*. New York: MacMillan.

Adapted from an article by Sam Patterson, MSW, a licensed social worker, in the *Therapists Newsletter*. Used with permission.

### Quote:

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.

—Robert Frost

## The Fact Sheet of the Month: Antioxidants

### Antioxidants Protect Your Cells From Excess Damage:

Free radicals are unstable molecules produced when the body breaks down food. They cause a condition called oxidation. Oxidation is balanced by antioxidants which neutralize free radicals, thus curbing damage to cells and metabolism. Oxidation can also be accelerated by stress, cigarette smoking, alcohol, sunlight, pollution, and other factors.

### Some of the degenerative conditions caused by free radicals:

- ☉ Deterioration of the eye lens, which contributes to blindness
- ☉ Inflammation of the joints (arthritis)
- ☉ Damage to nerve cells in the brain, which contributes to conditions such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease
- ☉ Acceleration of the aging process
- ☉ Increased risk of coronary heart disease
- ☉ Certain cancers, triggered by damaged cell DNA

Antioxidants are phytochemicals, vitamins, and some minerals. They can be found in most fruits, vegetables, and some culinary herbs. Top sources include cranberries, pomegranates, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, artichokes, blackberries, Russet potatoes, tumeric, beans, pecans, cinnamon, ground cloves, walnuts, oregano, ginger, sunflower seeds, and hazelnuts.

### Sources of antioxidants:

- ☉ Allium sulphur compounds: leeks, onions, garlic
- ☉ Anthocyanins: eggplant, grapes, berries
- ☉ Beta-carotene: pumpkin, mango, apricots, carrots, spinach, parsley
- ☉ Catechins: tea
- ☉ Copper: nuts, seafood, lean meat
- ☉ Flavonoids: citrus fruits, apples, tea, dark chocolate
- ☉ Indoles: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower
- ☉ Isoflavonoids: soybeans, tofu, lentils, peas
- ☉ Lignans: bran, sesame seeds, whole

- grains, vegetables
- ☉ Lutein: spinach, corn
- ☉ Lycopene: tomato, pink grapefruit, watermelon
- ☉ Manganese: nuts, seafood, lean meat
- ☉ Polyphenols: thyme, oregano
- ☉ Selenium: seafood, lean meat, whole grains
- ☉ Vitamin C: orange, kiwi, mango, broccoli, spinach, strawberry
- ☉ Vitamin E: avocado, nuts, seeds, whole grains
- ☉ Zinc: nuts, seafood, lean meat

Sources: NIH; News Target; U.S. National Library of Medicine; American Heart Association; Better Health Channel; Health24; Science Daily; About.com; WebMD; *Healthy Aging* by Andrew Weil, M.D.; *Ultra-Metabolism* by Mark Hyman, M.D.; *The Maker's Diet* by Jordan S. Rubin; and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Fact Sheet of the Month is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician.

# Ten Tips on Managing Change

By *AllBusiness.com*

*Change* is a small word that can strike fear in the hearts of many. Yet life is full of change, especially in the business world. While those affected may not always get to decide when change happens, they can learn to manage it. The following 10 tips will help even the most change-phobic person stay calm and in control:

## 1. Don't resist.

While your gut reaction to change is often refusal, such a response is not productive. Change is inevitable, and you must learn to accept it. The quicker you do, the smoother your transition.

## 2. Find the positive.

Even the most difficult changes can produce positive results. Don't waste time dwelling on what you don't like. Focus instead on the potential benefits and new opportunities the changes may bring, and your spirits will remain lighter throughout the transition.

## 3. Create a list.

You'll feel much better about change when you're able to manage its details and results. Make a list of what needs to be done to implement the change. The more prepared you are, the less change will overwhelm you.

## 4. Familiarize quickly.

Jump headfirst into change, whether it is new ways of doing things, new offices, or new teams. Take time up front to learn a new program, take a tour of a new office facility, or introduce yourself to a new coworker. The more quickly you are acclimated to new things, the more quickly they will become familiar to you.

## 5. Consider others.

Change rarely affects just one person; it usually affects many people at once. Change experienced as a group can become either a supportive, unifying experience or a negative, frustrating one. Consider the kind of group you want to be a part of, and then seek to make it so through your words and actions.

## 6. Focus on one change at a time.

While we can learn to accept and manage change, piling up numerous changes all at once can become too overwhelming, even for the most flexible of us. If there are many changes going on in your work life, this is probably not the best time to also start those home renovations. Managing change in one area of your life is easier when you have other areas that remain familiar and comforting.

## 7. Exercise patience with yourself.

When things change significantly, accept that you will not be able to master them all right away. If you are dealing with updated computer systems, a shakeup in business operations, or any other major business change, things will take time. Give yourself a break, and don't add to your stress by trying to become a whiz at everything overnight.

## 8. Ask productive questions.

Ask yourself questions that will make a positive difference, such as, "How can I help facilitate the transition?" or "How will I need to adjust my daily schedule to accommodate this new process?" Avoid asking "whys," and instead learn to move forward by asking questions that will help you become comfortable with the changes.

## 9. Take control.

Change is stressful because it threatens a person's sense of control. Don't allow a powerless feeling to overwhelm you; face new challenges head on. Focus on how you can make it work for you. You will feel empowered by your renewed sense of control when you stop allowing change to overcome you. Instead, overcome change through hard work and steady determination.

## 10. Don't get too comfortable.

While it is important to familiarize and adjust to change, it's fruitless to get so comfortable that you believe things will not change again. Adjust, but do so with the knowledge that nothing lasts forever, and this too may give way to more change in the future.

Managing change with peace and confidence is entirely possible. Keep these tips in mind, and you will be well equipped to work through any change that life may throw at you, both in your professional and personal life.

Note: *AllBusiness.com* provides resources to help small and growing businesses start, manage, finance, and expand their business. The site contains forms and agreements, business guides, business directories, thousands of articles, expert advice, and business blogs. Material copyrighted by *AllBusiness.com*.



## Upcoming Events

**June 27, 1010**

▪ **National HIV Testing Day**

**National Association of People with AIDS,  
Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3349,  
866-846-9366**

**<http://www.napwa.org/>**

**June 14, July 12 and August 9**

▪ **MCPS Cancer Support Group**

**We will be meeting on the second Monday of the  
month at CESC, room #240 from 12:30 — 1:30, new  
members are always welcome. For more information,  
please contact Debra Tipton on Outlook or by phone  
at 240-314-1040**

## Ask EAP

**Q.** I am having some serious financial problems. Does the EAP offer any sort of financial assistance?

**A.** If you're having a financial problem, you should certainly consider contacting the EAP. While we don't have any money (loans, grants, etc.) within the EAP to offer, what we do have is access to a wide variety of resources, one of which may address your particular concern.



Do you have a question for EAP?  
Send us your questions via Outlook  
or through the Pony to Jeff Becker.



## Teamwork

What makes a team successful is not necessarily the same as what makes an individual successful. In order to have less conflict and to improve morale, consider the following:

**There are no team failures, only unexpected outcomes**

Try to see mistakes as lessons to be avoided a second time. If things don't work out, try to focus on change, not blame.

**Team members share resources**

Knowledge, time, materials, and information need to be shared openly by all. This is crucial for reaching team goals.

**Seek feedback**

Be open to constructive feedback from other team members. This is a great tool for growth when used between team members and offered to the team as a whole.

## A Healthy Outlook!

*To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.*



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE  
SPECIALISTS: Debbie Tipton  
Robyn Rosenbauer  
Jeff Becker

EAP at Gaither Road  
2096 Gaither Road, Suite 205  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
phone: 240-314-1040  
[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP)

Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook!* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns, contact your employee assistance professional.

You may contact us or send your questions and comments to  
[Debra\\_Tipton@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Debra_Tipton@mcpsmd.org)

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

## Need a relaxation break?

**New on the EAP website are two relaxation audios: progressive muscle relaxation and guided imagery. Triggering the Relaxation Response has benefits for your physical and mental health and your sense of well-being. Give it a try — destress from your desk!**

*Published by the Office of Communications and Family Outreach  
for the Employee Assistance Program*

2186.10 • EDITORIAL, GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 5.10

