



Education | Healthcare | Public Services

Contact: Leven “Chuck” Wilson, MSW cwilson@aft.org - Contact hour / CEU Available

Your Right to Grieve Your Way

Introduction

Grief is a universal part of the human experience—but how we experience it is profoundly personal. There is no timeline, no checklist, and certainly no “correct” way to do it. Despite this, society often imposes quiet (or loud) expectations on how we “should” feel, act, or recover. That pressure can make it hard to truly meet our own emotional needs.

This guide is a reminder: you have the right to grieve in your own way. Not because you need permission—but because your needs are valid, your story is yours, and healing begins when we stop apologizing for how we hurt. You don’t need to grieve like anyone else. You just need to grieve in a way that is honest to you.

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Section 1:

Why This Matters

We often suppress our own needs while grieving—trying to protect others, avoid discomfort, or “move on” faster than we’re ready for. But silencing your needs doesn’t make grief easier—it makes it heavier.

When you acknowledge your needs, claim your rights, and take intentional steps to meet them, you start building a foundation for long-term healing.

This isn’t about getting grief “right.” It’s about honoring what’s real.

Section 2:

Identify What You Need Right Now

Everyone needs different things when grieving. Maybe you need quiet time. Maybe you need to talk it out. Maybe you need to rest more. Or laugh again. Your needs might change every day, and that’s okay.

Write down what you need most right now—emotionally, physically, spiritually, or socially.

Need ideas? Here are some examples:

- “I need to talk openly about my loss—even if it makes others uncomfortable.”
- “I need breaks from grief to rest or enjoy small moments.”
- “I need people who listen without trying to fix me.”

Section 3:

Define Your Rights

For every need you listed, you also have a right to honor it. These aren’t rules from the outside world—they are inner permissions to live and feel in a way that’s true to you.

For example:

- If your need is to cry when you feel like it, your right might be: “I have the right to express my emotions without apology.”
- If your need is time, your right might be: “I have the right to heal at my own pace.”

Write these down. Frame them like affirmations or truths. They are your grief boundaries—and your healing invitations.

Section 4: Action to Exercise Those Rights

How can you protect and honor those rights in everyday life?

Examples:

- If your right is to rest when you're overwhelmed, the action might be: "I will block off time to rest without guilt."
- If your right is to talk about your loved one, your action might be: "I will share stories with people who are open and kind."

List one or two small, realistic actions you can take for each right. This is how you begin shifting from simply surviving your grief to actively supporting yourself in it.

Section 5: Reflect on the Process

Pause and ask yourself:

- How did it feel to name your needs and rights?
- What surprised you about your grief?
- What's one right you feel most strongly about protecting?
- How has this changed the way you think about healing?

This reflection isn't a final step—it's the beginning of learning to return to yourself again and again, gently and without judgment.

Section 6: References

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