

Top Ten Touchstones: Parental Loss

1. The death of a parent represents a potentially major life event for many people. **Mourning a close relationship or mourning a distant relationship are both matters of the heart and have EVERYTHING to do with love.**
2. It is important to **reflect on the ups and downs of your relationship** with your parent(s).
3. It is wise to **ask the question “Were you and your dad/mom close?”** when talking with someone whose parent has died.
4. If there was **no time to say goodbye**, this will complicate your grief journey.
5. **How and when your parent died matters a great deal and influences the course of your griefwork.** Grief is the normal or expected aftermath when a parent’s death is anticipated; trauma can result when death is sudden and unexpected.
6. **If you and your parent(s) were also best friends**, your tasks of grief include mourning both the passing of a parent as well as the death of a best friend.
7. If you and your parent(s) have **unfinished business** when they die, this will complicate your griefwork. **Unfinished business can go both ways – parent to child or child to parent.**
8. **It is a myth to assume that it is “too late”** to deal with unfinished business after a parent has died. **You have options.**
9. If you find yourself suffering and struggling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week **after the natural death of an elderly parent**, it may be a good idea to seek outside or professional help to guide you through this time of crisis.
10. **Support groups can be a tremendous source of support.** Or not. Some groups are more focused than others. Find a good one. Not all people want or benefit from group support.

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* Certified in Thanatology, Fall 2003