

HURRICANE KATRINA:

Beginning Tips for "Survivors"

By Rev. Aliah K. MaJon, Author of
From Grief to...Growth™: A Handbook of Enlightened Healing

We can help IF YOU:

- You have lost a loved one
- You've lost a home or job/business
- You have witnessed suffering
- You are feeling depressed
- You are feeling sad & lost
- You're feeling grief for any reason

Eleven years ago I lived through a tragedy that has changed me--**and my life**—forever. My only child, my precious son Sean, committed suicide in July of 1994. When I think of it now, I can hardly believe that I was able to face this horrible reality and continue with my life with any semblance of peace. It was quite a blow, and it goes without saying that I was reeling from the effects for a long time. Yet, I did find peace again and was able to bring myself back in 'one piece' ready to go on with my life. Although I would have to say that I will never be the same, I can also say that my life has delivered more blessings and personal growth than I ever could have imagined. People ask me all the time **HOW DID YOU DO IT?** There is only one answer -- **I TRULY WANTED TO BE OKAY AGAIN, AND I KNEW THAT THIS DESIRE WAS THE FIRST STEP IN MAKING IT POSSIBLE...** **YOU** can do this too; here is how the process might begin:

STEP ONE:

Allow the TRUTH of your feelings... It's okay if they sound something like this:

- "I just want this to be over; how can I possibly survive so much pain."
- "I don't want other people to feel sorry for me."
- "I don't want to be traumatized, but that is exactly HOW I AM FEELING."
- "I want things to be like they used to be."
- "I wish I could just disappear and never have to face this again."
- "I can't imagine ever feeling happy again."
- "I want to avoid other people and especially other people's feelings at this time."
- "I only want to do what I feel that I can handle, I don't even know if I can cope."
- "I don't know what I want; this is all very confusing and upsetting to me."
- "I simply can't do this - no matter what anyone says - it is more than I can take."

STEP TWO:

Don't AVOID memories or stop talking about what your life was like before, instead, tell stories and allow yourself to fully embrace what your life has been up to now...

PRINCIPLE: Remembering and telling stories is an excellent way to celebrate your life and the meaning of the past -- and, most importantly, to **release** so that you can move into the future. Knowing that memories live in you supports a healthy integration of reality and **acceptance**.

STEP THREE:

Be gentle with yourself and COMMIT to having a “taking care of myself” attitude, even if there are not many actual resources to do so, the feeling is what is important...

PRINCIPLE: You are your own best caretaker, or the person who knows *best* what you need at any given time--You must commit to holding an “energy” of **pampering** yourself, no matter what the conditions may be...JUST HOLD THE INTENTION and welcome even the smallest comfort!

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