

What I Know About Healing
By Sandra Gaines of Independence, Kentucky; Printed in Bereavement Magazine
January/February 2005—www.bereavementresources.com

When I recently returned home after major surgery, I began to make notes about the healing process that was taking place within my body. As I was writing, I realized how similar healing from a physical wound is to healing from a grief wound.

- Healing is a process, it takes time, it happens in stages, it can be painful and it will leave scars.
- I need to heed the advice of experts in order to facilitate the healing and avoid relapses.
- If I am in good overall health going in, I will be stronger and more able to work my own recovery program. This is true whether the wound is physical, spiritual, or emotional.
- Healing takes energy. I am not surprised that I don't have much energy for other things.
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- Healing is meant to happen from the inside out, so the visible signs of healing may not be noticed for quite awhile. However, occasionally things may appear to be healed on the outside, but are far from it on the inside.
- I take the experiences of others with a grain of salt and try not to compare my pain and healing to that of others.
- It helps to engage in activities that “feel” like healing, even if they are not a part of the prescribed regimen, like getting a massage, watching a funny movie, surrounding myself with lit candles, good music and pets.
- I honor the messages my body sends me. I rest when I am tired, cry when I need to and laugh when I can.
- I am willing to tell people how I am feeling and what I need from them.
- At some point, I need to start engaging in normal activities again, testing the waters and my strength. However, I don't overdo it. I will know when I am ready to fully embrace life again.
- Finally, I recognize that changes have taken place within my body, mind and spirit and I'm ready to share with others who may walk on a similar path someday.