



# health & wellness

Dr. Ava Cadell

## Healing From Loss and Abuse

Talk to the person you have lost and express your feelings. It can be very powerful to articulate the things you wish you would have said, or even the things you're glad you did say, and imagine that person's response. This exercise helps you process the loss of your one-on-one engagement with that person. Talk to the person you lost as if he or she were there with you and imagine what they would say back to you. You can write down questions for the person and answer those questions with the first response that pops into your head. Say or write everything you wished you had said while he or she was still alive. There are no dating rules for widows or widowers. Some people might be ready to date after six months, while others are ready after five years. Some people can't live alone, so they date with the intention of finding a committed relationship. Other people prefer to live alone and have clear dating boundaries, like not bringing anyone home to spend the night, not introducing them to close family, and not making any commitment to be monogamous.

### Before You Start Dating, Ask Yourself:

- Am I ready for a new companion, partner, lover or spouse?
- When I really tap into my emotions, do I feel guilty about dating?
- Can I be with someone new without comparing them to my beloved who passed away?
- Am I dating because I'm afraid to be alone?

After my husband passed away, I created a shrine to him with photos of us on our wedding day, honeymoon, and other treasured memories. I knew that I couldn't date until I put all of our photos away. If you're joining the online dating scene, I recommend you use caution. Google your date to make sure the person is who they say they are, then have a FaceTime session first before meeting them in person. This way, you can see what they look like, how they speak and their body language. You may also get a sense of how they live or work by the background they choose for the conversation. This can also take the pressure off, reducing the anxiety of the "blind date" first impression.

### Healing from Sexual Abuse

I am a rape survivor and was sold into sex trafficking as a teenager, which put me on a life-long path of recovery. It's my personal experience that motivates me to



help every single victim of harassment or assault because I believe that every human being deserves a safe and healthy space to enjoy love, peace and happiness.

### Healing From Memory Triggers

A memory trigger is a personal reaction to a particular stimulation of one of our five senses (touch, smell, sight, sound and taste) that sets off a flashback to a traumatic experience. The memory trigger causes a person to "re-live" the trauma, often accompanied by fear, anxiety and overwhelming emotions or thoughts. There are as many traumatic memory triggers as there are individuals. They are different for everyone and can be specific to the abusive event, where elements might have been present, such as a certain food, music or the smell of a wood fire burning. By identifying your memory triggers, you can prepare yourself for the emotions that may come to the surface. How do you know if you're ready for intimacy after abuse? Many survivors worry that if they jump in too soon they might re-live their trauma, perhaps freezing up or breaking down, or experiencing any number of unwanted responses. Use this reference to reflect on before you become intimate again: Healthy sexual relationships involve a healthy intimate communication. Make sure you are 100% comfortable with asking for what you want or don't want. If you experience a trigger or a flashback to a past abuse, tell your partner that you are not ready. Deeper intimacy and connection will be possible when: you feel good about engaging in intimacy and sex with no guilt or regrets afterwards. ■

For a complimentary copy of, Healing From Loss and Abuse: [healingsolutions4u.com](http://healingsolutions4u.com). Dr. Cadell is a public speaker and TV personality who has appeared in various publications throughout the world. She has authored 11 books covering various aspects of relationships and sex. In her private practice she counsels individuals and couples of all aspects of intimate relationship concerns. 310-882-5438 ext 900 [AvaCadell.com](http://AvaCadell.com) [Loveuniv.com](http://Loveuniv.com) Profile Photo: Dean Capture Book Cover: Pablo Solomon

**"It's important to understand that we all grieve differently and grief does not have an expiration date. Even when you are expecting someone to pass away because of a long illness, when it happens you are still not ready."**

Welcome to my book excerpts on Healing From Loss and Abuse: Loving Solutions to Live Your Life to the Fullest for Victims of Grief, Trauma, Assault and Sexual Harassment. I feel so passionate about helping people heal their mental, emotional and physical pain, I decided to give my book away. It's important to understand that each of us grieves differently and grief does not have an expiration date. Even when you are expecting someone to pass away because of a long illness, when it happens, you are still not ready. I know because my husband passed away five years ago. He suffered for two years battling cancer, so I thought I was prepared, but I wasn't. I still have a hole in my heart. Losing a loved one is an all-consuming grief that can take control of your life if you let it. Here are vital things to keep in mind.

### Healing From The Loss of a Loved One

- #1. Blaming yourself will make the pain worse and can stop or prolong your healing.
- #2. Only you can reclaim your life after you have lost some one you love
- #3. Forgive your loved one for leaving you and forgive yourself for feeling guilty.

