

# TRY IT ON

WHAT FITS MY GRIEF?

## The Grieving of David

Some features to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the circumstances are similar to your own:

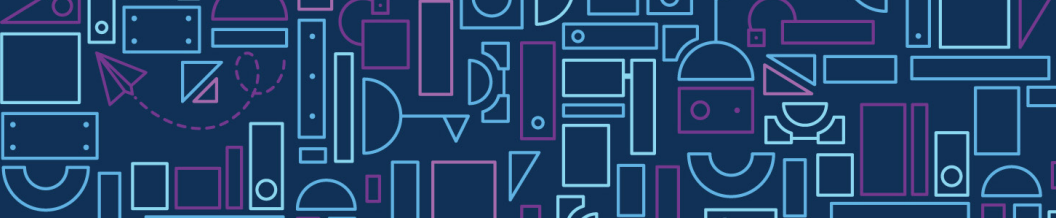
- Dramatic mood swings
- Unexpected deaths of family members
- Casualties from military defeat
- Loss of military leaders
- Complicated relationships
- Public expectations
- Prolonged absence before death
- Inability to retrieve bodies

Some feelings to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the emotions are similar to your own:

- Celebration with sadness
- Relief with remorse
- Confusion
- Pressure
- Insecurity
- Longing
- Distress
- Indebtedness

### A summary about what happened.

David had complicated relationships with his in-laws. David had been exiled for years and even hunted by his father-in-law, Saul, but David still longed to reconnect with his brother-in-law, Jonathan, whom he had not seen in years. While celebrating a victory during battle, David received a message that his father-in-law, brother-in-law, and their entire family had been defeated and killed in a different battle. David questioned the messenger and learned that his brother-in-law had been killed in battle and his father-in-law had tried to kill himself before being captured. Also there was no way that David could retrieve their bodies for burial or a funeral. David tore his clothes, mourned, wept, and fasted with his fellow soldiers. Then David composed a song to lament the deaths of his father-in-law and brother-in-law that could be sung by everyone in the nation. Many of the unpleasant details were left out of the song so that it could declare how the glory of the nation and these mighty warriors had fallen. The abilities of both were mentioned along with invitations to cry that they had perished. Then David asked God what he should do next.



**Some of the actions of David that you can *TRY ON* to see if any fit you well:**

- **Inquire about details** - Compose a list of questions to ask those who were present during the time of death. Consider asking how they knew what was happening and how they would describe the scene in their own words.
- **Mourn with others** - Find a group whose feelings might be similar to your own so that the grief can be shared. Determine together how to express those feelings.
- **Rip and tear** - Find an item you own that can be torn into pieces. Be sure to pick something that is replaceable so that regret is not possible later. Physically and vocally express the agony of having people ripped away from you.
- **Write a poem or song** - Determine how you want to honor the life and death that has occurred. Feel free to leave out details that might be unpleasant or negative of the deceased. It can be helpful to include a repeated phrase that expresses the grief and can be spoken or sung over and over with increasing emotion. Creating artwork or visual representations of your grief can also be helpful.
- **Tailor the memories** - You can resist the pressure to treat all who died equally. Focus on lamenting the people you knew best. Express freely how you felt and what you wish others knew about your relationship.

### **Some of the phrases of David that you can *TRY ON* to see if any feel right for you:**

- How did it happen?
- Tell me!
- How do you know this?
- How the mighty have fallen!
- Let there be no rejoicing.
- You were beloved.
- You were lovely.
- Weep with me.
- I am distressed.
- Your love was wonderful.
- What should I do next?

### **Some ideas you can *TRY ON* with a child:**

- **Find answers** - Your child might be curious about what happened. Rather than dismissing difficult questions or those that you do not have answers, go together to investigate. Consider the people or resources that you want to consult. Keep a record of what you discover together.
- **Tear paper** - Invite your child to reflect on feelings the child had before the deaths or defeats occurred. What were some sweet memories or some dreams of interactions that could have happened? Write what the child says, have the child write down the feelings, or encourage your child to draw a picture. Take the paper with the writings or drawings and tear the paper up together. This could also be done with permanent markers or paint on a sheet, thin blanket, or other cloth that would allow for a greater intensity in tearing them up. The torn writings or drawings can be buried or thrown away. Invite your child to share what the child feels now that those things have been torn apart.
- **Sing a song** - Ask your child if there is a song that would be nice to sing or if your child would like to compose a song about what happened. Sometimes it is helpful to take a familiar tune and re-write the words. What about the life or death would your child like for others to know? How would your child like to honor the memory?

- **Visit a memorial** - A war memorial can be a soothing place and give ideas on how your child can express grief. Look for a nearby memorial or another place where people visually honor those who have died, such as places on the road that are marked after accidents, benches in parks, plaques, etc. Visit together. Ask your child if your child would like to make a memorial or leave something at the memorial to express honor and love.

### **A summary of what happens next:**

---

David taught the people the song so that they could lament what happened to their leaders too. When David asked God what he should do, God responded by telling David that it would be best for him to relocate and live in Hebron. David moved and was appointed as their new leader. David sent some soldiers to find out what happened to the bodies of his father-in-law and brothers-in-law. He learned that a small town had gone and retrieved the bodies and buried them. David blessed them, prayed that God would reward them, and invited them to be part of the new government that was being formed.

### **Where to find the *Grieving of David*:**

---

2 Samuel 1