Dealing With Your Emotions – Resolving Grief

- Accept all of the feelings you are having as normal reactions to an extraordinary event. You are not “crazy.” You are reacting normally to a “crazy” event. Be patient with yourself. It takes time to recover emotionally from a traumatic event.

- Accept the fact that you have been a victim and accept the feelings that result. Remember, others may not validate your feelings. In fact, they may minimize your experience by saying things like, “You were only a witness,” or “You were really lucky,” or “It’s been two weeks. Why are you still bothered?”

- Avoid alcohol, drugs, or overeating as a way to cope. These behaviors will only make matters worse.

- Maintain normalcy. Go about your daily routines and take care of business.

- Attempt to understand what happened by getting the facts.

- Talk about the event and write about it.

- Combat any guilt you might have by:
  - Accepting your sense of guilt as normal.
  - Talking to others about your role and their role during the event; you are probably not alone in your reaction to this event.
  - Realize you were a victim yourself and not a trained rescuer.
  - Recognize what you “did right.”
  - Recognize the extenuating circumstances related to the event, such as the suddenness or the danger.

- Help others in your family or group.

- Reach out to support those who are particularly traumatized. Take time to talk, and to reminisce.

- Respect each other’s way of coping. Don’t victimize them by judging their individual coping style. Let the “grievers” grieve and allow the “doers” to do.

- Bereavement groups provide an opportunity to share grief with others who have experienced a similar loss.

- If the healing process becomes too overwhelming, seek professional help.