



T N M F T

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THERE'S NO MAP FOR THIS

When The Ground *Disappears*

Six things to do when you don't know what to do.

Nobody gave you instructions for this.
That's not an accident — there aren't any.

What follows isn't a cure, a plan, or a promise
that it gets better. It's just the basics.

The things that keep you alive
until you figure out the next thing.



01 *Breathe*

This sounds stupid. You're already breathing. But grief does something to your nervous system that turns breathing shallow and fast without you noticing.

Your body thinks it's being chased.

When the weight gets unbearable — stop.

Breathe in slowly for four counts. Hold for four. Out for four. Do it three times.

You're not fixing anything. You're just telling your body it's safe enough to keep going for the next five minutes. That's enough for now.

02 *Move*

Walk. Run if you can. If you can't run, shuffle. If shuffling is all you've got, shuffle.

Movement is one of the few things that actually does something to the chemistry of grief.

It doesn't lift it — it just makes it slightly more bearable for a window of time.

That window matters.

You don't need a destination. You don't need a plan.

Put your shoes on and go outside. That's the whole instruction.

03 *Sleep*

Grief is exhausting in a way that makes normal tired feel like a vacation.

Your brain is doing something enormous. Let it rest when it will.

If you're not sleeping, don't fight it. Don't stare at the ceiling cataloguing everything you've lost. Get up. Sit somewhere. Write something down.

Come back to bed when you're ready.

If you're sleeping too much — that's grief too. It's not laziness.

It's your system doing triage.

04 *Eat*

You probably don't want to. Eat anyway.

It doesn't have to be good. It doesn't have to be a meal. It just has to be something.

Your body is carrying an enormous load right now and it can't run on nothing.

If someone offers to bring you food, say yes.

Let people do the one concrete thing they know how to do.

05 *Talk*

Find someone who will listen without trying to fix you.

This person is rarer than you think, but they exist.

You're not looking for solutions. You're looking for someone to sit in it with you for a while. A friend, a family member, a stranger on a grief forum at midnight — it doesn't matter. Say the things out loud.

The ones you're afraid to say. Especially those.

If you can't find that person, talk to a camera. Talk to a journal.

Talk to your steering wheel. The point is to get it out of your head, where it will eat you alive, and into the air, where it loses a little power.

06 *Give yourself grace*

How you are feeling right now is not a malfunction.

You are not broken. You are not weak. You are not 'too much.'

You are a person whose world just ended and you are still here, which is not a small thing. It's completely disorienting.

Grief doesn't have a timeline. Anyone who implies otherwise has never lost something that mattered. Ignore them.

There will be days that feel like progress and days that feel like you're back at the beginning. Both are normal.

Neither tells you where you actually are.

RESOURCES

The New Normal
thenewnormalcharity.org

National Widowers' Organization
nationalwidowers.org