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**Haunted: Burying The Ghosts Of Lost Love**

**By Toni Coleman**

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Late at night, as you read quietly, before you fall off to sleep...

During a busy afternoon as you run through a crowd, hurrying back to your office or home....

Sitting in a movie theater, a restaurant or waiting for the light to turn...

A sudden thought or image rises within you. It can come as a small nagging feeling or as a wave of emotion that threatens to overwhelm and drown you in the grief of a memory. Either way it's clear; here comes his/her ghost again.

For those who are haunted by a past relationship, the instinctive response is often to run away from these feelings or to pretend they just aren't there. It is also not uncommon to react by setting your system on "anger mode" and seeing everything and everyone in a negative light. Shutting down all ability to handle even the simple routine tasks of daily life is another response, and one that signals depression. This one needs to be addressed quickly, as it can leave a trail of destruction in it's path.

These defense mechanisms are employed as a way of coping and to "get through the day." However, when these responses become prolonged and ingrained, we can get stuck in the grieving process that accompanies loss. This is where the ghosts come in.

All loss, especially the absence of someone with whom we were intimate, results in sadness, anger, denial, fear, depression and guilt. These feelings are normal. However, how we respond to them will make the difference in how well we recover and move on to a new and healthy life.

In order to work through the grief and finally lay those ghosts to rest, you may need some help with the important do's and don'ts of grieving. The following is a basic primer to get you started.

Things To Do:

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### \* Acknowledge Feelings

Denial can provide a very short-term way to cope with loss, but will compound the bottling up of destructive feelings that need to find a healthy outlet for expression.

Allowing yourself to feel, helps you to understand that what you are feeling is normal and therefore, you are not "crazy" or alone. It also opens the way to learning how to cope and move towards a positive resolution. Over time you will learn that feelings won't kill you, and that you are strong and able to confront them and move on.

### \* Express Anger Safely and Productively

Fear of our own anger is normal. This is why we have so much difficulty expressing it to others. We imbue it with a power that is beyond our control and something that can only be destructive.

Therefore, we stuff everything inside. Pressure builds and we explode, and out comes the "anger monster"; a creation of our own inability to deal with anger when it is at a lower, more manageable level.

There are safe ways to express these feelings. Crying, talking to friends, writing down the feelings and even engaging in some physically demanding labor are all healthy ways to release your anger.

### \*Take Care Of Yourself

This seems to be one of the things we most neglect when loss strikes. Not caring for even basic needs is one of the faces of grief. It can also be a sign of a dangerous depression. Therefore, it has to be a priority.

Basic needs are what usually require attention. These include: adequate sleep, eating right, taking care of minimal household and financial responsibilities and attention to personal grooming.

In addition, exercise not only provides a great outlet for stress, it has been proven in clinical trials to be effective in lessening depression in a significant number of people. Regular exercise can also offer assistance to those who have difficulty sleeping and heightens self-esteem.

### \* Build and Strengthen Social Supports

A strong social support system is always important. During a time of extremes loss, it is vital to recovery.

Do you have good, supportive friends? Do they have time and energy that they can offer to you during this period of grieving?

What about religious ties? A church, temple or other community of like-minded believers?

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Do you have good support from any family members?

What about organizations that you have participated in and given your time and energy to? Can they now give something back to you?

These are a few of the supports that you can turn to. Make sure you PLAN well for weekends, holidays and other significant days. Let people know you want to get together and that you want to get out regularly and stay active and involved. This allows others to offer their support and remember to include you in group activities, etc.

### \*Give Yourself Time

Getting over the loss of someone you love takes time. It is a process. It doesn't take "forever." You will move on and recover. But beware of that feeling that is often expressed of "I don't know what's wrong with me, it's been months and I'm still not over it."

The months SEEM like forever, but you know they are a relatively short period of time. You need to give yourself that time or run the strong risk of getting stuck for (perhaps years) in the quicksand of grief.

### \*Set Realistic Goals

This is a time to prioritize and decide what you most want and need and to make a realistic plan for achieving it.

Goals will keep you focused and on-track. They will provide a compass as you navigate your way to a new life. They will help you to achieve success and to boost your self-esteem. This achievement will help you to feel strong and capable of beginning a new life.

### \*Things To Avoid

When enveloped in grief and loss, we have to be careful not to respond in dysfunctional ways. Some classic examples of poor coping behaviors include:

- overuse of alcohol
- use of illegal drugs
- ignoring signs of serious depression
- sexual acting out
- recklessness with finances
- ignoring basic safety and placing self in risky situations

These are all the result of low self-esteem, guilt and feelings of hopelessness.

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With good supports and the utilization of healthy ways to express feelings, you will be at far less risk of using these self-injurious behaviors.

Remember, we must be willing to accept grief as a possible price of experiencing love. Many, many people have gone through the process of loss and despair and come out strong, whole and ready for a new life. Along the way, they often come to know themselves better and to understand what they most need and want from their relationships. Armed with this new experience and knowledge they are then ready to form new, healthy and lasting relationships.

Toni Coleman is a relationship coach who specializes in helping singles find lasting love. After over twenty years of working with singles on relationship issues, she founded [consum-mate.com](http://consum-mate.com), which offers articles, quizzes, classes, a newsletter and other great relationship resources.

### **Travels Through Yorkshire, England**

**By Steven Cronin**

"Of course, the castle is haunted you know," teased the waitress as she served up tea and scones.

In Knaresborough everything stops for tea and scones, but only when topped with a healthy lashing of fresh cream and raspberry jam.

"They say the ghosts of several family members walk the halls of Allerton Castle," she continued in a tone that suggested she had told this story before and obviously enjoyed it.

Her manner was exemplary. Her advancing years were of little consequence to her appearance; she maintained an air of elegance. She was born in the village and had lived here all her life.

The village of Knaresborough sits in the northern county of Yorkshire, around thirty miles north of Leeds.

The journey north along the M1 was instantly forgettable. Wrathful clouds followed me everywhere. The sky was a mishmash of drab greys, an incessant resource for the torrential downpour.

"How old is the castle?" I asked, eager to discover more of this historic landmark.

"I think it was built sometime around the seventeenth-century. I know it was recently damaged by fire. Many of the rooms are off limits during repair and restoration. Is it a social engagement?"

"My partner's cousin is getting married there tomorrow," I replied. "I've got a room on the high street for tonight."

The café was sat on the banks of the river that had cut through the landscape for centuries. The riverbed was now part of a great gorge that snaked through the outskirts of the village.

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Just before passing out of view, the river ran through the giant support pillars of the old railway bridge.

Directly overhead lay the ruins of the old Knaresborough Castle. Overlooking the river and the gorge, the abrupt drop of the land must have provided the inhabitants of the castle a wonderful natural defence.

Today, a monument stands in the corner of the castle grounds depicting the names of those who lost their lives in more recent conflicts.

I made for the high street and quickly found myself back in the modern world. The pace quickened as shoppers scurried in and out of shops seeking the latest bargains.

Back at the hotel I thought about what the old lady had said. Was the castle really haunted?

I lay in bed wondering about spooks and spirits. As the clock passed midnight the shadows in the room seemed more dark and sinister.

I felt my imagination getting the better of me before thankfully, I nodded off.

Steven Cronin owns the City Breaks website featuring city break special offers from luxury hotels to budget accommodations. For great offers visit



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