

Special Days

Memory is a way of holding onto the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose. – The Wonder Years

One of the most painful issues to deal with is how to survive those special days after the death of your loved one. Many of these days were special because your loved one was a part of them. Recognize that your loved one's absence will cause pain no matter what you do. This is only natural and right. Let the memories come. Talk about them. This is a part of the mourning process. Tears and sadness do not have to ruin the entire day for you. Let yourself have the cry you need and you may be surprised that you can go on again until the next time you need to release the tears.

It is often common for the anticipation of pain at the holidays to be worse than the actual day. As much as you would like to skip these particular days, that is impossible. The important thing to remember is that you do have options about how to cope with those special days. Don't worry about all the other special days to come. You will be at a different place in your mourning then.

Here is a list of some choices for you:

Recognize that your distress about special days is normal. Countless other bereaved people have felt, and do feel, as you do now.

Take control of the situation by planning for what you want to do or do not want to do to get through this time. Recognize that what you decide to do can be changed for the next special day. Decide what is right for you now. Notice what your plans indicate: are you isolating yourself from support or are you tapping into your resources? Are you engaging in things that are meaningful or just doing things?

Let your family and friends know what your limits are. Let them know what you need and how they can best help you. Let others know if you want your loved one mentioned. Don't be forced into doing thing you don't want to do or don't feel up to doing solely to keep others happy.

Realize the anticipation of pain at the holiday can be worse than the actual day.

Plan ahead for any shopping tasks. Try to minimize the tasks you need to accomplish and make a list ahead of time for the things you need to do. You may even shop online instead of venturing out among the crowds.

Do something symbolic. Think about a ritual that can appropriately symbolize your memory of your loved one.

Do something for someone else. Although you may feel deprived because of the loss of your loved one, reaching out to another can bring you some measure of fulfillment.