

# HONORING & COPING WITH ANNIVERSARIES OF LOSS

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*You have made it to the anniversary of losing a loved one and survived. Acknowledge your accomplishment! Life has gone on since you began your grief journey. Moving forward with your life is a big process and you are now on your way.*





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1. **Forgive Yourself:** Grief immobilizes you. Realize grief takes time to work through and hence, you may not have accomplished everything you wanted to accomplish in this period of loss. Write down all the things you think you should have done and haven't during your time of grief. Look at these items and let them go.
2. **Forgive Your Lost Loved One:** People are imperfect. Forgiving is a strong healing tool. Using an anniversary as a reminder to forgive someone helps you to heal and move on.
3. **Talk to People:** Family and friends may not know a special anniversary is arriving soon or know what to do for you. Tell them your needs and wants during this time.
4. **Crying is Okay:** Let the tears flow either when you are alone or in public. Crying is a natural outlet of grief. Do not apologize.
5. **Tell a Story:** On anniversaries tell a story about your loved one that was special and meaningful to you. Stories help treasure the memories and pass on special times to others of all generations. Love shines through unique tales.
6. **Write Letters:** Take the anniversary as an opportunity to write your thoughts and feelings. Talk about the good times, things that you miss, times when it was hard. Keep the letter, mail it or send it away in a creative manner. You might consider posting it on the Internet at a grief or memorial site.
7. **Give Permission:** Tell yourself it is okay to move on with your life. Moving on doesn't mean forgetting – it means living life now. Strive to do one thing new during the next few weeks. Give yourself permission to be happy.
8. **Remember the Pain of Others:** Anniversaries of a loss usually don't affect just one person. Take this time to reconnect with other people who share this same loss over dinner, a special event, or a beverage.
9. **Take Comfort in Your Faith:** Use your faith as a place to give you comfort and solace while you are healing. Talk to others in your place of worship or faith community and ask them to keep you in their prayers.
10. **Be Thankful:** Grieving sometimes clouds the good we do have in our life. Be still for a few moments and reflect on the blessings that grace your life everyday. Start a daily blessings journal to remind you of the good.