



# DAYBREAK

In touch during a time of grief

## *Make Every Day Count*

*In **Make Every Day Count**, persons who have lost a loved one share their experiences. This month, Jean D. recalls the loneliness she experienced after her husband died.*

“In the first few months I was so busy I don’t think I had time to be sad or lonely. Following up with people who helped out, sending thank you notes, sorting through my husband’s things...all this kept me pretty busy. But later, my friends didn’t call as often and my kids went back to their busy lives. That’s when I got really lonely. I decided to join a mall-walking group not too far from my home. This was a big help. I got to meet some new people, and we often talked as we walked. I didn’t talk about my husband or his death, specifically...just things going on in the world, our families, etc. But it was great having a place to go and people to spend time with. It made me feel like I was a part of things again.”

## Dealing with Loneliness

We have all heard the cliché about a person who feels lonely even in the midst of a crowd. For people who are grieving the loss of a loved one, that feeling is all too familiar. Loneliness does not necessarily mean being alone. In fact, during the grief process you may experience loneliness most acutely in the middle of a family gathering or other event where your loved one’s absence is felt. Loneliness is a painful awareness that you are not connected to a person you love.

**In a way, we are lucky.  
Human love seems to have a quality  
that transcends the human condition.**

Love does not end with death of a loved one. It remains, often long after death, and can evoke a deep sense of loneliness.

How can you deal with your loneliness? How can you make sure that loneliness doesn’t compromise your own health and positive outlook toward the future? There are a number of ways. Many people report that keeping busy and being involved with other people helps ease the pain of loneliness. You can also maintain a connection with your lost loved one. Perhaps now is a good time to start writing down your thoughts about your loved one and the experiences of the past few months. If your lost loved one was a spouse, parent, or child, you might assemble photos, cards and other mementos and create a scrapbook that honors his or her life. If you have mutual interests or hobbies, now might be the time to resume those activities.

Whatever you choose, remember that it is important for you to stay connected to other people.

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## What You Need During the Grief Process

Grieving is an exhausting, painful, but important process. Following are some of the things you need during this challenging period.

**Time...**time alone and with those who will listen when you need to talk.

**Rest, Exercise, Nourishment...**you may need even more of the “basics.” A soothing bath, a walk after dinner, a special night out with friends...try anything that will give you a lift. Because grief is so exhausting, you need to pay close attention to your physical, as well as your emotional, needs.

**Hope...**talking to others who have endured a loss and recovered will give you hope and comfort.

**Caring...**accept the expressions of caring from others.

**Goals...**for a time, it may seem that your life is not worth living. Set small goals to get you through this period; plan a trip with friends, schedule dinner with your family, pick a book you've wanted to read.

**Small pleasures...**appreciate the healing effects of simple pleasures such as a walk in the park, a delicious dinner, or a good movie. These small steps will help you restore your pleasure in life itself.

**Take active steps to create a new life for yourself...**give yourself as much time to grieve as you need. When you begin to feel new energy, start looking for interesting things to do. Take a course, volunteer for a cause you support, or embrace a new hobby.



## We Are Here To Help

It's important to talk about your loss with compassionate friends and family. Many people also seek the comfort of support groups during this difficult time. The Daybreak Bereavement Program, provided by the hospice services of Advocate Aurora Health at Home, offers a wide range of opportunities for individual or group support. For more information, or talk to a bereavement counselor, please contact:

- Illinois 800-813-5185
- Wisconsin 800-862-2201