



# 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, Patricia B., who lost both her mother and father in the last few years, recalls how giving to others helped her get back to normal.*

I lost both of my parents within a pretty short time. This was really difficult because our family was very close. Staying busy was helpful for me. I tried to find ways to help others, to take the attention away from myself and how sad I was. Of course, the grief was still with me, but it was easier to handle if I was occupied doing things for other people.

I think I have been helped most by spending time with my little granddaughter. It's hard to focus on sadness when you are around a child. Being with her helps me keep my perspective. She gives my life so much meaning and reason to be optimistic. Now, I am making plans for my future. I am planning my garden for next season and have begun volunteering at my town library. Of course, I still have sad moments, but I feel like I am on the road to being myself again."

## Adjusting to the New You

It has been one year since the death of your loved one. As you mark this anniversary, you may experience a fresh wave of grief. But this will usually pass quickly.

### **You have survived a very difficult year of your life.**

As the pain lessens with the passing of time, your memories of your loved one won't always bring tears. In fact, now they may bring pleasure, comfort and a smile.

You can measure the progress you have made in adjusting to your loss by identifying certain feelings that have appeared. By completing the following statements, you will discover those areas where you have made progress:

- I will always remember the happy time when...
- In the past month, I have made several decisions, including...
- Before this year, I never knew I could...
- I have regained some control over some areas of my life, including...
- I feel hopeful that...
- My plans for the future include...

Once you have completed these statements, read them over. You will likely begin to realize how strong you are, and how many aspects of your life are returning to normal. It has been a difficult year, but you have endured. Give yourself credit for what you have accomplished. Don't overlook your mistakes, either, because they provide a source of growth. Take some time to make a list of personal accomplishments from the past year. Include any new goals you have set for yourself, any new skills you have mastered, and any spiritual renewal you may have experienced. Use this list, and the statements completed above, as your beginning "road map" for the future.

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# Signs of Healing

Everyone grieves differently. The grief process can be lengthy. During the last twelve months, you may have wondered if your grief would ever go away. You may wonder if you're really making progress.



Remember that the signs of healing occur a little at a time. Sometimes, the changes are so gradual that they may go unnoticed. Now is a good time to consider how far you have come in the past year. You will know you are making progress when you experience the following signs of healing:

- You are allowing yourself to feel your emotions.
- You are able to laugh and enjoy some aspects of your life.
- You are adjusting to your environment without your loved one's presence.
- You don't become depressed when you think about your loved one, look at old photos or go to your favorite places.
- You find a sense of purpose in your life, relationships and work.
- You start planning for the future.

Congratulate yourself on how far you've come.

## 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