



When you are grieving, some days are just harder than others.

Dealing with Special Days and Holidays

Adapted from the original by Dr. Bill Webster

You've probably heard the expression "Some days are diamonds, some days are stones."

When you are grieving, some days are just harder than others. They may remind us more specifically of the person who died. Sundays often represent family days. Anniversaries and holidays, birthdays—of the deceased and your own—can be especially hard. They remind us of better days when the person was here, as compared to this day, when they are not.

When you don't seem to be "getting over it" or when it feels like you are getting worse, it can be discouraging. I call these events "TUGs"—Temporary Upsurges in Grief. There are so many triggers, usually simple everyday things: being in a familiar restaurant you frequented with your loved one; the scent of an aftershave or perfume; hearing a special song on the radio. So many things remind us of the person who has died and each has the potential to suddenly compel us to miss them again.

Coping with difficult days

Do not regard such times setbacks. We need to remember. Observe these special occasions in ways which are comfortable for you. There is no right or wrong way of handling these times. Once you have decided how to observe the time and what you can handle comfortably, let family and friends know.

Allow yourself to feel and to express your feelings. Share your concerns, apprehensions, and feelings with a friend or in a support group. The need for support is often greater during holidays. Try to get enough rest, because those occasions can be emotionally and physically draining. Acknowledge your loved one's presence in the family. Consider lighting a memorial candle, listen to music enjoyed by the deceased, or look at photographs or videos if you wish.

Don't be afraid to have fun.

Your loved one died, but they also lived. Laughter and joy are not disrespectful. Get together with family and friends and take some time to share special memories or tell stories about the person. What made them special and what you miss about them? Humorous incidents have a special healing quality. Consider what you could do to honor their life, even though their absence is keenly felt.

Be proactive—take charge of the day. Try to balance your sorrow at their death with a celebration of their life. Be prepared for difficult days, anticipate them and then do what you can to make each a day to remember. ■



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