



*“Grief changes shape, but it never ends.” - Keanu Reeves*

You have reached a significant milestone in your grief journey. You have been through those first days, weeks and months when the person you loved was no longer physically present. You have come to know what that feels like. Hopefully, you have been able to express your feelings to those that have supported you along the journey. Someday in the future you will look back over this period in your life and think “How did I ever make it through that difficult time?”

In the land of grief, mourning does not have a timetable. The only thing it requires of us is that we learn to absorb the loss, remember our loved ones and learn to live well in spite of our losses. Friends, family and a faith community can walk with us. If we still struggle counselors, doctors and support groups can help. As others hold us up, time passes. Gradually, we realize where the compassion of others often comes from. Many of them have been there too at some point in their lifetimes.

When the anniversary of the death of your loved one approaches, it is important to think ahead about how you want to spend that day. Like with other parts of the grief journey, how you decide to spend important dates and anniversaries is up to you.

**Some questions you may want to consider include the following examples:**

- What will be most helpful to you to on the first anniversary of your loved one’s death?
- What will bring you comfort, or maybe even joy, on this day?

Grief workshops, counseling and resources are available to support you during your journey through grief. To request additional information, please email [adultbereavement@shands.ufl.edu](mailto:adultbereavement@shands.ufl.edu) or call 352.246.8855.

  
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## A JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF TO HEALING

### Moving Forward



To help get you started, here is a list of ways to honor and remember your loved one on the anniversary of their death. These same ideas can also be helpful at other important dates such as on a wedding anniversary or birthday:

- Take flowers to the grave site or other place where you go to remember your loved one.
- Look at old photos and family videos/recordings.
- Donate a few of your loved one's old belongings to a shelter or other charity, or make a charitable donation in their name.
- Volunteer with a charity or cause close to your loved one's heart.
- Host a dinner party and invite those who knew your loved one best.
- Cook your loved one's favorite dish.
- Light a candle in honor of your loved one.
- Visit or spend time in a place where you feel closest to your loved one.
- Read old notes, letters or emails from your loved one.
- Spend time together with friends, going to the movies, shopping or taking a short trip.
- Choose whatever you most enjoy doing.
- Watch your loved one's favorite movie.
- Create a new annual ritual to celebrate the life of your loved one. Do something your loved one would have enjoyed.
- Make a toast or say a prayer or blessing in their honor.
- Search for joy and feel gratitude.
- Make a keepsake box of things that remind you of your loved one.
- Finish a project your loved one was working on.
- Continue to work towards a cause your loved one was involved with.
- Plant a tree in your loved one's name.

Many people choose to plant a tree, flower or bush in memory of the person who has died. This newly planted item can be a reminder of the person in the form of a living item. As you see it grow, thrive and flourish, those moments can become encouraging signs for you to live, thrive and grow in your life. These are all positive signs that you are healing in your grief and moving forward.

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## Looking Ahead...Moving Forward

You have walked through many months in your healing process. How do you think you are doing at working through your grief? What progress or accomplishments have you made? Are you able to enjoy more days than not? Are you finding it easier to talk about remembering your loved one? On days like the anniversary of a death, it is important to consider finding ways to honor and remember your loved one. What you do as a remembrance is up to you. There are endless options for you to consider, you can decide how. There is no right or wrong way. It is important to keep in mind that whatever you do is meant to help and heal you. Reaching the one year anniversary can be challenging, but it is important to remember it also should be seen as a positive milestone you have reached in your journey toward healing.

### Questions to Ask Yourself

- How are you coping and living each day?
- What has helped you the most to move forward in your healing?
- Looking back over the past several months, how are you progressing in your journey?
- What gifts did your deceased loved one give to you that are now helping you move through your journey in life?

It is important to understand your grief journey has become a problem when your self-care, family or work responsibilities become disabling. This is when it is time to seek help and guidance from others, whether it is through friends, a spiritual community or a professional counselor.

### Helpful resources for coping with grief and loss can be found at the websites listed below:

- [www.momentsoflife.org/find-hospice](http://www.momentsoflife.org/find-hospice)
- [www.nhpco.org/find-hospice](http://www.nhpco.org/find-hospice)
- [UFHealth.org/bereavement](http://UFHealth.org/bereavement)

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