

## **Grief During the Holidays and Significant Anniversaries**

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The holidays are supposed to be a happy, jolly time of family and friends. That is what we see on TV, on the front of Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas cards, and hear in the songs on the radio. The truth is that the holidays are frequently a source of stress for people. There are concerns about getting everything done in time, arranging travel, satisfying social obligations, and there doesn't seem to be enough time for everything. Unfortunately, some do not want to visit their relatives or have to choose which set of relatives with whom they will spend time. Some people do not have a family to visit or have lost family members.

Holidays and significant anniversaries are especially difficult for people who have lost a loved one. Some people think that the loss needs to be recent in order for it to have an impact, but that's not true. People take time dealing with loss and holidays and anniversaries have a way of reminding us of those we are missing, even those who have been gone a long time. Your feelings are perfectly normal, whatever they are. Treat yourself with care through out the holiday season.

The following are some tips for dealing with the holidays.

- Allow yourself to grieve if needed
- Don't be surprised if several intense emotions sneak up on you such as anger, guilt, and/or depression
- Take care of yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually
- Share your memories, as Shakespeare said in Macbeth, "Give sorrow words..."
- Honor their memory in a special way
- Reconnect or establish support systems.
- Time for yourself is important but do not isolate
- Maintain your routine
- Do what is right for you
- Pray
- Do for others less fortunate, charity has healing properties
- Maintain old tradition that make you smile
- Acknowledge anniversaries, such as a birthday in a way that is uplifting to you
- Create new traditions
- Don't over-plan
- Remember your relationship hasn't ended it is just more one-sided now