WEEKLY REFLECTION

My week has been

My wins were

Five moments I want to remember

1

2

3

4

5

I thought a lot this week about.....

It made me realise.....

This week I....

Huggey Oreamey Helpey

Enjoyed Jaughed Practiced

Advice to myself for next week

Goals for next week

Understanding primary and secondary losses

Loss and life can be like a row of dominos. You spend years arranging your life, using your time, money, and other resources. After many years, your life can seem nearly perfect. But even the most stable of situations can unravel quickly.

A significant loss can be similar to knocking over a single domino. A chain reaction can occur that results in many other losses.

A loss of a spouse leads to a loss of income. This can lead to the loss of your home, automobile, college tuition funds for your children, and emotional support. One loss can quickly lead to additional losses.

n this instance, the loss of a spouse is a primary loss. The additional losses are referred to as secondary losses. Life and disability insurance are an attempt to limit the extent of secondary losses.

A few secondary losses can make it feel like you're losing everything and add to your grief from your primary loss.

Types of loss

These sad events are some of the types of loss that can cause grief:

\checkmark	Death of a loved one	
\	Death of a pet	
\checkmark	Unemployment	
\checkmark	Divorce or breakup	
\checkmark	Miscarriage	
\checkmark	Serious illness or disability	
\checkmark	Loss of a Dream or Opportunity	
\checkmark	Financial hardship	
✓	Mental health issues	
\checkmark	Loss of a Home	
✓	Loss of Connection	





Taking a moment

Now breath...

After a major life event or series of events, I find that by the time I am talking to people about what they have been through, it sounds like they have been pushing a huge boulder up a very steep mountain. I use this metaphor deliberately when describing the enormous effort that people have taken to get to where they are now.

I don't think we take enough time to recognize the energy and emotions that have been used and often we then tend to get frustrated that we haven't moved on yet. I hear words such as "I can't believe that I still feel this way", "I feel like I am stuck", "I am never going to be able to move forward". These are all internal criticisms of ourselves, which after what we have been through is just not needed or OK.

When I ask "If this was me who had been through what you have what would you say?" Every time I hear the reply "wow that's so much, I am amazed you're still able to function!" We belittle our own journey making it small not seeing the courage it has taken to get to this point.

I want you take a deep breath and give yourself a moment here, recognize the journey you are on and what you have been through.

Let's spend a moment imagining instead of pushing that boulder, that we are going to stop and lean against it or even sit on top of it for a while, allowing it to take some of the burden we have been carrying and take some time to breath.

I want you to know that it is OK to allow yourself to stop, to pause & slow down for a while. To give yourself the time and the space to catch up and recognise how incredible you are.

This is our view from safety, we can put down all self criticism, there are no expectations of where you should be or what you should have done. This simply is time to stop, pause and breath, giving yourself permission to rest and to allow yourself time to breath and unwind.

From this space what words of wisdom would you give to yourself?

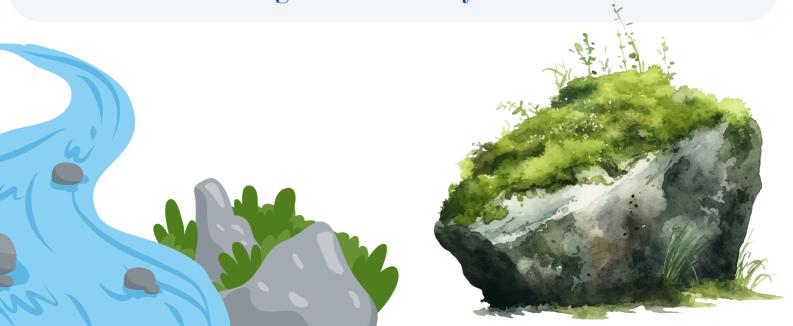
Taking a moment to stop and pause. What words of kindness and wisdom would you give to yourself?



Example -

It's important that you find the time to slow down and look after yourself.
If stopping feels to hard maybe just try to slow down for a while.

Now take these thoughts back with you to the here and now.



Relaxation meditation

- Let's take several nice big deep breaths... slowly releasing each one.
- Feel your feet and body on the surface below you, allowing your shoulders to drop and release any tension they may be holding.
- Notice the gentle rise and fall of your chest, allowing any tension in your chest to melt away.
- Relax the muscles in your jaw, allowing your tongue to drop into the bottom of your mouth, giving yourself time to settle into this moment.
- Breathing in calm... Breathing out any worries, allowing them to just be released, just letting go...
- In your mind's eye I want you to imagine a great big rock, it's solid and stable and the sun is shining just above. Slowly moving towards the rock, noticing the blue sky above and the green of the grass below, notice the feeling of warmth as you get closer to the safety and stability of this big rock.
- Listening to the birds and the calmness all around you.
- As you reach the rock, notice how the sun reflects off the surface, reach out and touch the edges, feeling the warmth on your skin, allowing yourself to relax a little more.
- Take a moment now, to lean your weight on this sturdy rock and allow it to take the burden of all that you are carrying. Knowing that it is safe to pause and rest here, to let go of the weight that you have been carrying.
- Allow yourself to sit on top or to lean and sit against the rock knowing that this is safe and that you are safe here, letting go, putting down...
- Feel the strain of all that you have been carrying slowly starting to lessen as the rock draws down those burdens and lends you its feelings strength and stability, letting go, feeling calmer, feeling lighter ...
- Notice your shoulders and chest relaxing even more as a gentle stillness is created throughout your body and mind... Just breathing in and breathing out ...
- As you spend a moment here in this stillness and peace, raise your hand to your heart either in person or in your mind and thank yourself for looking after you during everything that you have been through. Send kindness to your body and your mind for being there and the support it has given you; let it know that you are thankful for everything that it does everyday for you. Let it know that you hear it when it asks its questions and keeps you moving forward and you thank it but right now you need to find some space to pause and to just be where you are right now...
- As from this space you can find a place to breath that little bit deeper, to relax that little bit more and allow yourself time to just put everything down for a while, to show compassion and kindness to yourself. Breathing in ... Breathing out
- From this feeling of calm, what advice would you give to yourself? What words of wisdom can you take back with you? Letting go, feeling lighter, breathing in... breathing out... notice the calm around you and that feeling of being settled within you is there and knowing you can take this back with you and is always available to you.

Things I can NOT Control

So I can let go of these things

Past Mistakes

Other's Actions

What Others Post Online

How People React to my Boundaries

What Others Think

What Other People
Believe

Who Loves Me

THINGS IN MY
CONTROL

let's focus here

The Friends I Have

My boundaries

My Attitude

How I Respond to Situations

My Decisions

My Words

What I Say & Do

My Thoughts

Asking For Help

What I Post Online

My Self-Care

My Actions

Weather

Who Likes Me

Other People's

Others Being Kind

The Future

Time

Someone Else's

Decisions

Others Apologising To Me

Using the thought clouds exercise, separate below into what is IN your Control & what is OUT of your Control Now take what is IN your control, what are the small steps YOU can take.

Things I can NOT Control

THINGS IN MY CONTROL

There are occasions when things will straddle both areas such as illness, put your focus on what you *are* able to steps to help improve a situation.

Duel Process Model

This is what bereavement looks like, the constant back and forth between feelings of loss and creating a 'new' normal creating movement between the two. With time this settles but can and may appear at moments in your life, hopefully this model will help remind you of what is happening and that this is **totally normal**.



Growing around grief



Grief does not get smaller over time ...





Growing around grief

They say time heals all wounds but it doesn't ever feel like that especially in the first couple of years or ever in some cases, you may also have heard "it will get smaller over time", this one is totally wrong (or so I think) or and I am taking a deep breath as I write this, "you will get over it or you should be over it by now"

Whilst I am sure people mean well I can't think of anything more upsetting or if I am honest disrespectful than to be told I will 'get over' the loss that I am dealing with in that moment.

The way I look at loss is that very slowly over time we start to grow around and with our loss. Learning over time to adjust and allow this into who we are now, it effects every part of our life.

This is where I use the visual of a tree that has been cut in half like the photo above, let me explain, when grief and loss first happen it is all consuming everything is about what you are feeling (or not feeling in some cases) every thought revolves around what you are going through and it feels like nothing is ever going to change from where you are now.

When we look at the centre of the tree we can see clearly what they call the annual lines, they say you can count these and know how old a tree is, they are also called the growth rings. If you look closely at the tree stump you will see the lines but also see the knots and different shadings, this is what has impacted the tree at that time, this is what we would see if where where able to look back over time.

Nothing has gotten smaller, we are not taking away the impact of what has happened we are with kindness to ourselves seeing that everything is a part of us and whilst it feels at the time that you will always be stuck here we manage to still grow and to know that loss is a part of who we are.

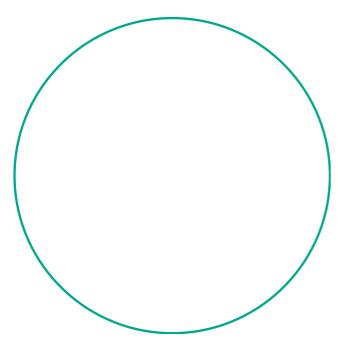
What will happen over time is that we will be triggered it could be a birthday or anniversary or well just anything and it feels like we are back at the start, please know that you are not, you have just been moved back to how you felt at this time. Now I know I have used the word 'just' here as the feelings can be really intense and feel like shock and panic but I do want to let you know that your brain doesn't know the difference between real events happening now and ones that you have lived through in the past.

This is where we need a good version of self care that works for you. I have found that EFT & calming reassuring words help bring me back into the here and now, letting myself know that I am safe and that I am ok, this isn't about dismissing how I feel, this is about helping to settle myself down.

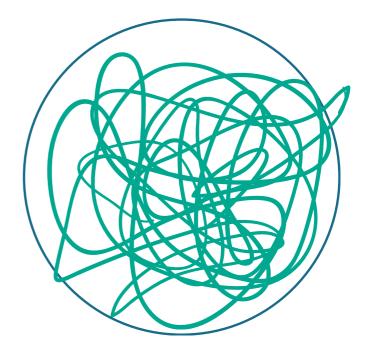
I say to myself "It's ok, just breath" I then instruct myself to relax my shoulders and slowly breath in and slowly breath out while I keep reassuring myself its ok I am safe.

We are on a journey and it really is tough so lets show ourselves understanding and compassion.

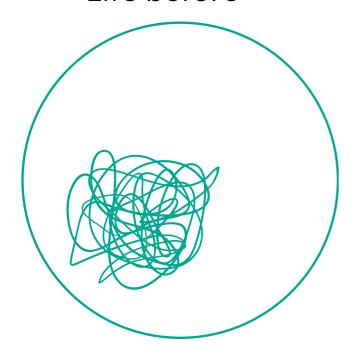
A Visual timeline



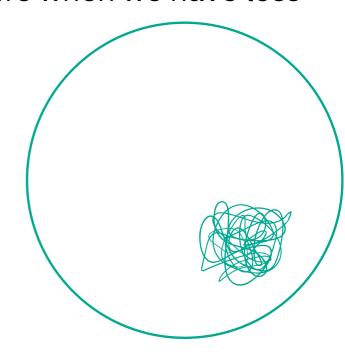
Life before



Life when we have loss



Life as time goes by, your life is growing

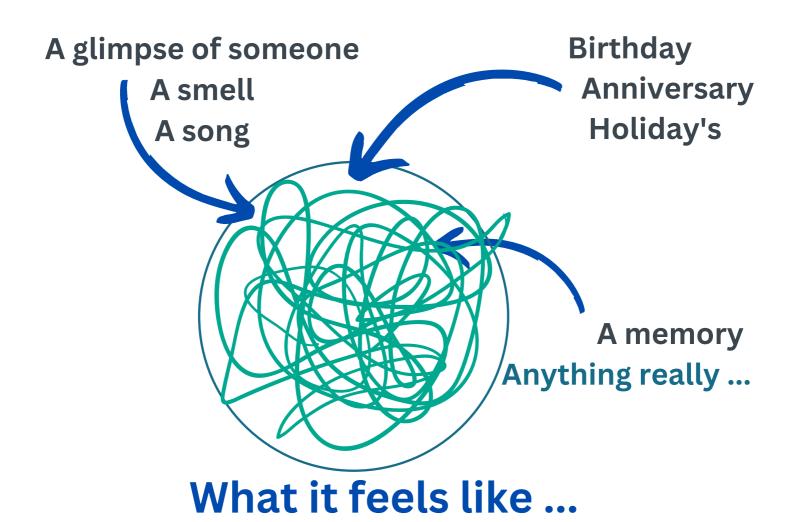


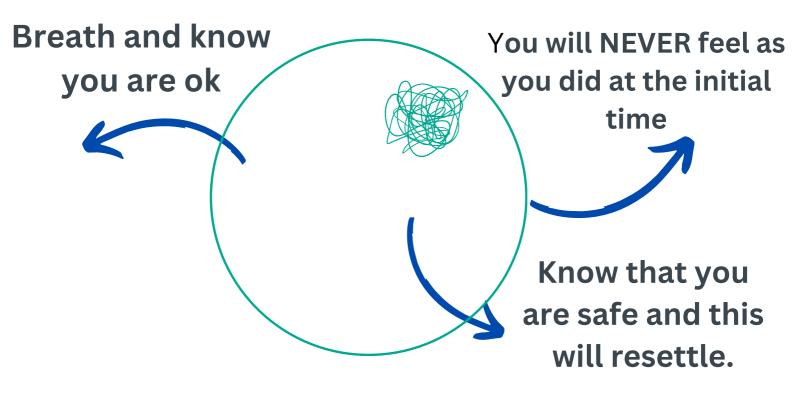
Life as time goes by, your life is growing



"If you look closely at the tree stump you will see the growth or time lines but also see the knots and different shadings, this is what has impacted the tree at that time, Nothing has gotten smaller, this is what we would see if where where able to look back at ourselves over time."

Over time - Reality V's Feeling's





What it actually is ...



SELF-CARE

TO-DO LIST

Taking Care of yourself is important



Check-in with someone you adore.



Journal your feelings.



Read a book.



- o Nap
- Sleep Early
- o Take a break



Paint, draw, or use your talents.



Do something that physically makes you feel good.



Organise
that
cupboard
one drawer
at a time



Ask yourself: What do I need.



furry animal.



Get back into your hobbies. (Playing music is so relaxing!)



Plan a night to have a movie marathon.



Have a cup of tea or coffe. (bonus: if it's with a book!)

Your support What's need & What is NOT!



Whilst there are times that you may naturally want to sit and be by yourself, it is so important that you have good support around you. I have found when it comes to loss that you are always surprised by the people who are 'there' for you and can also be shocked and hurt by those who seemingly (and also occasionally actually) cross over the road to avoid having to see you. The reason for this behaviour is they are unable to process what to say or how you feel, they are either unable to understand the depth of feelings or are avoiding having to feel them, mostly it isn't meant to hurt you, they just don't realise that a simple conversation or show of empathy really could make a difference.

Support can look and sound in so many different ways to what you might imagine, **offers of help** (please take these) people in general, do want to help but they just don't know how. Let them take the weight with you just for a while. Take the comfort that is offered. You are not taking up their time and you are not a burden to them, people genuinely what to help.

When you feel able and comfortable, start to talk to others. **Trusted family & friends, a counsellor or the occasional stranger**, I have spoke to them all. It doesn't need to make sense but saying it out loud will help you to start to process what you are going through. This is ongoing, like the many skins of an onion where you peel away one level there below can be another. There are no time limits on this and often the process of time allows you to talk about things you might not even have realised where there.

Bereavement groups both in person and online, there are some great groups out there and I can not tell you what a relief it can be to talk to someone who has a real understanding on how you are feeling right now, that on its own I find helps as you realise you are not alone in how you feel. **Bereavement & loss support charities** both local and national, each offering support from 1-2-1 online counselling to advice and guidance, there is a list at the back of this booklet.

Good support is like your metaphorical life raft, you can have lots of people on there and each person helps in their own way then the life raft is good. If you have just one who has their own agenda or opinion!! (Don't get me started on the horror stories of how 'others' think you should grieve) then that one person can start to make the life raft feel unsafe. I am lucky that I have wonderful people who share their stories with me and this incredible strong lady Helen taught me about the 'life raft' after a particularly cruel remark delivered from a family member she decided that that was it she wasn't going to allow others to sink her raft and in her words "If they aren't supporting you then kick them off the life raft!" Bravo I say!

This is your journey, don't allow anyone to damage the incredible work you are doing.









When we have been let down and hurt by others, we can often turn this into I am just 'too' "Trusting" or 'too' "Caring. I gently remind you that you are not 'Too' anything. There is a possibility that we might benefit by looking after our boundaries a little better, listening to our gut and learning it is ok to say 'no'

After being hurt rightly we go looking for answers somebody has hurt us or let us down we ask questions "why would they treat me like that?" There is possibly no answer to this question, the reason being that this would take the 'other' person to look at their behaviour, so the question inevitably comes back in your mind to "I must have done something wrong"

Let's get this straight right now,

You are NOT responsible for OTHER people's BAD behaviour!

What you are **now** responsible for is **moving forward is** looking at who is around you and how you can protect yourself when you get a sense of unease.

This workbook reminds US of what to be aware of and how WE can Protect ourselves from the occasional Energy Drainer *and* continue to be the Person *we choose to be* .

Avoid the people who:

- Guilt trip you
- Treat you unfairly
- Demoralise you
- Those who always want to fight with you
- Those who find fault
- Blame you
- Those who mess with your head
- The people who can't see yourself worth
- People who intentionally & repeatedly do and say things that they know upset you.
- People who expect you to prioritise them but refuse to prioritise you
- Act like the victim when confronted with their abusive behaviour.
- People who can't and won't apologise sincerely.
- Those who take over your life.
- Thrive on Drama
- Self-Destructive
- Lie
- Two faced/Gossip
- Isolate you
- Embarrass you.
- Blame everyone else.
- Passive aggressive.
- Selective memory.
- Those who are jealous
- Those who do not care.
- Those who criticise you.
- Anyone who disrespects you.
- Those who judge
- Take up too much of your time.
- Lack compassion.
- Those who treat others poorly



I Protect My Energy By:

- Deciding not to engage in arguments with people who aren't listening.
- Not always making myself available
- Turning my ringer off
- Resting
- Minimising my contact with people who deplete me.
- Taking the time, I need before responding to texts, calls or emails.
- shortening conversations that are going in a negative direction.
- Telling people when I've reached my capacity
- Taking space when I need to
- Not doing everything myself.
- Putting my phone down.
- getting some fresh air.
- Allow myself to change my mind.
- Saying both 'no' and 'yes'
- Walking away from Drama.





Dealing with Catastrophising thoughts

A-Z thinking

This is something that I can fall foul to at times. It is when you have an initial thought and before you know it has turned into a major catastrophe. It's as though we have decided we are going to write the script in a drama movie, and this is the worst-case scenario we can come up with.

So why does our mind do this? Well interestingly it is our brain's way of thinking it is looking after us. It goes back to primitive times, it's on the lookout for danger but it has been let loose, hence the blockbuster film that is now playing in your mind.

Now here is the thing with thoughts, your body doesn't know the difference between reality and the made-up scene in your mind. Your body responds to the dramatic thoughts, and you feel this in every part of your being.

This is like fuel to your thoughts as they feel the panic, and this just increases your thoughts, it spirals and before we know it, we are dealing with overwhelm and panic.

So, let's take a moment and take a deep breath

Tips to help deal with A-Z thinking

- Remember thoughts are just that thoughts, this does not make them true!
- Recognise this for what it is, your mind playing tricks on you.
- Use one of your coping strategies, maybe go for a walk or move around a little to shake off the feelings.
- Practice one of the breathing exercises such as finger breathing.
- Remember this will pass.

Overthinking?

Imagine pages of writing without any punctuation, streams of words just going on and on, no time to take a breath or to pause to let the words and questions sink in!

When you are overthinking this is what's happening with your thoughts. So, for example, you have a thought come into your head, it could be a relevant thought or a random question and your mind, which is like a giant computer, hears you ask it a question and it brings back answers, answers and more answers, possibly even more questions. Like the above there are *no pauses to breath* it just spirals until we feel every single thought in our body. In summary we have allowed our thoughts to ramble and ramble. Now we are going to add in simple punctuation to these same thoughts to *slow and stop overthinking*.



Punctuation for our thoughts. This is where you bring in the above punctuation for your mind. I know that might sound a little silly but trust me it works!

It takes a little discipline to start to notice what is going on to start but soon, with practice, becomes a new and much healthier habit.

This is how it works; I want you to start to imagine your thoughts and mind as something separate, you are going to 'notice' what is going on here. This in itself takes practice and I find breathing and mindfulness exercises work really well alongside this.

If you can visualise what is being said by your mind, see it as text in a book, though listening to it works just as well. This is all about separating it, not allowing it to just keep running. You are going to help to slow down the 'spiral' by *interrupting its downward spin*.

Now we are going to add the punctuation, (do not worry about this if like me you struggled with remembering this from school). We are going for basic places to pause and to stop.

As your thoughts start to come in add either a comma, question mark or full stop and breath in appropriate places.

Comma - This means pause and breath, allow your thoughts to catch up, remember to breath and allow yourself to relax.

Question mark - this means just that, it is a question the dot is a full stop, so do just that stop. Is the question relevant? Do we need to answer it? if we do answer it, don't forget to add the full stop at the end. If the answer leads to other questions repeat this section, learn to know when this is enough.

Full stop - Means to stop. That thought has finished, no carrying on, it stops. You could even say full stop out loud to start with, we are giving our minds some boundaries, remember **you are in charge, not your overthinking mind**.

Stopping the Justification

After my recent session with my amazing Therapist Laura (huge shout out to her and everything she has done over the many years where she has helped me to realise being me is bloody brilliant! even if at times I still fight this and I am not what my mind and others have told me! I realised that for as long as I could remember I had been caught in the trap of as she puts it 'dancing with my inner negative dialogue' it comes along and whispers something rude, something nasty and before I know it I'm either believing it or allowing it to remove my inner self confidence and steal my joy!

"I have learnt to stop dancing with my inner negative dialogue"

As someone who struggles with fatigue and exhaustion, being able to balance, my inner battery has been (and still is) a journey within itself.

There have been so many times. I felt so exhausted that I have just looked at the kettle across the room and thought I can't even get up to make that much needed cup of tea. Unless you've experienced this kind of exhaustion, it's truly hard to explain how on one day doing the simple tasks becomes impossible and on other days you are able to manage.

I felt like I've had to justify being this exhausted, trying to find reasons and excuses. So if I was going to give any advice, my advice would be stop justifying yourself both to yourself or to others! Stop adding to your narrative that you are doing something wrong allow yourself to be released from this added pressure.

As part of my journey to heal, I have learnt to listen to the inner wisdom of my energy/batteries, I have learned and accepted (though this can still be tough) the need and the right to rest when needed. I have quietened the voice that tells me that "this is being lazy" I've removed the inner commentary that tells me "you should be doing something" I now just notice, but don't engage with the constant questions of "why can't I do this anymore? Why can I not do the things I used to be able to do?"

I have stopped the repeat cycles of continuing when I have little to no energy, which then wipes out days of being able to achieve anything. Of been frustrated and taking this out on others when I feel like I've got too much energy that nervous kind energy that often travels with anxiety, which then steals more energy and so the cycle continues.

I've learned to soothe and calm myself when I feel overwhelmed and panicked which can happen in either or both of these situations and I've learnt to trust myself that I will be okay. I've learnt a new narrative that supports me my body and my needs.



Discussing the Concept of Acceptance and Its Challenges
Facing tough situations can be daunting, but it's crucial to address them to move
forward. Acceptance isn't about being 'happy' or 'okay' with a situation, nor is it a
sign of weakness or surrender. It's about viewing a situation without judgment,
avoiding negative self-talk, and not adding unnecessary layers to it. It's common to
perceive not only the original situation but also the additional unjust layers, which
can lead to repetitive thoughts like a stuck record. Acknowledge your feelings in the
moment, experience them, but don't cling to them to prevent further distress.
Remember, help is available, and you don't have to face challenges alone.
Sometimes an external perspective can provide valuable insight to help you cope
and move forward positively.

Acceptance is a complex yet essential practice when navigating life's highs and lows. When circumstances seem overwhelming, embracing acceptance can bring peace and clarity. By recognizing the reality without judgment, we can progress with resilience and understanding, accepting that change is inevitable.

During difficult times, treating ourselves with kindness and compassion is crucial. Rather than resisting life's challenges, accepting them allows for growth, healing, and transformation. Acceptance is not resignation but a courageous acknowledgment of our reality, empowering us to face challenges with wisdom and strength.

Embracing acceptance is a powerful tool for self-awareness and resilience, enabling us to navigate life's trials gracefully. Remember, acceptance is not about giving up but about confronting reality with courage and fortitude, fostering inner strength and wisdom to overcome adversities.

Grief never ends but it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith. It is the price of Love •

Author unknown



Continuing Bonds

Grief is a continuous process, and it's natural over time, to maintain a connection with your loved ones and carry their memory with you. Here are several ways to help you stay connected. Remember, grief is a unique journey for everyone, and finding ways to maintain bonds with your loved ones can bring comfort and solace. Cherishing the meaningful moments you shared, engaging in conversations with them in your heart, and visiting places that hold special memories can help keep their spirit alive in your life. Preserving photos, including them in significant events, and considering the advice they would offer if they were present can also contribute to feeling their presence.

Sharing stories about your loved ones with new acquaintances, establishing ongoing rituals to honour and commemorate them, and leading a life that would make them proud are powerful ways to stay connected. By incorporating these practices into your life, you can create a lasting bond with your loved ones that transcends physical boundaries and celebrates the impact they had on you.

Ways to Maintain Bonds:

- Cherish meaningful moments.
- Engage in conversations with them.
- Visit places that hold special memories.
- Preserve photos.
- Include them in significant events.
- Consider the advice they would offer if they were present.
- Share stories about them with new acquaintances.
- Establish ongoing rituals to honour and commemorate them.
- Lead a life that would make them proud.



BENEFITS OF CRYING

For some reason we can carry with us that crying is a weakness, a well meaning person may have said to stop crying or said there is nothing to cry about, you may even have been told when you where younger "if you don't stop crying then I will give you something to cry about" So there a lots of reasons we see this as a negative. I love the below as it overrides all of the above, learn these reminders off by heart, Don't worry about what others think these are your emotions and you who are struggling right now so find your version of a safe space and let go!

It helps you calm down

It helps you get support from others

lt balances emotions

It protect your eyes from bacteria



It reduces
both
physical and
emotional
pain

It makes you feel better

It improves vision

It helps you cope with grief

Making do with "Normal" Enjoying the "Normal" Moving on

Every day is NOT the Same

You may wake up! get up! and start moving, make your breakfast "as normal" go shopping "as normal" bump into friends "as normal"
You may find yourself smiling and talking "as normal" There is No Guilt in this, grab these days and feel blessed. Do not question and beat yourself up on why you are having a "normal day"

For when you have a bad day a 'grey' day,
When you wake up and feel WHY?
When you get up and wonder
Why you don't want breakfast or to go shopping,
When you have these 'grey' days
Remember the days that were "normal" and know that they will return bit by bit, day by day.

Not the same as it was,

NO it will never be the same

But it will be "normal" and with that,
it allows you to eat, sleep, breath, relax, laugh & cry.

All "normal" things that go on everyday

That is a stepping stone to moving forward.

A to Z of Coping Skills















someone or

a pillow









music











Play with a pet



Quiet your mind & Meditate



Read



walk

Sleep



Take a break



Use affirmations



Visualization a happy place



Watch funny videos



Exist on a healthy diet

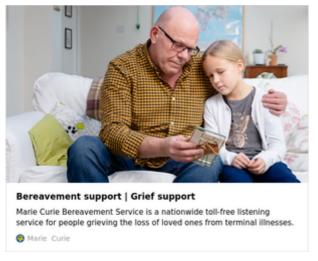


Yoga



zzz ... Sleep

Support around Grief



https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support



https://www.mind.org.uk/informationsupport/guides-to-support-andservices/bereavement/support-and-self-care/





Here to listen

Samaritans works to make sure there's always someone there for anyone who needs someone. Read more.

Samaritans

https://www.sueryder.org

https://www.samaritans.org



Grief can be overwhelming - you don't have to deal with it alone. Cruse Bereavement Support is here. Call our helpline or chat online.

https://www.cruse.org.uk

6 Cruse Bereavement Support



https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelingssymptoms-behaviours/feelings-andsymptoms/grief-bereavement-loss/



www.rainbowafterthestorm.org







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Rainbow after the storm, mental health matters



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