

# Remembering Your Lost Loved One

## Objective

To identify ways to honor the memory of your lost loved one during your grief process.

## You Should Know

Losing a loved one is a devastating human experience and the grief process is different for everyone. There is no timeline or predictable course. At first, thoughts, feelings, and memories of your loved one will likely be the focus of your attention. Over time, the memories can dissipate, but that does not mean that your loss is any less powerful or that your sadness is gone. Finding a balance in your life—grieving *and* going on with your life—is a process that can be challenging for most people. But, as they say, “the only way out is through.”

Keeping the memory of your lost loved one alive is an act of love that continues in the present and bonds you together despite their absence. It can also aid in your grief process. Depending on your spiritual beliefs and experiences, you might sense their presence every day, which can be very comforting. But you might want to do something tangible or public to keep them “alive.” In this worksheet, you will choose several ways to honor the memory of your lost loved one.

## What to Do

Here are some things that people do in order to remember their lost loved ones, including simple activities and ones that are more complex. Most do not cost anything, but some might involve spending some money.

Note: If these activities do not apply to your situation, for instance, if you experienced a miscarriage or stillbirth, lost a newborn or a young child, you may wish to create different, meaningful ways to remember them. Activities are also helpful in expressing your hopes, wishes, regrets, and your experience of love.

- Cook their favorite meal and invite friends or family over to share food and memories.
- Write them a letter.
- Keep a journal recording your memories.
- Make a video for them, saying what you would like to say to them (you can share this with others or not).
- Create a photo album featuring them.
- Plant a garden with them in mind.
- Plant a tree in their name.
- Have a “conversation” with them, as if they were right there with you.
- Carry their picture with you, or make it your “home screen” on your phone.
- Celebrate their birthday, anniversary, or other milestones in their honor.

- Create a ritual or ceremony that you do once or regularly.
- Light a candle.
- Say a prayer.
- Create something from an item of theirs—a collage, a piece of jewelry, or a work of art.
- Take a trip someplace they always wanted to go—tell them all about it while it happens.
- Watch videos or look at photos of them.
- Visit places where you spent time together.
- Engrave a bracelet with their name.
- Spread their ashes somewhere meaningful (if relevant).
- Visit and tend to their gravesite (if relevant).
- Sponsor a fundraiser or create a scholarship in their name.
- Collect donations for their favorite charity.
- Donate a memorial bench in a park or public place.
- Create a postage stamp with their image on it: <http://photo.stamps.com>.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the above activities appeals to you? Write down three.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Make a plan to do those activities. Share your planning with someone you are close to and get their help, if you wish. Do more activities as they feel important and meaningful for you.

Activity/Item	Planned Date	Thoughts and Feelings After the Activity
1.		
2.		
3.		

## Reflections on This Exercise

Why did you choose the activities you did?

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What other ways would you like to remember your lost loved one?

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Are there others with whom you can share these experiences? Who are they?

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When will you contact them? \_\_\_\_\_

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What else can you do to make progress in this area of your life?

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