

THE BENEFITS OF JOURNALING

Journaling can be a powerful tool during grief. Writing is a healthy outlet to process emotions and express what's hard to say out loud. It can also help you track how your grief changes. Use these prompts to help get you started.

- **Write a letter to the person** sharing what you miss, what's changed, or what you wish you could say. Things you might write about:
 - Updates about your life and who you are today
 - Ways they still influence your decisions or values
 - The parts of them that live on in you
 - How your relationship with them changed since their death
 - Express how you're feeling in the moment
- **"Then and now" journal entry.** Write two short reflections:
 - **Then:** What was your relationship with the person like before they died?
 - **Now:** How does that relationship live on? You can write about memories, lessons you learned, or traits and habits you carry on.
- **Gratitude list.** List things you're grateful for about the person (traditions they passed down, support they gave, life lessons they taught you, etc.). This is also a good entry to list *anything* you are grateful for, big or small. Practicing daily gratitude is a path to healing. Come back to this list when you need comfort and hope.
- **Unfinished conversations.** Journal about unresolved issues or words left unsaid to help process guilt, anger, frustration, regret, etc. Ways you could start the entry:
 - "I wish I had told you..."
 - "The last thing we said was..."
 - "I've been struggling with..."
 - "Since you've been gone, I've..."
 - "I want you to know..."
 - "I forgive you for.../forgive me for..."

Whether you write daily or only when you feel the need, journaling can help lighten the emotional load. Writing can also deepen your sense of connection to the person who died—as well as your connection to yourself.

FULL-COLOR
LOGO HERE

Contact us with questions
or for more support.

1-800-123-4567 | info@domain.com



REMEMBERING WITH SADNESS & JOY

Grief can color even our happiest memories with sadness and pain. That doesn't mean we have to shut them out. It's possible—and healing—to let yourself feel both joy and sadness *together*.

The movie *Inside Out* illustrates this idea. In the story, 11-year-old Riley's emotions are colorful characters in her mind (Joy, Sadness, Anger, Disgust, and Fear) who color spheres that hold her memories. When Riley struggles after a big move, Sadness touches a lot of the golden, joyful memories, making them blue and sad.

Joy tries to keep Sadness away from the memories. But eventually, Joy realizes that some of the most meaningful memories can be a mix of emotions. It's only when Joy and Sadness work together that Riley can face her feelings and start to heal from the loss of her life before the move.

Bittersweet memories are a sign of our enduring love. Below is an exercise that can help you embrace them and feel more connected to the person's memory.

1. **Think of a happy memory**, like when the person was doing something they loved, making you laugh, supporting you, or making you proud. Look at pictures or watch videos. Remember the sights, sounds, and smells. Where were you? What were you wearing? Who were you with?
2. **Reflect on the joy**. Even if it's painful, try to reconnect to the positive emotions you felt in that moment. What made it so memorable? What made you so happy?
3. **Acknowledge your emotions**. Now think about how this memory makes you feel today. Do you still feel some warmth, happiness, or joy? Sadness? Anger? Gratitude? Emptiness? Let yourself feel *all* your feelings.
4. **Bring it together**. Create a journal entry, artwork, a video, music, or use any creative outlet you like that combines both the joy of the memory and the sadness of the loss.
5. **Consider sharing**. If you'd like, share what you've created with loved ones, a support group, a therapist, or on social media. Sharing your grief story and hearing others can help you normalize and process your feelings.

FULL-COLOR
LOGO HERE

Contact us with questions
or for more support.

1-800-123-4567 | info@domain.com

THE “WHAT-IFS” OF REGRET & GUILT

After loss, you might replay events and wonder, “*What if I’d said something different?*” or “*Why didn’t I do more?*” These thoughts don’t mean you did something wrong—they mean you cared deeply. Gently remind yourself:

- **You did the best you could with what you knew.** Not knowing how that day would unfold doesn’t mean you failed—it means you’re human.
- **Grief sharpens hindsight.** While we can’t change the past, we *can* make choices in the present that honor what we’ve learned.
- **You are not alone.** Regret is a normal part of grief for many people. Having regrets doesn’t mean you need to carry the extra weight of guilt.

You are more than the things you wish you had done differently. Acknowledge regret without letting it define your whole grief story by trying these exercises.

Write a self-compassion letter: Write to yourself as if you were a friend going through the same thing. This can help you speak more kindly to yourself.

1. Name your regrets
2. Acknowledge what was outside your control
3. End with words of kindness and compassion
4. Re-read this letter whenever regret or guilt resurface

Example: *Dear [Your Name], I know you regret [regrets]. Remember that [things you couldn’t control] were outside your control and you did the best you could. That doesn’t lessen your love for [Name of Person]. Take it easy on yourself. Love, [Your Name]*

“Two truths” reflection: Acknowledge the regret without letting it define your whole grief story by trying this exercise.

1. Fold a piece of paper in half
2. Label one side, “What I regret...” and the other, “What I know to be true...”
3. Write one or two thoughts on each side

Example:

- What I regret...*I wasn’t there for them when they died. I left them alone.*
- What I know to be true...*I loved them with all of my heart, showed them I cared in so many ways, and they knew I loved them.*

FULL-COLOR
LOGO HERE

Contact us with questions
or for more support.

1-800-123-4567 | info@domain.com