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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



Celebrating Love

While Grieving

By Josephine Haefner

Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate love. I remember when I was a little girl, my father always made that day special for me. He would give me roses or chocolate. One time in high-school, he sent flowers with a note that said "From the only man in your life. Love, Dad."

For those grieving this can be another hard holiday of remembering those we have lost. Both my parents have passed, and as a divorced single mother it can be a challenging day. With the barrage Valentine's Day advertising and social media, one is constantly reminded of what we may no longer have, or who. Whether you're

divorced, like me, or widowed, memories of happier times can overwhelm. However, Valentine's Day isn't just for romance. It can be a day to celebrate love of all kinds.

Here are some suggestions for celebrating in other ways when you are grieving:

1. Love yourself. Take the day for self-care. Whether that means a nice bubble bath, or treating yourself to some chocolate, relax and pamper yourself. Spend time meditating, praying, or simply enjoying the quiet and stillness.

2. Spread love to your friends. This Valentine's Day I plan on writing little inspirational Valentines to all the women in my life. Showing how much you appreciate a friend who has been there for you is a great gesture. I also am a big believer in the unofficial holiday known as "Galentine's Day" which is on February 13. Celebrating with your closest women friends and expressing how much you

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"I need something mushy and in cursive that sounds nothing like me."

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**FEBRUARY
2022**

*All you need is love. But a little chocolate
now and then doesn't hurt.*

~Charles M. Schulz

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love them is a great way to make the holiday a little more fun filled.

3. Give love to a charity or organization. If you love animals, donate to a local shelter. Using this day to give love or a donation to a charity that you care about is a great way to feel joy in your heart. Better yet, if you are missing a loved one who has died, donate to a charity that they supported, in their honor.

4. Send flowers to a grieving person. Let someone who may be grieving, know that they are not alone on this day.

5. Spread love and kindness to complete strangers. You never know

how much a simple smile can mean to a stranger. Use the day to spread small acts of kindness out into the world. I truly believe that when we give love and put out good energy, it will come back to us.

6. Give Valentines to whomever your social circle includes. Remember when we were younger and we would make those Valentine’s Day boxes and everyone got one? I vote we bring that back as adults!

While someone may not physically be in our lives, we can carry their love in our hearts. Don’t let the commercialism of this holiday leave

you feeling down. Grief comes in waves, and while it is okay to feel whatever emotions come on this day, be kind to yourself! Time may not heal all the wounds our hearts have gone through, but if we try to channel our grief and loss into positives, then slowly, we may start to not dread certain holidays. I already look forward to the day when I will send flowers to my daughters when they are in high-school. I will carry on the tradition that my own father did with me.

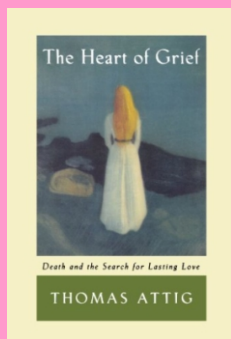
Happy Valentine’s Day!

bookmarks

The Heart of Grief: Death and the Search for Lasting Love by Thomas Attig is a wonderful book for February.

This stirring volume recounts dozens of stories of real people who have struggled with the loss experienced in death. But through those stories, Attig quietly explains how we make the transition from “loving in presence” to “loving in separation.” Instead of forgetting our loved ones, he argues, our grief becomes the means to sustain memories, embrace our loved ones’ legacies, and allow their contributions to our lives to play an active role in our future.

Robert Neimeyer, one of the world’s leading voices in bereavement today says this book is “an invaluable guide to all bereaved persons who strive to restore wholeness to a love strained by loss, and who seek practical and spiritual counsel on how to find hope and even growth in the wake of desolation.”



Show Your Sweet Side

Sometimes the simple gesture of giving to others can make all the difference if you have suffered a loss or someone you know has. Consider a gift of a home-baked treat to remind someone special that you are thinking of them.



Prepare and roll out cookie dough following recipe directions. Use 3 smallest cutters from 4-piece heart nesting cookie cutter set to cut out shapes. Bake and cool cookies.

These heart cookies are also heart-warming to make (and eat!) when they are made with love!

Stackable Heart Cookies

- Favorite roll-out cookie recipe or use pre-made cookie dough
- Royal icing (store bought)
- Rose Icing color
- Heart micro mini icing decorations

Divide royal icing into three equal portions, and tint 3 shades of rose. Thin a portion of each shade following recipe directions. Use tip 3 and full-strength tinted icing to outline cookies. Use thinned tinted icing in cut decorating bag to fill in cookies; gently tap to smooth icing. Let dry overnight.

Use icing to attach cookies, stacking largest to smallest. Place icing decoration on top.

GRIEF SUPPORT TIP:

DON'T CHARGE IN WITH SOLUTIONS

In **ALL** things, not just in grief, it's important to get consent before giving advice or offering strategies. In most cases, when someone is talking to you about what they're going through, that person simply needs to be heard and validated inside their pain or their challenges.

Remember to ASK FIRST before offering advice. And respect the response you receive.

@REFUGEINGRIEF

#RIGGRIEFTIPS

Chapters encourage readers to visit helpful websites, podcast, and other social media sites. This month we suggest refugeingrief.com.

findahelpline.com



Helplines, also known as hotlines, exist to provide a confidential, non-judgemental space – for free.

They are staffed by supportive people, who provide immediate support, counseling and information.

It’s quick, personal and private. Talk, text or webchat with a volunteer, counselor, or peer. No sign up or personal information required.

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