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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



How to Survive Valentine's Day Grief

By Chris
Raymond
verywellhealth.com

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We encourage you
to visit this website
for wellness information
and to read other
articles by Raymond.

Special days often trigger powerful emotions and memories in survivors regardless of how much time has passed since the death of a loved one. A holiday reaction or anniversary response can occur because you associate a date on the calendar or the event itself with someone significant, such as a spouse, family member, or friend.

For anyone mourning a loss due to death, Valentine's Day can feel particularly cruel because it emphasizes togetherness, love, and romance. Moreover, given its significant marketing and prominent displays of merchandise in stores of all types, it is practically impossible to avoid reminders that the "couple's holiday" approaches.

Use these tips to help you cope with the grief you feel on or around Valentine's Day

as you attempt to deal with your loss.

Ignore the Rules

The pressure to act a certain way adds an unfortunate and unnecessary burden to those mourning a loss to death. If you feel the need during Valentine's Day to conceal your tears or put on a brave face (or, conversely, not to laugh or enjoy yourself at times), then you need to give yourself permission to grieve in your own way. Despite societal pressures—real or imagined—or the idea of the universality of grief stages, there simply is no correct way to mourn the loss of a loved one.

Cope Ugly

In 2008, a study was published concerning the resiliency of people facing potentially traumatic events, including bereavement. The authors expressed the idea of "coping ugly," meaning that coping does not always fit the mold of "healthy" thoughts and behaviors—it just needs to get the job done. Do whatever you need



"I know it's Valentine's Day, but you look terrible. Can't you call in lovesick?"

continued...

**FEBRUARY
2024**

Love doesn't make the world go 'round.
Love is what makes the ride worthwhile.
—Franklin P. Jones

Ask yourself how your loved one would like to be remembered and then make it happen.

to do during the holiday in order to cope.

Put Pen to Paper (or Fingers to Keyboard)

Journaling not only helps relieve stress but can also help you process and organize your thoughts and

feelings as you write them down. Whether you express yourself best sitting at your computer or using paper and pen, exploring and recording your innermost emotions and ideas "for your eyes only" often proves therapeutic and can provide insight into your grief response.

Bury the Past

If you are comfortable with the idea, select a significant memento, reminder, or artifact that you strongly associate with the deceased and, literally, bury it in the ground during a private ceremony that you plan. Whether this involves a particular photograph, letter, matchbook, souvenir, or some other physical connection to your loved one, the idea here is to symbolically and lovingly say goodbye to the deceased and to "let go" of your past relationship so you can move forward.

Be Your Own Valentine

Grief takes not only an emotional toll on those mourning a death, but it also takes a physical one. Often, the bereaved person feels exhausted because of poor eating habits, a lack of exercise, or inadequate sleep.³ If that describes you, then practice some self-love during the holiday by paying attention to your physical needs. If you don't feel energetic enough to prepare a meal, then order out or go to a favorite restaurant. Take your dog for a walk, or invite a friend to stroll around the mall with you. Review guidelines to help you get a better night's rest.

Honor Your Beloved

Focusing your attention on a meaningful way to honor and memorialize your loved one can help channel your thoughts and feelings in a positive fashion during the holiday. Ask yourself how your loved one would like to be remembered and then make it happen. It can be a physical memorial such as planting a tree in your yard or donating one to a school or church, adding a small "In Memory of..." plaque. But there are ways to honor your loved one that doesn't require spending money. You could give blood or assist with a blood drive, volunteer your time to help others, or visit and read to those at a nursing home. Give it some thought and you will find a way to honor your departed loved one. You might make this your Valentine's Day tradition.

Sometimes the best advice is a break from advice. Enjoy your favorite beverage and these tidbits of this & that.



- Did you know that "February" is one of the most misspelled words in the English language?
- If you were born in February, your birthstone is an amethyst, and your flower is a primrose.
- The name of February comes from the Latin word "**februum**," which means purification.



- February 7 is **Send a Card to a Friend Day**.
- February 16 is **Do a Grouch a Favor Day**. We all know a grouch in our lives. Let's see if we can brighten up his or her day by doing them a favor. It can't hurt!
- 17th February is **Random Act of Kindness Day**. What acts of kindness have been bestowed upon you that you've never forgotten?



What Grief Has Taught Me...

I've found during my 3 months of grieving for my husband that I'm alone once again and I don't want to be alone. Having to accept that is the **hardest lesson I've learned so far.**

I have learned that **grief and joy can co-exist.**

whatsyourgrief.com



FAST FOOD

It can be difficult to think about cooking, or even eating sometimes, when we are grieving. Good nutrition is especially important now, and these quick and easy ideas may help.

VEGETABLE JUICE

Low calorie, high nutrition, and easy way to get a serving of vegetables. You can choose between the low sodium, regular, or spicy versions. There are also varieties mixed with fruits, and also with caffeine. Something to keep in mind so you don't drink it before bed!

