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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



This time of year offers us a chance to begin again. Looking ahead, setting goals and moving on, are certainly not indications that you've forgotten the person you're grieving. They are merely steps in a new direction. Perhaps this was your first holiday season since your loved-one passed, or maybe you've become a veteran at simply 'getting through' the holidays. The good news is that with each passing day the chance for a new start repeats itself.

What if you don't care to make a new start just yet? Never feel as though you have to move according to someone else's time frame. We all grieve at different rates, for different reasons and in different ways. I cannot stress enough the importance of letting someone work through their own grief in their own way. Maybe your friend lost a spouse and remarried quickly, while you have been alone for years and cannot seem to get

over losing yours. We should never compare our grief or loss to someone else's.

Grief seems to come in waves and is experienced to varying degrees. It can range from a fond memory that now brings pangs of sadness in the absence of the deceased, to a paralyzing sense of loss that knocks us over. The latter can make us feel as though we might not ever fully recover.

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"Resolution? I just got here!"

In a sense, the grief we experience after we lose someone is a healthy sign that they had an impact on our life. Since we are all unique, no one can ever replace someone who has died. What life can offer however is a chance to begin again. This is going to look and feel different to everyone. For years after the passing of my parents I found it extremely difficult to enjoy the holidays. My parents had a way of making

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**JANUARY
2023**



*Every sunset is an opportunity to reset.
Every sunrise begins with new eyes. — Richie Norton*



...continued from front

everything special and wonderful, from our meals together to little traditions we'd had while I was growing up. After years of bracing myself for the holidays, I found that I was finally ready to celebrate again. Much to my surprise the idea that I would enjoy myself was no longer too painful to think about. Keeping my parent's traditions is now a way of honoring their memory and I find that it fills me with joy- the same joy that eluded me while I was grieving. As I mourned both of my parents it never occurred to me that I would one day enjoy the holidays again. I honestly didn't give it much thought. Looking back now, I realize I was in some kind of survival mode and just muddling through the best I could.

What we experience in the wake of someone close to us passing on isn't always obvious to everyone else. Only you can know when the time is right to

start something new. Be kind to yourself in this season of grieving and do not let anyone make you feel as though this time of year should dictate your attitude. When my parents died (which happened fairly close together) many well meaning friends suggested that I join a grief support group. I had a sense that it wasn't the right thing for me, and I chose to grieve mostly in private. It's important that each of us makes those kinds of decisions for ourselves. Don't be afraid to say "No, thank you," if it seems right for you to do so.

Maybe this is the time for you to begin a new life, and maybe it isn't. Only you can make that determination. If you're just not ready to think about starting fresh yet, don't worry. There's another new year waiting just around the corner.

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

• January's flower is the carnation and the snowdrop.



• January's birthstone is the garnet. Garnet means "dark red." It is also thought to keep the wearer safe during travel.

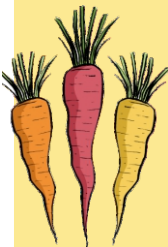


• January was named for the Roman god Janus. He has two faces, one looking back, one looking forward.

• January 14 is National Dress up Your Pet Day.



• The full moon in January is called the Wolf Moon.



• This month is the best time to start planning your garden.

• According to folklore, fog in January brings a wet spring.

• January is:
National Thank You Month
National Soup Month
National Book Month

• The January Tournament of Roses Parade has run since 1890.

✧ Footnotes How To Survive A Panic Attack

One can experience a panic attack when they least expect it, especially when stressed from grief. Here are a few easy steps one can follow when a panic attack strikes.

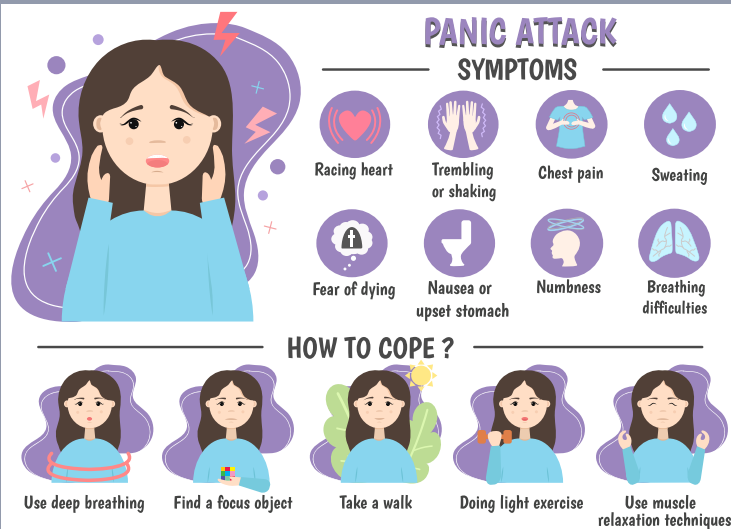
Take a break: A panic attack can be very uncomfortable and can affect a person's thinking. The best thing to do is to take a break. Don't do anything when you're not thinking clearly.

Take deep breaths: Take some deep breaths will help get rid of some of the excessive fear and anxiety. There are many kinds of breathing exercises a person can learn to follow to help you relax right away.

Distract yourself: Get some fresh air, listen to some music, take a brisk walk, read the newspaper, or do something relaxing that may give a fresh perspective on things.

Get the facts of your situation: You may feel helpless when experiencing a panic attack for the first time. The fact is that you will be ok and that it takes a few minutes for the anxiety to go away. Talking to a counselor may help you get the facts of what a panic attack is and what you can do when a one occurs.

Don't dwell on your thoughts: The more one tries to reason out their thoughts, the longer a panic attack can last. Read some positive statements from your favorite self-help book or other resources to help overcome your negative thoughts during a panic attack. Whenever you come across an affirmation that makes you feel good, write it down in a small notebook that you can carry around with you in your pocket. Whenever you feel depressed, open up your small notebook and read those statements.



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