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Chapters

Turning the Pages through Grief



A Resolution TO BE NORMAL

By
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Madsen

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Chapters Newsletter

We've turned the calendar to another year, and with it comes the obligatory demands that we make every day matter, count blessings, savor life's moments, and stop and smell the roses. And don't forget to say "I love you" at least every hour to spouses, parents and children because you just never know, right? The speeding bus may be right around the corner, or that piano being lowered from a high-rise just might bust its cable whilst you're out walking the dog.

Get real.

Of course, untimely death is no laughing matter, but it isn't feasible to live up to advice books or Hallmark movies 24-7. And waiting for the other shoe to drop—or that grand piano—isn't exactly a healthy way to live. But being your normal self is, and in the long run, what we crave day to day. Honestly, if my husband started declaring his love every time I headed to the office "just in case," it

would be a bit disconcerting. Not to mention out of character.

When tragedies happen to others, such as school shootings, accidents, or a sudden death, it's human nature to pour extra love and attention onto your own family and friends, and certainly prudent to count one's blessings. But eventually it's natural to go back to being annoyed at dirty dishes left in the sink, underwear that missed the hamper, or the racket your kids are making. You know—normal.

It's like when you get a speeding ticket. Afterwards you're hyper aware of following the speed limit for a month or so before returning to old habits.

My point here is that life changes, as life will do, and when it does there can be much comfort to be had with the same old, same old.

For example, a dear friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer. After the initial shock and discussion

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"Time stands still best in moments that look suspiciously like ordinary life."

—Brian Andreas



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with him about prognosis, treatments, etc., we went back to our usual funny conversations and silly texting rituals. While I am indeed concerned for his health, and we don't avoid the "C" word, I've never change my demeanor with him by being overly solicitous, nor behaving any other way than I always have. He told me that he appreciates that more than anything—that we carry on like normal.

I recall one year I had the flu, and felt lousy for what seemed like a month or more. At the time, all I could think about was what I was going to do when I was back to good health. No vacations to the Bahamas, or other lofty plans. **What I dreamed of doing was just going to the grocery store, shopping for food, and coming home to cook it.** Then hanging out and watching my favorite TV show without feeling like I had to throw up, blow my nose, or cough like a cat with a hairball. *Normal*.

I think when one is grieving, the upending of normal is what we are most discombobulated with, and what is most missed.

So here's to 2026... new year, same you. It may be just what you and your loved ones need. Now pick up your underwear.

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5 EASY TO KEEP RESOLUTIONS WHEN GRIEVING

Start a gratitude journal.
Research has shown that recognizing the things in your life that you can be grateful for is good for your mental and physical wellness.

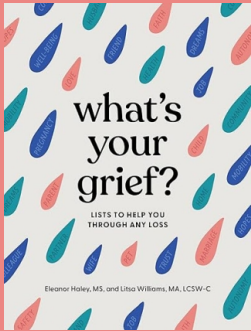
Make time for family.
If you have healthy family relationships, do everything you can to maintain them. Family members can help you get through tough times and celebrate the great times.

Read more books.
There's nothing quite like getting cozy on the sofa with a new book when it's cold outside or when you're not feeling up for conversation and need some escapism.

Join a club.
Joining a club through websites such as Meetup can help you find a group of people with similar interests, or are going through the same life challenges.

Become a plant owner.
Just the presence of indoor plants can lower human stress levels, research shows, and one study found that actively caring for plants calmed the autonomic nervous system and lowered blood pressure.

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WHAT'S YOUR GRIEF? LISTS TO HELP YOU THROUGH ANY LOSS

A friendly and accessible book of **75 lists** that will help anyone experiencing a change or loss from the creators of the popular *What's Your Grief* website and community.

Losses, big and small, turn your world upside down. *What's Your Grief?* will help you through all of them.

Many life changes need to be grieved, from the loss of a loved one to the loss of a job, from a breakup to a relocation, and all the rest of life's ebbs and flows. In *What's Your Grief?*, mental health professionals Eleanor Haley and Litsa Williams help you examine, investigate, and move through the complex but universal experience of grief.

Through 75 engaging, informative, and accessible lists, such as to-do (and not-to-do) lists, bucket lists, interactive lists, and more, you'll discover:

- 5 Little-Known Truths About Grief
- 4 Reasons Guilt Is Even More Complicated Than You Think
- 9 Tips for Communicating What You Do (and Don't) Need
- 7 Common Defense Mechanisms
- And much more

