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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



Reconnecting with Thanksgiving

By Eleanor
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Courtesy of
whatsyourgrief.com

There are a lot of things that feel not quite right about celebrating Thanksgiving after a loss. For starters, you're grieving, and grieving feels inconsistent with many of the positive experiences and emotions that you used to treasure about the day -- perhaps you can't seem to care about watching football, don't know how to spend time around family without the person who's died, or feel like you're the only sad person in a room full of smiling faces.

Not to mention, for many people, giving thanks and feeling gratitude for their current situation feels unfathomable. A secondary loss that people rarely consider is how grief can temporarily cut a person off from specific emotional experiences, like certain types of love, hope, optimism, and gratitude. Experiences like these may have previously connected you to a sense of purpose, comfort, humanity, or joy. However, since experiencing loss, these

emotions may seem more challenging to grasp. And now, the emotional scales may seem tipped entirely on the negative end of the spectrum.

So, I wouldn't blame you if you were one step away from writing Thanksgiving off entirely. Or maybe you're saying to yourself, I'll go and eat the green bean casserole, but there's no way I'm feeling thankful. Both of these approaches are fine —as we always like to remind people—there will be more Thanksgivings.

On the other hand, if feeling disconnected from the day's purpose bothers you, remember that gratitude isn't only for people whose cup flows over with blessings — just like joy isn't only for people who identify as "happy," and purpose isn't only for people who have things all figured out. I'm reminded of the following quote by Sam Lefkowitz:

"When asked if my cup is half full or half empty, my only response is that I am thankful I have a cup."

Unlike many sentiments about



"I don't know, have a sandwich, make some soup or something. It's just not that hard."

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"Gratitude is when memory is stored in the heart and not in the mind.."

—Lionel Hampton

continued...

...it is the common, everyday blessings of our common everyday lives for which we should be particularly grateful.

Thanksgiving and gratitude, the above quote sums up the very best many of us can do when we're grieving: find gratitude for the little things.

"As the years pass, I am coming more and more to understand that it is the

common, everyday blessings of our common everyday lives for which we should be particularly grateful. They are the things that fill our lives with comfort and our hearts with gladness — just the pure air to breathe and the strength to breath it; just warmth and shelter and home folks; just plain food that gives us strength; the bright sunshine on a cold day; and a cool breeze when the day is warm."
~ Laura Ingalls Wilder

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.



NUKE IT!

Believe it or not there are healthy microwaveable meals. According one website, their top microwavable meals include Trader Joe's Cuban Style Citrus Garlic Bowl, Amy's Beans & Rice Burrito, and Calipower's Margherita Pizza. Each of these choices are well under 400 calories, supply protein and are low in sugar. Plus they taste great.

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



- The Anglo-Saxons had quite a fitting name for November. It's usually at this time of the year in the northern hemisphere that cold winds start to chill you to the bone, and as such, they called it "Wind Monath," or wind month.



- Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November and has been celebrated since 1621. The first Thanksgiving meal included venison, seafood, and all of the vegetables that they had planted and harvested that year—onions, carrots, beans, spinach, lettuce, and other greens.
- The Full moon in November is traditionally called the Beaver Moon in the US. The tradition goes back to North America's early colonial years, as it was during this time of year that hunters would set their beaver traps for the last time before the lakes and water sources they lived in froze over.



- November has just one birth stone, the radiant topaz, symbolic of many things, but most of all, it is a symbol of strength and honor. The ancient Greeks also believed that the stone had the ability to turn oneself invisible.



- November's birth flower is the chrysanthemum, which mostly symbolizes cheerfulness. Different colored chrysanthemums have different meanings, though – a white flower symbolizes pure love and truth, a red flower says "I love you" like nothing else does, while a yellow flower is a symbol of unrequited love.

What Grief Has Taught Me...

I have to forgive myself for not being able to save my baby. I did my best.

That being lonely has nothing to do with being alone. I still have lots of family and friends, but I am still so lonely for my husband who died.

I've learned that little moments count and forgiveness and love should always be on your lips.

whatsyourgrief.com