

64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

By Litsa Williams via [HTTPS://WHATSYOURGRIEF.COM/64-TIPS-GRIEF-AT-THE-HOLIDAYS/](https://whatsyourgrief.com/64-tips-grief-at-the-holidays/)



1. Acknowledge that the holidays will be different and they will be tough.
2. Decide which traditions you want to keep.
3. Decide which traditions you want to change.
4. Create a new tradition in memory of your loved one.
5. Decide where you want to spend the holidays – you may want to switch up the location, or it may be of comfort to keep it the same. Either way, make a conscious decision about location.
6. Plan ahead and communicate with the people you will spend the holiday with in advance, to make sure everyone is in agreement about traditions and plans.
7. Remember that not everyone will be grieving the same way you are grieving.
8. Remember that the way others will want to spend the holiday may not match how you want to spend the holiday.
9. Put out a ‘memory stocking’, ‘memory box’, or another special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read them together.
10. Light a candle in your home in memory of the person you’ve lost.
11. Include one of your loved one’s favorite dishes in your holiday meal.
12. Be honest. Tell people what you DO want to do for the holidays and what you DON’T want to do.
13. Make a donation to a charity that was important to your loved one in their name.
14. Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity.
15. If you are feeling really ambitious, adopt a family in memory of your loved one. This can often be done through a church, Salvation Army, or Goodwill.
16. See a counselor. Maybe you’ve been putting it off. The holidays are especially tough, so this may be the time to talk to someone.
17. Pick a few special items that belonged to your loved one and gift them to friends or family who will appreciate them.
18. Make a memorial ornament, wreath, or other decoration in honor of your loved one.
19. If you have been having a hard time parting with your loved one’s clothing, use the holidays as an opportunity to donate some items to a homeless shelter or other charity.
20. Send a holiday card to friends of your loved one who you may regret having lost touch with.
21. Visit your loved one’s gravesite and leave a grave blanket, wreath, poinsettia, or another meaningful holiday item.
22. Play your loved one’s favorite holiday music.
23. If your loved one hated holiday music, that’s okay! Play whatever music they loved.
24. Journal when you are having an especially bad day.
25. Skip holiday events if you are in holiday overload.
26. Don’t feel guilty about skipping events if you’re experiencing holiday overload!
27. Don’t get trapped. When you go to holiday events, drive yourself so you can leave if it gets to be too much.
28. Pull out old photo albums and spend some time on the holiday looking at photos.
29. Talk to kids about the holidays – it can be confusing for kids that the holidays can be both happy and sad after a death. Let them know it is okay to enjoy the holiday, and it is okay to be sad.
30. Make a dish that your loved one used to make. Don’t get discouraged if you try to make their dish and you fail. We’ve all been there (or, at least I’ve been there!).
31. Leave an empty seat at the holiday table in memory of your loved one.
32. If leaving an empty seat is too depressing, invite someone who doesn’t have any family to spend the holiday with.
33. Don’t send holiday cards this year if it is too sad or overwhelming.
34. Don’t feel guilty about not sending holiday cards!
35. Create a ‘dear photograph’, with a photo of a holiday past.

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You Are Not Alone...

Don't be afraid to ask for help from those close to you when you need it. So much hurt and pain go unheeded during grief because we don't want to bother anyone else with our problems. Wouldn't you want someone close to you to ask for help if they needed it? Some relatives and friends will not be able to handle your grief. Find someone with whom to talk. Seek out an understanding friend, survivor, or support group member.

When you need to talk to someone who has experienced a loss of...

Spouse/Partner

Anne W. 619-992-9023
Bonnie B. 619-818-3363
Allison L. 760-670-7158

Son

Christa S. 858-755-3400
Cheryl W. 619-277-0913

Daughter

Cheryl V. 760-942-7869
Anne W. 619-992-9023

Parent

Paul G.* (Mother) 760-815-1482
Kate W. (Father) 916-601-4585
Nick G. (Father) 317-775-1274

Family Member/Friend

Pam E. (Brother) 760-415-5604
Cindy P. (Sister) 619-850-6225
Jeanie F.* (Friend) 619- 417-2788

Helpful Websites

American Assoc. of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org

Compassionate Friends
www.compassionatefriends.org

Fresno Survivors of Suicide Loss
www.fresnosos.org

Friends for Survival, Inc.
www.friendsforsurvival.org

GROWW Friends Helping Friends
www.groww.org/Branches/sos.htm

Suicide: Finding Hope
www.suicidefindinghope.com

Suicide Prevention Resource Ctr.
www.sprc.org

Suicide is Preventable
www.suicideispreventable.org

Trevor Project
www.thetrevorproject.org

UMTR2ME You Matter To Me
www.UMTR2ME.org

Grief Recovery Resolutions for a New Year

By: Victor M. Parachin
Source Hope for Bereaved
HOPELine JANUARY 2020 Issue

Here are some grief recovery resolutions and intentions to help the healing process as a New Year begins: Each day, I will... remember to live in the present. The past is gone; the future is uncertain. All I have is today and I will make the most of it.



- Open my heart asking the Universe (or a Higher Power) to help me heal.
- Remind myself that every day is a healing day.
- Do the best I can for my own good.
- Do the best I can for the good of others.
- Count my blessings, remembering that my cup is always half full and never half empty.
- Avoid setting unreasonable, perfectionist goals for myself.
- Nurture my spirit through prayer, meditation, worship and inspirational readings.
- Take care of my physical self by eating nutritious, balanced meals and by engaging in physical exercise.
- Believe that "help" is not a four-letter word; that asking for assistance with various issues is both mature and wise.
- Choose to respond positively and creatively to problems which come my way.
- Seek out all resources to find relief for my sorrow.
- Not indulge in guilt and regrets because they don't change anything.
- Maintain hope believing that the light always dispels the deepest darkness.
- Trust that the pain will pass and peace will come.
- Get the support I need.
- Forgive others for being human and fallible.
- Find role models to inspire me on my journey through bereavement.
- Be kind, compassionate and generous toward others.
- Practice patience with myself because healing and recovery take time.
- Grow from this experience.
- Allow myself to feel good again.

"The heart is the only broken instrument that works." T.E. Kalem

My Wish List

By Unknown Author

I wish you would not be afraid to speak my loved ones name. They lived and they were important and I need to hear their name.

If I cry or get emotional, if I talk about my loved one, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me. The fact that they died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and I thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.

I wish you wouldn't let my loved one die again by removing from your home their pictures, artwork and other remembrances.

I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good day that my grief is over, or that if I have a bad day that I need counseling.

Being a bereaved person is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't stay away from me.

I wish you knew that all of the "crazy grief" reactions that I am having are very normal.

Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected after a death. I wish that you wouldn't expect the death to be over in six months. The first two years are going to be very traumatic for me.

I wish you understood the physical reactions to grief, I may gain or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all.

Our loved one's birthday, the anniversary of their death, and the holidays are terrible times for us. I wish you could tell us that you are thinking of them on these days.

And if we get quiet and withdrawn just know that we are thinking about them and don't try to coerce us to be cheerful. I wish you wouldn't offer to take me out for a drink or to a party. This is just a temporary crutch and the only way to get through this grief is to experience it. I have hurt before and I can heal.

I wish you understood that grief can change people. I am not the same person that I was before my loved one died. And I will never be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to "get back to my old self", you will be frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know the new me - maybe you will still like me.



I Felt An Angel

Author Unknown

I felt an angel near today, though one I could not see
 I felt an angel oh so close, sent to comfort me
 I felt an angel's kiss, soft upon my cheek
 And oh, without a single word of caring did it speak
 I felt an angel's loving touch, soft upon my heart
 And with that touch, I felt the pain and hurt within depart
 I felt an angel's tepid tears, fall softly next to mine
 And knew that as those tears did dry a new day would be mine
 I felt an angel's silken wings enfold me with pure love
 And felt a strength within me grow, a strength sent from above
 I felt an angel oh so close, though one I could not see
 I felt an angel near today, sent to comfort me.



"When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves." William Arthur Ward

S O S L S U P P O R T G R O U P M E E T I N G S - S A N D I E G O

*****Due to the COVID 19 Restrictions*****
 SOSL support groups are meeting online via ZOOM.
 For more information, email Michele@SOSLsd.org
 or call the Warmline (619) 482-0297

December 2020

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 ABHC, TCMC	3	4	5
6	7 SMH	8 CEBC	9	10	11 GSH	12
13	14 ECC,RCG	15 4S	16 TCMC	17 OM,SBG	18	19
20	21 SMH	22 CEBC	23	24	25	26
27	28 ECC,RCG	29	30	31		

January 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 SMH	5	6 ABHC, TCMC	7	8 GSH	9
10	11 ECC,RCG	12 CEBC	13	14	15	16
17	18 SMH	19 4S	20 TCMC	21 OM,SBG	22	23
24/31	25 ECC,RCG	26 CEBC	27	28	29	30

February 2021

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 SMH	2	3 ABHC TCMC	4	5	6
7	8 ECC,RCG	9 CEBC	10	11	12 GSH	13
14	15 SMH	16 4S	17 TCMC	18 OM,SBG	19	20
21	22 ECC,RCG	23 CEBC	24	25	26	27
28	28 SMH	29				

4S Ranch—West Coast Martial Arts Academy / 4S

3rd TUESDAY 7:15-8:45 pm / December 15, January 19, February 16

10890 Thornmint Rd., San Diego 92127

Aurora Behavioral Health Center / ABHC

1st WEDNESDAY 7-8:30 pm / December 2, January 6, February 3

11878 Avenue of Industry, San Diego 92128 – North County Inland (Cafeteria)
 From I-15 S: Exit CAMINO DEL NORTE and TURN LEFT; turn Right at CARMEL MT. RD., turn RIGHT at INNOVATION DRIVE, turn RIGHT at AVENUE OF INDUSTRY
 From I-15 N: Exit CARMEL MT. RD. and turn RIGHT, turn LEFT at RANCHO CARMEL DR., turn LEFT at INNOVATION DR. turn RIGHT at AVE. OF INDUSTRY

Encinitas Community Center / ECC

2nd & 4th MONDAY S 7-8:30 pm / Dec.14 & 28, Jan. 11 & 25, Feb 8 & 22

1140 Oakcrest Park Dr., Encinitas 92024 – North County Coastal Room 116
 From I-5: Take the ENCINITAS BLVD. exit (EAST), turn RIGHT onto BALOUR DR., turn LEFT onto OAKCREST PARK DR.

Grossmont-Sharp Hospital / GSH

2nd FRIDAY 7-8:30 pm / December 11, January 8, February 12

5555 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942 – East County (Cardiovascular Center, Room 1) Look for SOSL sign. Validated parking in structure.
 From I-8 E: Take the FLETCHER PKWY exit. Turn RIGHT onto GROSSMONT CTR DR.
 From I-8 W: Take the GROSSMONT CTR DR. Exit toward LA MESA BLVD. Turn RIGHT onto GROSSMONT CTR DR.

Otay Mesa—Bilingual Group / OM

3rd THURSDAY 7-8:30 pm / December 17, January 21, February 18

Border View Family YMCA—Conference Room
 3601 Arey Dr., San Diego 92154

Oceanside Group Tri City Medical Center / TCMC

1st and 3rd WEDNESDAYS 7-8:30 pm / Dec. 2 & 16, Jan. 6 & 20, Feb. 3 & 17

Tri City Medical Center—4002 Vista Way, Oceanside 92056
 Enter through the main lobby. Take elevators down to Lower Level LL—Classroom 6

Scripps Mercy Hospital / SMH

1st & 3rd MONDAYS 7-8:30 pm / Dec. 7 & 21, Jan. 4 & 18, Feb. 1 & 15 & 28

4077 5th Ave., San Diego 92103 – Hillcrest
 Enter thru main lobby and take elevator to Lower Level. Follow SOSL signs to Classrooms 5A & 5B. Validated parking in structure.
 From CA-163 S: Take the WASHINGTON ST exit (WEST). Turn RIGHT onto 5th AVE.

South Bay Group / SBG

3rd THURSDAY 7-8:30 pm / December 17, January 21, February 18

First United Methodist Church - 1200 East H St., Chula Vista 91910
 Discovery Room - located by the Sanctuary. Drive to the back of the property to park - room to the right.

Clairemont Emmanuel Baptist Church / CEBC

2nd and 4th TUESDAY S 7-8:30 pm / Dec. 8 & 22, Jan. 12 & 26, Feb. 9 & 23

2610 Galveston St., San Diego 92110 – Mission Bay Area
 From I-5: Take the CLAIREMONT DR exit, (EAST) Turn RIGHT onto GALVESTON ST. Drive down to the lower parking lot. As you leave the parking lot, walk straight ahead and the room will be in the first building on your left.

Riverside County Group / RCG

2nd and 4th MONDAYS 7-8:30 pm / Dec.14 & 28, Jan. 11 & 25, Feb 8 & 22

29029 Murrieta Rd., Sun City 92586 – Valley Christian Fellowship
 Must call before attending: Kathy 951-679-2008

“He that conceals grief can find no remedy for it.” Turkish proverb

Continued: 64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

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36. Skip or minimize gifts. After a death, material things can seem less meaningful and shopping can seem especially stressful. Talk as a family and decide whether you truly want to exchange gifts this year.
37. Put out a photo table with photos of your loved one at holiday celebrations in the past.
38. Go to a grief group. When everyone looks so gosh-darn filled with holiday cheer, sometimes it is helpful to talk with others who are struggling.
39. Skip (or minimize) the decorations if they are too much this year. Don't worry, you'll see plenty of decorations outside your house.
40. Don't feel guilty if you skip or minimize the decorations!
41. Remember that crying is okay. The holidays are everywhere and who knows what may trigger a cry-fest. We've all been there and it is okay to cry (even if you are in the sock aisle at Target).
42. Volunteer in your loved one's memory.
43. Let your perfectionism go. If you always have the perfect tree, perfectly wrapped gifts and perfect table, accept that this year may not be perfect and that is A-OK. Know this is easier said than done for you type-As, but give it a try.
44. Ignore people who want to tell you what you "should" do for the holiday. Listen to yourself, trust yourself, communicate with your family, and do what works for you.
45. Seek gratitude. I am the queen of holiday funks, so I know this is tough. But try to find one daily gratitude throughout the holiday season. Write it down, photograph it, share it on Facebook. Whatever. Just look for the little things.
46. Watch the food. Food can make us feel better in the short term (damn you, dopamine!) until we feel like crap later that we ate that whole tin of holiday cookies. Don't deprive yourself, but be careful that you don't let food become your holiday comfort.
47. Watch the booze. Alcohol can become a fast friend when we are grieving. If that holiday party is getting to be too much, head home instead of to the open bar.
48. If you are stressed about making the holiday dinner, ask someone else to cook or buy dinner this year.
49. If you are stressed about the crowds at the mall, cut back on gifts or do your shopping online.
50. Splurge on a gift for you. Grief can make us feel a little entitled and self-involved, and that is okay sometimes (within reason, of course). Splurge on a holiday gift for yourself this year, and make it a good one!
51. Say yes to help. There will be people who want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers.
52. Ask for help. If people aren't offering, ask. This can be super-hard if it isn't your style, but it is important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping, or decorating can be a big relief.
53. Have a moment of silence during your holiday prayer or toast in memory of your loved one.
54. Donate a holiday meal to a family in need through a local church, salvation army, or department of social services.
55. Identify the people who will be able to help and support you during the holidays and identify who may cause you more stress. Try to spend more time with the former group and less with the latter.
56. Make some quiet time for yourself. The holidays can be hectic, make quiet time for yourself to journal, meditate, listen to music, etc.
57. Practice self-care. I know, how cliché. But it is true – whatever it is that helps you recharge, do it.
58. Support kids by doing a memorial grief activity together.
59. Donate altar flowers or other holiday decorations at your place of worship in memory of your loved one.
60. Prioritize and don't overcommit. When the holidays are filled with so many parties, dinners, and events, save your energy for those that are most important. Look at everything you have to do and rank them in order of importance. Plan for the most important and skip the rest.
61. Make a list and check it twice. Grief makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. When you have a lot going on at the holidays, make a list even if you aren't usually a list-maker, and write things on the calendar.
62. Skip it. Really. If you just can't face the holiday it is okay to take a break this year. Before you get to this extreme, consider if you could just simplify your holiday. If you do skip, still make a plan. Decide if you will still see friends or family, or watch a new movie, or make another plan.
63. Enjoy yourself! The holidays will be tough, but there will also be love and joy.
64. Remember, it is okay to be happy – this doesn't diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn't there this holiday. Don't feel guilty for the joy you do find this holiday season.



"We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey." Kenji Miyazawa

Survivors of Suicide Bill of Rights

I have the right to be free of guilt.

I have the right to express my feelings and emotions, even if they do not seem acceptable, as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

I have the right to positive feelings about the one I lost through suicide, regardless of the events prior to or at the time of the untimely death

I have the right to have my questions answered honestly by authorities and family members.

I have the right not be deceived because others feel they can spare me further grief.

I have the right to maintain a sense of hopefulness.

I have the right to maintain my individuality and not be judged because of a suicide death.

I have the right to seek counseling and a support group to enable me to honestly explore my feeling and further explore the acceptance process.

I have the right to reach acceptance.

I have the right to a new beginning.

GRATITUDE SPEAKS

BY JOYCE BRUGGEMAN, *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

When we reside in a place of Gratitude, the world changes.

This is a place for survivors to share what they are grateful for.

What a year 2020 has been, and we still have one month left! When COVID became very real at the beginning of March, I was very worried about SOSL. How would this impact us? Would we be able to continue to provide our life saving services? What would our donations look like?

I want to thank our SOSL community for how you/we have rallied together during this difficult time. By the middle of March, we were able to transition to online support groups and have been able to provide support to more people than ever before. A big thanks to all of our staff and support group facilitators in making that happen. In addition, we have provided suicide prevention trainings and a suicide prevention continuing education course to mental health professionals. But it is your generosity that has exceeded my expectations! SOSL is on track to meet our revenue projections for 2020 despite the financial uncertainty many are experiencing.

- In September, we held our first ever virtual Walk in Remembrance with Hope. We know that not being able to meet in person was disappointing to many, but you continued to support our Walk. We raised \$63,775 which exceeded our goal by \$3,775.
- A local SOSL community supporter, Craig Juan, held his 2nd annual Wings of Hope Zumbathon, and raised more than \$650 for SOSL. It is because of community supporters like Craig that more and more San Diegans know about SOSL as well as providing much needed financial support.
- On October 17th, we held our 5th Annual Ride for Life where we raised more than \$4,000. Once again, the community came out and supported our cause and our organization.

I am grateful that each of you continue to support SOSL in your own special way. It is all of us working together, giving our gifts of time, talent or money, that make this organization what it is – a Community of Survivors of Suicide Loss – making a difference in the lives of thousands of people every year. I am grateful for the opportunity of working alongside each of you – and knowing that we are saving lives every day with the work we do!



“Joys are our wings, sorrows our spurs.” Jean Paul Richter



CONTRIBUTORS:



Ray and Sarah Arnold (Dylan Arnold)
"We think of you every day and love you
always and forever"

Leslie Joseph
"In Memory of my nephew
Samuel Leonard Joseph"

Michael and Margaret Strahm
"In Memory of Aaron"

Larry and Susan Bartlett
"In Loving Memory of Michael 7-11-19 –
How we wish you were here."

Craig Juan
"In Honor of my best friend Vicki Nguyen"

Belinda A. Vong

LuAnn Washington

Pierre Bogacz
"In Honor and Remembrance of Jennifer"

Kim King (Austin Phillip Thorp)
"We sure love and miss you Austin"
– Mom and family

Cheryl Williams

Cars2Charities

Karen Brainard
"In Memory of Emily"

Adam Kranz
"In Honor of Lori Kranz"

Senor Grubby's

Rebecca Carcova
"In Honor of Sara Overstreet"

Mike and Shannon Kurtz
"Remembering Jeremy"

Trauma Interventions Programs of SD
"TIP appreciates the support given by
SOSLSD not only to our volunteers in
training which is invaluable, but more
importantly to our clients who have
suffered the loss of a loved one by
suicide. We are grateful for your
commitment to our communities to
provide support, resources, a safe space
and compassion to suicide survivors on
their healing journey."

Bella Lindsay
"In Memory of Joseph Lindsay"

Bonnie Daniels

Leah Diebel

Michele Stephens

Kyoko Gayda
"Forever love Riki"

Thank you for those of you who donate through the United Way and the CFC!

SOSL is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax deductible.

Follow SOSL on Social Media!

Keep in touch with SOSL on social media! We are on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
Use them to connect with the SOSL community and keep up to date with news and events!

www.facebook.com/soslsd



www.instagram.com/sosl_sd



www.linkedin.com/company/soslsd



About SOSL

Survivors of Suicide Loss, Inc., is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, self-help support group system for those who have lost a relative or friend to suicide. The Hope & Comfort Newsletter staff is dedicated to the primary goal of publishing articles and information, which is assisting in the grieving and healing process of our readers. We welcome your written contributions for inclusion in the newsletter; however, we reserve the right to publish only those articles that are considered to be of benefit to the majority of our readers.

Please send all correspondence to:

Survivors of Suicide Loss
PO Box 3297
La Mesa, CA 91944-3297

Helpline: (619) 482-0297 Website: www.SOSLsd.org Email: info@SOSLsd.org

"Let your tears come. Let them water your soul." Eileen Mayhew