



HOSPICE MESSAGES OF HOPE

When Your Spouse Dies

You may feel like a part of you died. How can you face tomorrow when you are only half here? Your lover and best friend, the person who knows and accepts you so well has died, but there are ways to heal.

RECOGNIZING TRIGGERS

Our lives, decisions and future are so tied to our spouse. When they die, a part of us truly goes with them. We do not even realize how intertwined our lives are until they are gone. Emotionally, we have been cut in two. Everywhere we turn, we are reminded of their presence – their soap and deodorant in the bathroom, the empty pillow that still smells like them, the sunken area of the sofa where they always sat, the television show you watched together and mail that comes with their name on the envelope. Reminders like this will bring on waves of sorrow and loss.

Even your children and grandchildren bring the pain to the surface. The son who looks like his father did years ago, the daughter who is the spitting image of her mother or the grandchild who answers a question with a grin just like grandpa. However, these same reminders also bring us hidden joy. They carry on the look, legacy and behavior of the one you miss so much.

It cannot be said that your grief will resolve easily. There will be days when nothing around you offers solace or comfort and days when you are managing well. A song may come on the radio and you will drive through your tears as memories flood your mind. However, these memories are the support as you work through those first days, weeks and months. As time moves on, you will be able to recall a special memory or moment, savor it again and draw comfort. There is no right or wrong way to manage your grief. Yours is unique and you must find the path that is right for you.

FIND SUPPORT

You must not only deal with your grief, but manage many practical issues simultaneously. You must deal with all of the financial issues related to banking, property, credit cards and wills. It is advisable to have a friend or family member assist you in these areas. Friends can also assist you with practical solutions by helping create a “go to” list for things such as finding a reliable handyman or what laundry and dry cleaning services to use, etc. Your friends are excellent resources; ask them for help.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Unless a decision must be made immediately, it is often suggested that you give yourself six months to a year before making any major lifestyle changes, including selling your home. Decisions made during those first few months of grief do not always match what you would make in six months or one year and may create more grief or unhappiness. If you are considering a life change, give it a trial run. Rent an apartment in a new location for three months. Keep your own home and go stay with someone else for 30 days to see if this will work for you. Leave your options open.

Some spouses are not only dealing with their grief but also guilt. You must put your faith in God and know that you did the best you could each and every day and that your spouse knew and continues to know how much you cared and loved them.

OSF Home Care Services is here to support you and wants to meet you wherever you are in your grief journey.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call (800) 673-5288 or visit our website at www.osfhomecare.org.

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