



Keeping a Journal

Integrating loss into our life is challenging and requires time and self-compassion.

Consider keeping a journal during these difficult times. Journaling provides a safe place to reflect on what has happened and helps you begin the healing process.

Research shows that writing not only helps release pent-up feelings but also relieves stress and boosts the body's immune system.

Guidelines That Can Help You Get Started

- Use any type of notebook with blank or lined pages and find a pen or pencil you enjoy using. Some prefer a computer keyboard.
- Write for 5-15 minutes a day or whenever you feel the urge.
- Choose a location that is comfortable and private, a lighted candle and background music may help set the mood.
- Do not be concerned with sentence structure, grammar, or making sense. You are not being judged.
- Feel free to make your journal entries in the form of a letter addressed to your loved one, or yourself.
- You might prefer to make lists on your journal pages—a list of your emotions, memories, plans, ideas, and so on.
- Another option is to choose a feeling you've experienced recently

and describe it fully. You could compare the feeling to a taste, smell, picture, piece of music, or physical sensation (I feel tense like a rope, or I feel calm like the still waters of a lake.) You can also illustrate a feeling with markers.

- Some people find it freeing to burn a letter or journal after writing it.

You may want to write about a specific topic such as:

- A description of your loved one or your relationship.
- Your thoughts and feelings about how or why they died.
- What you wish you had said or done.
- Things that have changed since your loved one died.
- Just how hard your grief has been.
- Your hopes for the future.

"I want to write, but more than that, I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried in my heart."

—Anne Frank



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