



DAYBREAK

In touch during a time of grief

Make Every Day Count

In **Make Every Day Count**, persons who have lost a loved one share their experiences. This month, Shirley W., who recently lost her longtime best friend, George, encourages others who are grieving to stay physically active. She also talks about how her cat, Lady Jane Grey, has been a loving “friend” during a time of great need.

“George was the most important person in my life and I miss him so much. I’m kind of an ‘orphan’ now, with no family left. I do have wonderful neighbors who have become my adopted family. I bake for them once in awhile, and that’s a good distraction. I try to keep busy. One of the best things I have done for myself is to stay physically active. I walk two miles every day at the mall near my home. That keeps me from getting too sad and lonely. I get the exercise I need and there are people to talk to. The other mall walkers have been very nice because they know I have recently suffered a great loss. But the thing that keeps me going most is my cat, Lady Jane Grey, who I adopted two years ago. She’s a loving companion. It might sound odd, but I really think God gave her to me to help me through this sad time. Having this little friend has made things much easier for me. I don’t know what I would do without her.”

Taking Care of Yourself

During the first few months after the death of a loved one, it is very important to remember to take good care of yourself. This can be hard work because your attention right now may be focused on loss...not on your own needs.

Keep a Daily Routine

This is a time when maintaining a daily routine is especially important. Keep in mind that people who are grieving are more vulnerable to illness. Rest, exercise and good nutrition will help keep you healthy and give you more energy.

Get dressed and go out every day...

even if it’s just a walk around the block. The physical and emotional benefits of exercise are well recognized.

Get plenty of rest. Don’t change your nighttime routine. If you are having trouble sleeping, try reading for awhile or listening to a relaxation tape.

Eat regular meals. Even if you have no appetite at this time, try to eat small amounts frequently. If you are alone, invite a friend to dinner or go out to eat now and then.

Be Good to Yourself

Attention to your basic physical needs is a priority. But you should also be thinking of ways to enjoy simple pleasures.



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Indulge yourself. Take naps; read a good book; listen to your favorite music; go to a movie with friends or family.

Keep up your interests. Continue to pursue hobbies or recreational interests that have been enjoyable. For example, if you knit, begin a new sweater or scarf. If you like carpentry, make plans for holiday gifts.

Explore nature. Many people find that the beauties of nature provide peace and solace during the grieving process. Depending on the season, you might take a walk in the park, a nature center, or a conservatory. Taking care of living plants... either in an outdoor garden or indoors...can be an enjoyable and healing activity for people who are grieving.

Take care of your pet. If you have a pet, make sure it gets adequate care and attention. People often find that their pets provide a special brand of affection and comfort during difficult times.

Taking Care of Yourself

Getting over a loss is hard work. In order for growth to be possible, it is essential to allow yourself to feel all the emotions that arise, as painful as they may be. Talking about your feelings is very important. Take the time to seek comfort from friends who will listen. Let them know you need to talk about your loss. People will understand,

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though they may not always know how to respond. If someone tries to change the subject, explain that you need to share your memories and express your sadness.



We Are Here To Help

It's important to talk about your loss with compassionate friends and family. Many people also seek the comfort of support groups during this difficult time. The Daybreak Bereavement Program, provided by the hospice services of Advocate Aurora Health at Home, offers a wide range of opportunities for individual or group support. For more information, or talk to a bereavement counselor, please contact:

- Illinois 800-813-5185
- Wisconsin 800-862-2201