

# 9-Steps to Get Through the Holiday's after the Loss of a Loved One

The holidays are time of joy and cheer, but after the loss of a loved one, especially the first holiday, can be the most difficult. The empty space in your heart and life can leave you anything but happy and cheerful. If you have lost a loved one recently, here are nine tips to help you get through the holidays, while honoring the memories of your loved one.

1. **Meet with family.** Discuss the importance of doing something different to honor your loved one. Exchange ideas. Not everyone will want to join and that is fine. Everyone goes through the grieving process differently. Each person has to do what is best for them. So it is fine if some family and friends do things separate.
2. **Plan something different.** Try not to recreate the past. Celebrate the holidays differently, however that may be. Go to a restaurant; visit old friends or relatives; go someplace you have never been before; if you choose to put up a Christmas tree, make new, or buy, decorations for it; have a special thought or some way of honoring and expressing your loved one together.
3. **Keep it simple.** Do not stress about gifts. Buy less or maybe just for the children. Or make homemade gifts. Keep it simple and different. You can have a fun activity by making decorations with others. For meals keep them simple too. Go out to eat, make different foods, etc.
4. **Take care of yourself.** Find time to relax. Eat nourishing healthy meals. Avoid alcohol since it can intensify depression and keep you from sleeping well.
5. **Plan to keep busy.** Grief can take all your energy away and even though we know we need to get up and do something, we do not have the energy. Have friends help you plan things to keep you busy. If you need to rest is fine but keep busy so you do not start feeling down or depressed.
6. **Pay attention to how you feel.** It is ok to let others know how you feel. If you begin to feel down and depressed talk with anyone. Let them know you need to talk and express how you feel to them. When you let people know you have experienced a loss of a loved one and need to talk, you will be surprised how people will offer to listen and help. So let others know how you feel. Be gentle to yourself and to others as well.
7. **Express your feelings.** Expect to feel some pain from your loss. This is normal. When you feel sad during the holidays, this is normal. Experience tears and express how you feel. Have faith in yourself and know you will get through this and will be fine.
8. **If you need help get help from others.** Grieving is difficult and should not be done alone. Share your feelings with others. If a friend or family member is not able to give you the support you need, call and talk with a lifeline counselor 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-8255 (FOR VETERANS PRESS "1", EN ESPAÑOL OPRIMA EL 2)
9. **Give something of yourself to others.** One of the most helpful things you can do to help you feel better is to help others, especially during the holidays. And do this in honor of the loved one you lost.



Remember to express your feelings, make plans to keep busy, do something different with others to honor your loved one, and if you need help call the lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**. Doing something different with others this holiday season can help you create new traditions to honor your loved one and get through the holidays in a different but special way.