



Re-creating Magic

For the Holidays After Loss

Re-creating magic in this sacred season is a delicate balance of honoring the past and embracing what is yet to come through the lens of hope.

Hope has the magical quality of helping the heart to heal as it transports us into the realm of possibilities and experiences for the future that will bring us comfort, peace and hopefully a spark of joy. It goes without saying that this holiday season will be different so it is important to accept, or at least honor, one of life's inevitable actions, change. The following are a few suggestions for navigating your way through these uncharted waters.



1. Keep it simple. Don't try to replicate all the holiday traditions that you shared with your deceased loved one. Putting heavy expectations on yourself or other grieving family members may cause the raw emotions of loss to overpower good intentions for the celebration.
2. Find a new tradition without drastically changing the old ones. Consider incorporating a few things that bring a sense of magic like:
 - Create a memory box with pictures of past holidays, cards, and other items that may bring laughter and/or tears. Both laughter and tears help to cleanse sadness.
 - Set up a small altar with flowers, a candle, maybe a favorite ornament and your loved one's picture.
 - Leave an empty chair at the table to honor their eternal presence.
 - Journal your favorite holiday memories.
 - Create an old fashioned chain link paper garland with special messages written on the inner links.
 - Buy a special gift that your loved one would have bought and donate it in their name to their favorite charity.
 - Write a card or letter telling them how you are feeling and that you love them.
3. If you did not celebrate the holidays with family members or friends. Create a plan for yourself. Watch a favorite movie, take a long walk, call distant relatives, read sacred scripture, join others in worship, journal, do a craft/art project, start a gratitude journal for the upcoming new year, volunteer your time to someone in need. Find something that will make the day special as you continue your grieving journey.
4. Attend a bereavement support group. Don't be afraid to ask for help and, most of all, be gentle with yourself as you recreate the magic of hope in this season of light.

In this Newsletter you will find information about our Bereavement Support Groups, and "Surviving the Holidays" a four-week series specifically designed to offer support for the holiday season.

We hope that you will join us and that you have a peaceful Holiday Season.

Dr. Karen



Surviving the Holidays

Mark your calendars for our four week bereavement group series.

Reno office 227 Vine Street



The holiday season is quickly approaching and for many who are struggling to maintain a sense of normalcy after the death of a loved one it can be a time of anxiety and great sadness. The feeling of immense sorrow, or the “Holiday Blues” often begins to surface right around Thanksgiving and can continue throughout much of the winter season.

On a positive note, it is a good time to cozy in and perhaps consider a new self-care routine that will support your healing. A Plus is offering a four week “Surviving the Holidays” series to support your journey as well. Many times sharing your feelings with others who are also grieving lends a layer of comfort.

Week One-Wednesday, November 22nd 1pm

Week Two-Wednesday, November 29th 1pm

Week Three- Wednesday, December 6th 1pm

Week Four-Wednesday, December 13th 1pm

We hope that you will join us for this informative bereavement support series.

Educational material and worksheets will be provide.

Please contact Dr. Karen at karen@aplushospicecare.com or (775) 351-7346 for more information.

Tangled Christmas Lights

Several years ago, I was told a sweet story that I would like to share with you. There was an elderly man who had recently lost his loving wife of 37years. Christmas was approaching and his mood found a deep well of grief, deeper than he could have imagined. His family was very supportive, but they could not do anything to reconcile his sorrow. About five days before the holiday his children decided to make a visit and perhaps do a little decorating to brighten his spirits.

He was resistant at first, after all it wouldn't be the same. His wife always did the decorating, and it just didn't feel right to step on her territory. But when they got there his oldest son went up into the attic and fetched a box marked “Christmas lights.” He wiped away the dust and brought it down to the living room.

When his son opened the box there was a string of lights in a tangled up in mess. As he lifted them up, he said, “maybe we can straighten these out and repurpose them.” His daughter chimed in, “yes, let's each pick a color and say what it means to us.”

So, they went around the circle untangling as they went and told what the bulb color meant to them. “**Orange** means generous, playful, and witty to me,” his daughter shared. “**Red** stands for love,” his son said. His daughter-in-law, said “**Yellow** is for commitment and faith.” “**Purple** is a peaceful color,” his granddaughter shared. “**Green** is calming” said granddaughter #2. And as they came to the end of the string the elderly gentleman held the blue bulb and looked around at his family. “**Blue**... blue is loyalty. Your mother would be proud of you for the generous, loving, committed, peaceful, calm and loyal family that you are.” He scooped up the lights and together they draped them on the fireplace mantle in a haphazard fashion with tears and laughter to mark a new tradition with gratitude and grace. Dr Karen



I Will Light the Candles



Karen Turek, DD, PhD

The holiday season holds treasured memories that only come around once a year when the Earth slows down enough for us to reflect on the gifts of the past as we embrace the warmth of the season with celebration. The "Lighting of Candles" has been a part of many religious and earth-based rituals since recorded time. Lighting an outer light, or candle, represents our recognition of our inner light or the connection with the eternal light of love.

This celebration can be shared with others or enjoyed privately.



Lighting the first candle acknowledges and honors our grief and our relationship with our loved one. _____ (name), I miss you...



The lighting of the second candle represents the precious memories that are cherished. I remember all that _____ (name) shared and contributed to our world.



Lighting the third candle represents courage to face the future, and the courage offered to others who are walking the path of grief.



The fourth candle represents our love. The gift of love that will always be present. With gratitude I keep this love light lit as a symbol of my blessings and the life that I shared with you. And so it is.



What is Christmas?

*Every time a hand reaches out To help another...
that is Christmas*

*Every time someone puts anger aside and strives for understanding...
that is Christmas*

*Every time people forget their differences and realize their love for each other...
that is Christmas*

*May this Christmas bring us closer to the spirit of human understanding,
closer to the blessings of peace. Anonymous*





My First Christmas in Heaven

I see countless Christmas trees around the world below.

With tiny lights like Heaven's stars, reflecting on the snow.

The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away the tears.



For I am spending Christmas in Heaven this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear.

But the sound of music can't compare with the Christmas choir here.

I have no words to tell you, the joy their voices bring,

For it is beyond description to hear the angels sing.



I know how much you miss me. I see the pain inside.

But I am not so far away, it's in your heart I now reside.

So be happy for me dear ones as you know I hold you close.

I send you each a special gift from my heavenly home above.



I send you each a memory of my undying and continual love.

After all, love is a gift more precious than pure gold.

It was always most important in sacred stories told.

Please love and keep each other close, as our Father said to do.



For I cannot count the many blessing or love He has for you.

So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away your tears.

I send to you my love and blessings from my home in Heaven this year. *Author Unknown*



Bereavement Support Groups

A Plus Hospice Care is here to support you through the loss of your loved one. Our Bereavement Program offers a variety of options tailored to give you the opportunity to choose the level and amount of bereavement care that is best for you. We provide individual counseling sessions for family members whose loved ones have been on our service as well as bereavement support groups. There is no charge for our bereavement services.

In Person Bereavement Support Groups: On the **First** and **Third Tuesday** of the month we will provide an in-person open forum support group at our Reno Office located at 227 Vine St., Reno from **1-2 pm**.

October 3th and 17th

November 7th and 21st

December 5th and 19th