



for Every Season

How Past Traditions Can Help You Cope During the Holiday Season

By Mallory Grivner, MSW, LSW, and Deacon Rachel Bailey, MAMS, CH

As Bereavement Specialists, We are Often Asked How Does Someone Cope During the Holidays.

One of the most important things to do is to honor past traditions and create new ones to honor your loved ones.

According to William Worden's *Tasks of Grief*, one of the most important steps in the grieving process is to find enduring and continuing bonds while embarking on a new life after loss. Establishing these bonds during the holidays can be both therapeutic and challenging at times.

Depending on your faith, new traditions can be religion based. For example, if you are hosting a Seder or Thanksgiving dinner, consider leaving an empty place for your loved one. If you wish to create a new tradition, you can have the youngest member of your family move into that space.

Other examples of creating traditions include making your loved one's favorite foods or cookies, listening to their favorite holiday songs or watching movies, hanging a memorial stocking or lighting a candle in their honor.

If you are finding it hard to cope, consider making your loved one's favorite cookies and donating them to a shelter or nursing home or donate a holiday present to someone in need in their honor.

If it's too hard to sit at a table together, opt to spend that time volunteering or doing something new and different. While you might still have your moments of grief and tears, hopefully, honoring old traditions and making new rituals will help you get through it.

Remember, there is no right or wrong with grief – especially during the holidays. If you need further assistance or ideas, please reach out to the Bereavement Specialists at your local Seasons office.

*small things
that matter most*

Waves of Love

From the moment Bill signed onto our hospice services, we knew that our experience with him was going to leave a mark on each member of our staff.

For starters, Bill's diagnosis was rare. At 51 years old, he had developed a rare cancer that was affecting his brain, which left him paralyzed on one side. What Bill also had was a huge support system, a loving wife and three young children.

Bill's wife Tara made it clear: Bill was leaving the hospital but he was not signing onto hospice to die; they were going home to live. Aside from symptom management and family support, one of our top priorities was partnering with Seasons Hospice Foundation to provide legacy projects and grant final wishes for Bill and his family.

The love Bill and Tara had for one another and their children was obvious. Tara told us about the great memories their family had: playing board games, eating dinner as a family, spending time together on trips; all things they could enjoy again with the support of our hospice services.

Our staff immediately went to work. While Tara quickly took real estate classes to take over Bill's business, our volunteer Rita spent countless hours with Bill writing cards for birthdays, anniversaries and other milestones for Tara and each child, for many years to come.

Rita also put together an activity for Tara and the kids to do together at a later date, using Bill's favorite candies and a Bible verse that he held onto

"This is the best quality of life our family has had in a long time!"

Tara, Bill's wife



dearly: Galatians 2:20. Rita put it all in a treasure chest with Bill's blessing, as a surprise to the family.

During one legacy project, Rita worked to create a mold of Tara's and Bill's hands, and the family was in stitches, they were laughing so hard. They were creating the mold in honor of their 7th anniversary, and between dipping their hands in the plaster and holding still for a long time, it was easy to see the love and joy between the two of them. It was at this point Tara said, "Bill looks so good. So much better than he has in the past year. This is the best quality of life our family has had in a long time!" So much laughter and joy was present in the room.



Sadly, Bill's health quickly declined. We moved him to our inpatient center, as he did not want to die at home. As a final legacy project, our staff, knowing that Bill was a long-time volunteer firefighter, called in the local fire department to visit Bill and we gave all of Bill's kids firefighter-themed baskets. It was Bill's final wish to have his family have only happy memories of him, and our staff worked diligently, every day, to make that wish come true.

Bill's memorial service happened just days after Easter and began with the singing of *Amazing Grace*, the last song he sang with Tara and our music therapist, as he laid in the bed at our Dallas inpatient center.

Many of our staff attended to support the family, and when we approached Tara to give our condolences, she enthusiastically threw her arms around us, saying, "Can you believe he had flowers sent to me at his own funeral?"



MEMORY STICK WITH VIDEO OF BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND PICTURES. THIS WAS HIS LAST NIGHT AT HOME WITH HIS FAMILY BEFORE GOING TO IPC.

Seasons Hospice staff helped Bill write cards and record video messages for his wife Tara and their children which will commemorate future holidays and milestone events.

It was a surprise to our staff, who had worked with Bill and the Seasons Hospice Foundation to make so many wishes and legacy projects happen so his family would feel peace after his death. This last gesture of love, so touching, highlights the true beauty of hospice and the waves of love that cannot be undone by death.



Putting the Pieces Back Together Again

By Robert Zalenski, MD

The Root Etymology of Bereavement is a Shattering or Breaking Apart.

When you lose a loved one, that relationship is not only broken apart, but your loss causes a breaking of your life wide open. Once you are "broken," it is important to have support – people who will listen and care about you, those who will enable you to express safely how deeply the loss hurts, those who can help guide you and provide advice, those who will embrace you.



It is normal to be broken after a deep loss and the process is to allow those pieces to fall gently to the ground and then to reunite and become resynthesized into a new and different person. You are not "forgetting about" or "moving on" or "getting on with your life." Rather, you are letting the full implications of the loss be understood and realizing the beauty of your gain from having that person in your life.

Put yourself back together in a way that reflects your loved one's contribution to your life and the love that was shared with you. Sometimes, this takes three months, sometimes six months, sometimes two years, or sometimes even longer. Every journey is unique and must be given the support and time to mature and to nurture "the fruits of bereavement."

Crying is normal.

Being alone is okay.

Spend your days as you need to.

Find ways to heal your spirit.

Society doesn't support this very well, but we can support it in our understanding and our attitudes toward our grieving families.

Honoring Life by Giving Hope

Each year, Seasons Hospice Foundation holds an Employee Giving Campaign to fundraise in support of our patients, families, and communities. During 2018's Campaign, we have raised over \$203K and have increased giving by 15% or more at 16 of our clinical sites. The funds will be used to support the Foundation's special



Gisèle D. Crowe
Executive Director,
Seasons Hospice Foundation

programs, including Patient Wish Fulfillment, bereavement camps, and legacy projects. We are grateful that so many of the dedicated staff at Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care believe in our mission. It is our privilege to serve these communities together.



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If our mailing records need to be updated, or if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact Seasons Hospice Foundation at 847-692-1000, ext. 4.

Helping Others Through SEASONS HOSPICE FOUNDATION



*"Death is not
the greatest loss
in life.*

*The greatest loss
is what
dies inside us
while we live."*

– Norman Cousins

SEASONS HOSPICE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Bereavement support for loved ones is an essential component of Seasons' mission. Thus far in 2017, we have provided outreach and grief support services to more than 20,000 family members. Seasons offers several opportunities for families to find support. Trained counselors provide:

- Support groups
- Individual counseling
- Check-in phone calls
- Supportive mailings
- Services of remembrance
- Educational workshops
- Online resources

These services are offered free of charge for families, friends and caregivers of Seasons Hospice patients. To learn more about support groups

available in your area, please visit <https://www.seasons.org/our-services/bereavement-support/>. If you are in need of support, please reach out to your local hospice care team.

