



Olds and District
HOSPICE
SOCIETY

Hospice Happenings DEC. 2015

Grieving at Christmas...
The best gift is 'presence'.

When someone we love dies we enter into a journey called grief..

GRIEF IS THE PRICE WE PAY FOR LOVE.

Grief is the internal response to a loss.

It affects us physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually. Some symptoms may include, fatigue, insomnia, dizziness, emptiness, headache, change in activity level, and eating changes. It can leave us feeling numb, lonely, anxious, sad, frustrated and at peace. Sometimes we think we are going crazy, we can't focus and we experience unknown forgetfulness. All these faces of grief are **NORMAL**. Love, anger, fear, loneliness, and guilt are all part of grief. It is important to understand that grief is **NOT** a sign of weakness nor a lack of faith.

We grieve at Christmas byletting go and taking time.

Because of our fatigue, we might not have the energy to enter into the 'normal' demands of the Christmas season. Be gentle with yourself, and let this year be 'different'. Your life has changed dramatically, and no amount of 'tinsel' will create the joy of previous years.....it **WILL** be different. **Take time** for yourself, take care of yourself, eating properly, getting enough sleep, and exercise. You are the priority.

Create new traditions and give yourself permission to **let go** of those you have to. Making donations to a favorite charity attending community supports for those grieving at Christmas, going to a soup kitchen, or even celebrating Christmas in a different country can be gifts this year versus massive presents under the tree. Keep the days simple.

Take the time and space to honour you and your loved one. Whether by simple rituals of hanging an ornament on the tree, lighting a candle, or buying a gift **for** or **from** them for this Christmas....they are in your thoughts and in your heart always...and we can acknowledge that by simple rituals.

Plan what this year will be for you. Sometimes the anticipation of what the day will be is so all consuming, Just remember Christmas is only 24 hours.

Surround yourself with the people that mean the most. Have patience as you walk through the hub-bub of the lights, the sounds, and the smells of Christmas, and focus on the simple gift that we cherish in loss...which is the **love** we have for those special people who have been a gift to our lives.

There is great symbolism of hope in all our Christmas decorations. These are the darkest days on the calendar, and the lights of Christmas remind us of the true meaning of the season, and hope there will be lighter days ahead. The evergreen is too a sign of hope that our lives will be colorful again, as we journey through the starkness of nature.

To support those grieving at Christmas, the best gift of all is Presence. Your love and care at this time, is important. Just be there!

May this Christmas hold moments of peace and joy in the most difficult of days. It can happen.

"What you have once enjoyed you can never lose. All that we love becomes a part of us. " Helen Keller.

From Olds & District Hospice Society we wish everyone the true joy and peace at Christmas and always!

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