



GHS Hospice of the Foothills

Continuing Your Relationship with a Lost Loved One

*"Death ends a life, but it does not end a relationship."
Playwright Robert Anderson, following the death of his wife*

Although we can no longer physically visit with our living, breathing loved one who has passed on, we don't stop having a relationship with him or her. A relationship that has been meaningful continues to be real to the survivor months and even years after the loved one's death. Continuing your bond with your loved one can take many forms, including:

- Talking to your loved one even if he or she can't answer
- Feeling watched over by your loved one
- Noticing his or her continued presence in dreams
- Talking about memories with other family members
- Feeling a sense of your loved one's occasional presence
- Committing to his or her positive qualities, values, or beliefs
- Doing things your loved one enjoyed, and remembering him or her
- Feeling your loved one's comfort and encouragement when you are grieving or lonely
- Knowing just what he or she would say at certain moments
- Seeing your loved one's qualities expressed in the lives of family members
- Continuing rituals your loved one enjoyed, and finding they have deeper meaning when you do them now
- Sorting or ordering photos, videos, or posts of your loved one for yourself and others
- Reading letters and other writings from your loved one
- Remembering your loved one when doing things he or she taught you to do
- Writing letters to your loved one or keeping a journal about him or her

- Recording the stories of his or her life for other family members
- Developing new holiday traditions to remember your loved one
- Changing your life as your loved one would have encouraged you to do
- Learning more about his or her family tree
- Keeping up relationships with your loved one's family members

Although the one you loved can no longer walk with you or hold your hand, they can still be close because they are inside you as you continue your journey. Instead of leaving them behind, you are taking them with you in your heart.

After months of grieving, friends may stop mentioning your loved one's name or your grief, perhaps afraid to ask how you are doing. Nevertheless, continue to use his or her name and share your feelings with friends and family who will listen and understand.

Although we would like to believe grief will end in one year, most find that this time marks not an end to grieving, but the arrival of a new normal that becomes more comfortable. One of the tasks of grieving is finding new ways to relate to your lost loved one as you continue living. We hope the list we provided will give you some ideas of ways to both grieve and continue your relationship with your loved one this month.

"In a society which is much more inclined to help you hide your pain rather than to grow through it, it is necessary to make a very conscious effort to mourn." -Henri Nouwen

Please call us at **(864) 882-8940** if there is anything we can help you with.