

LOSS OF A PARENT SERIES

HOLIDAYS WITHOUT YOUR PARENT

*Making Room for Love and Loss
During Meaningful Days*

Holidays | Family | Traditions | Care

Holidays can make the absence of a parent feel especially close.

Traditions, meals, music, gifts, and family routines may carry memories of them everywhere you turn. You may look forward to parts of the day and still dread how different it will feel. You may want to keep every tradition, change them all, or do something in between. There is no right way to honor your parent or care for yourself through a holiday.

You can make room for remembrance and care, one holiday at a time.

1 WHY HOLIDAYS FEEL HARD

- Traditions can make their absence feel more visible.
- You may miss the role they played in each celebration.
- Even familiar sights and sounds can bring longing.
- Your feelings may shift from moment to moment.

2 PLAN WITH CARE

- Think ahead about the moments likely to feel tender.
- Decide what you want to attend and what you may skip.
- Have a gentle exit plan if you need one.
- Small choices can help you feel less overwhelmed.

3 KEEP OR CHANGE TRADITIONS

- You may want to continue a tradition in their honor.
- You may need to change something that feels too painful.
- There is no need to decide forever this year.
- Let the day be flexible and kind to you.

4 CREATE A REMEMBRANCE

- Light a candle, hang an ornament, or set out a photo.
- Make their favorite recipe or play a meaningful song.
- Share a story or a favorite memory.
- Rituals can give love a place at the holiday.

5 MIXED FEELINGS ARE WELCOME

- You can laugh, enjoy a moment, and still miss them.
- Tears may arrive in the middle of a celebration.
- Gratitude and grief can sit beside each other.
- Nothing about this means you are doing it wrong.

6 FAMILY GRIEVES DIFFERENTLY

- Some relatives may want to talk about them; others may not.
- Different traditions may feel right to different people.
- Try to offer space for each person's grief.
- You can set boundaries around what you need.

7 GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

- It is okay to say no to an invitation or expectation.
- Rest, quiet, and time alone can be caring choices.
- You do not have to make the day look normal.
- Taking care of yourself honors the love you carry.

8 LOVE STILL HAS A PLACE

- Your parent's influence can remain in your traditions.
- Their memory can be included in ways that feel true.
- You can carry them forward without forcing joy.
- Love remains part of the holiday story.

A GENTLE REMINDER

Holidays may change, but the love you carry can still have a place.



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