

## Honoring Our Loved Ones

Honoring our loved ones can look different for everyone and can change and evolve over time.

There is no right or wrong way to honor them and it is a choice that may work some of the time and not work at other times.

Our guess is that you've probably already found personal ways of honoring the person you have lost. There are traditional ways, like a funeral or memorial. But you've probably found small, very personal ways too – things like talking to them in the car or drinking out of their favorite coffee mug.

Research has found that these individual rituals are surprisingly helpful in grief. Grief is ongoing – this is one principle that is acknowledged by grief theorists, grieving professionals, and grieving people alike. The theory of continued bonds suggests that many people find comfort and connection through actions and rituals that help them honor deceased loved ones. And these connections evolve and change with time, just as we change. The thing that brought comfort in year one may be something completely different than in year six.

Everyday life routines to physical remembrances to travel and well beyond may help us feel closer to our loved ones. Continuing the connection through planting a tree, cooking their favorite meal, saying good night to them, so many ways to keep the love flowing.

1. Listen to one of their favorite songs or albums.
2. Adapt a small detail of their routines into your own.
3. Journal your sensory memory of them.
4. Share a story of why a random moment in the day reminded you of them.
5. Try out their favorite activity or hobby.
6. Write a poem about them.
7. Recreate or order their favorite dish.
8. Plant a tree.
9. Wear a memorial bracelet (can be their name, a quote, a symbol, etc).
10. Read their favorite book.
11. Light a candle.
12. Make a donation to a particular cause in their name.
13. Finish their incomplete project(s).
14. Write a letter “from” the person you’ve lost, imagining what they would say to you now.
15. Visit their final resting place.
16. Keep something of theirs close by.
17. Plan a time for a celebration of their life.
18. Look over their old photos with family or friends.
19. Watch their favorite movie.
20. Attend a grief camp.
21. Leave an empty chair that was theirs around your house or at your holiday table.
22. Create a memory jar.
23. Develop a playlist of music they would have loved.
24. Have their handwriting engraved on a piece of jewelry.

25. Build something in their honor, like a memorial bench.
26. Do a genealogy of their family (and/or make and display their family tree)
27. Make a shadow box or a memorial keepsake of their belongings.
28. Buy or grow their favorite flower or plant.
29. Design a memorial trinket (a collage, holiday decor, office decor, etc).
30. Share their recipes with their name attached to the dish's title.
31. Advocate for policy changes.
32. Create a memoir of your relationship.
33. Volunteer for a cause that had impacted their life.
34. Write a song or a lullaby about them.
35. Plan a get-together to share memories.
36. Serve their favorite cocktail, wine, or other drink at special occasions.
37. Give a toast in their memory at family gatherings.
38. Capture a picture of the moment in your day when you are reminded of them.
39. Visit someone or the people that knew them.
40. Paint a grief art piece.
41. Get a memorial tattoo (such as an image, their handwriting, or their name).
42. Wear their favorite scent.
43. Use '[Find a Grave](#)' to "visit" their grave if you are too far away. You can even leave flowers
44. Create six-word stories of your memories.
45. Advocate for a project or movement that was related to the cause of your loss.
46. Dedicate a shelf for their book collection.
47. Start or continue a tradition in their memory.
48. Produce a quilt from their clothes.
49. Travel to a place they always wanted to visit but did not get the chance to.
50. Join a grief support group.
51. Curate a memorial space or altar in your home.
52. Share their photos.
53. Design a home decor or belonging that presents their favorite sayings or quotes. It can be on a shirt, pillow, mug, or frame etc..
54. Make a memorial website.
55. Put together a grant or a scholarship in dedication to them.
56. Write a letter to them.
57. Overlay their handwriting onto a photo.
58. Visit the place (or places) they grew up.
59. Have their voice recordings installed onto an item (like a teddy bear).
60. Use phrases or expressions they used to say.
61. Write an 'ethical will' of all the values they passed on to you.
62. Pause to recognize things and moments they would have loved. Share on the hashtag [#wouldhavelovedthis](#)
63. Teach someone else something they taught you.
64. Create a memory garden in your yard.

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