

WRITING AS THERAPY

Writing can be therapeutic. By writing out our feelings and emotions we can help relieve them. Writing can be as helpful as talking.

Write a letter to anyone you feel anger towards, such as a doctor or the person you hold responsible for your loved one's death. Writing out your anger helps relieve bottled up tension.

It also helps you to look at what you are angry about. Sometimes seeing it in black and white before you can help sort through what is rational and what is irrational in your anger. It serves little purpose to mail these letters. It is best to simply file them away or destroy them.

Writing out your guilts helps you in the same way as writing out your anger. Writing is especially helpful in sorting out irrational guilt.

Writing letters to your loved one who died is a way of saying things to her that you didn't say before she died.

Talking to your loved one on paper will make you cry, but to be able to say what you want to your loved one will make the tears worth it. Here are some ideas WRITE:

What I wish I had said to you
What I wish I had done
What I wish you would have done
What I wish I could ask you
What I wish I hadn't said to you
What I wish I had not done
What I wish you had not done
What I would like to tell you

Pour out your feelings to your loved one. Tell him of your anger, your guilt. Tell him how you love him. Tell your love GOOD-BYE.

Keeping a journal is another way of relieving some of the pain. A good time to write in a journal is at night, especially if you can't get to sleep. When you can't sleep get out of bed and write out your feelings and thoughts that keep going over and over in your head.

Writing about your love will almost always make you sad and you will cry, but don't let this stop you. Crying, besides being good grief work, is exhausting. You may find you will get to sleep

sooner. Writing out your feelings also helps relieve you of the tension they cause.

Another positive side of keeping a journal is that in going back and reading what you have written before will help you see the progress you are making towards recovery, or it may help you see where you stuck in your grief and give you some clues as to what needs to be resolved.

Write your loved one's story. The possibility of forgetting even the smallest detail of your loved one's life is a fear many of us have. In truth, over the months and years many of these details do dim. Writing them down is a way to keep from losing these memories. This way, if your child died, you will not only have a permanent remembrance of your child, but this will be a legacy for the brothers and sisters. Here are some suggestions.

--Write in a spiral notebook. (This way nothing you write will be lost.)

--Begin at the beginning. Write the details of your love's life. Use your love's pictures to help remind you of occasions and happenings over the years. Ask friends and relatives to tell you anything they remember about your love. (This may make them a little uncomfortable at first, but let them know how important it is for you.) Also, write any thoughts and feelings you remember having at that time.

--Record the bad things your loved one did and said in his life as well as the good things. It is important to write both his good and bad sides so you can remember him as the real person he was.

--Write about your loved one's death. Record as many details surrounding it as you care to detail. Write about the days before his burial, the funeral, the days after, two weeks, a month, and so on. Record how others helped. Record how they hurt. This is an emotional task, and will probably make you cry, but again, crying is an important part of your grief work.

You are not indulging in self-pity as you might think. On the contrary, you are working towards faster healing.

Few of us are professional writers, nor is this necessary. Just write. Don't worry about whether you write well or not. Don't worry about form or grammar. Think of it this way; writing is just talking written down.

Writing as part of your grief work is not easy, but then grief work itself is not easy either. If you have it all written down, in addition to the immediate benefits, you will have a permanent record of how you survived one of the most difficult experiences of your life.