

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a black-framed photograph of a family. The photo shows a man, a woman, and two children. The background is softly blurred, showing a person in a colorful patterned shirt. The overall image has a warm, hopeful feel.

HOSPICE MESSAGES OF HOPE

When a Parent Dies

No matter what age, none of us are ready or prepared to lose a parent.

There is always a sense of shock when a parent dies. They have been there for you all your life. They are strong, dependable and help with many decisions through your life. Suddenly, that support is gone.

After your parents die, you may feel cut adrift, orphaned or abandoned. It can help to develop an attachment with another older mentor or to share memories among your siblings and make your parent's gifts and knowledge stay alive in each of your hearts.

ACCEPTING GRIEF

There is no timeline for grief – take whatever time you need. You may feel disconnected or emotionally numb but this does not mean you are not affected by the loss. You may just need extra time to process what you've been through. Some people take less time than others, and you shouldn't get down on yourself if you feel like you've been in grief for a long time.

Don't bottle up your emotions – repressing your emotions can make it more difficult to cope later. You may be wary of showing your emotions, especially if other family members need your support. You should let those feelings out, whether it's with a friend, an understanding family member or by yourself, keeping emotions bottled up can lead to mental and physical distress.

HONOR THEIR MEMORY

Memories are an important part of working through your grief. You can go through old pictures and/or discuss family adventures with siblings. If you have mementos that belonged to your parents, they can bring back good memories. These are lasting bonds that can bring comfort and no one can take away.

Many people also draw great comfort from their belief in a future reunion. They know that when they die, they will be reunited with all those waiting for them in heaven.

Grief is a very individual journey, and each of us has different coping mechanisms. Here are a just a few activities that might support you in your grief:

- Make a picture album, memory book or journal of special memories of your parent
- Share your feelings or memories with your family or friends
- Spend time with your family or friends to assure strong family support
- Work with a therapist or minister to resolve any unfinished issues
- Share stories with your children and grandchildren to keep both their memories and yours alive

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SEEK HELP IF NEEDED

After many months have gone by, if you still feel you're grieving and feeling just as bad as you did when they passed, then you may need to seek additional help. You can see a grief counselor, try group therapy or even talk to a doctor if you feel like nothing is working. There's no shame in admitting you need more help getting through this difficult time.

OSF Home Care Services is here to support you and wants to meet you wherever you are in your grief journey.

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