Surviving the Holidays
&
Other Special Days

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Healing Network™
Anne Marie Lockmyer

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"What we have once enjoyed we can never lose.
All that we love deeply becomes a part of us."
Helen Keller

Dear Friend,

Thank you for joining me for this workshop on surviving those special days and seasons that make the loss of your loved one even more apparent and the pain often deeper. You may want to avoid these times but that usually makes them worse. Don't let them just happen to you and crush you. I am going to encourage you to lean into the emotions that these times create as allowing them is part of the grieving process.

With planning, these days can be better than you think and an opportunity to remember your loved one. They are not physically with you but they will be with you forever. You do not leave them behind. They are part of you. Grieving and healing are about remembering them well, not forgetting them. These special occasions can be hard, but they can also be a beautiful time of remembrance.

I hope you will find what I share helpful and encouraging. I have been where you are. When my husband suddenly died, I wondered how I would ever go on and didn't know such a deep pain could exist. But I am also living proof that hope and healing are possible. And my greatest joy is helping others experience the same healing I did.

Please remember that your deep pain is a reflection of your deep love. You hurt much because you loved much.

If I can ever be of help to you, please reach out to me. You don't have to do this alone.

Warmly,

Anne Marie Lockmyer

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About Anne-Marie Lockmyer

Anne-Marie Lockmyer is an advanced certified grief recovery specialist, certified in critical incident stress debriefing, a certified trauma-integrative practitioner, the award-winning author of the best-selling book ***When Their World Stops: The Essential Guide to Truly Helping Anyone in Grief***, and the founder of The Grief & Trauma Healing Network.

As a widow herself, Anne-Marie knows the pain and devastation that grief and loss cause and is living proof that you can go from surviving to thriving. Anne-Marie takes individuals online and in-person through her program ***Grieve Well: A Guided Journey of Healing from the Losses of Life*** which offers hope and healing to hurting hearts. She speaks internationally at conferences and retreats, offers crisis grief support for businesses, and grief training for therapists and counselors.

Anne-Marie is passionate about taking people on a transformational journey of healing from the anguish of grief and loss.

Pain is real. So is hope and healing!

Email: annemarie@griefandtraumahealing.com

Website: https://www.griefandtraumahealing.com

Schedule a free call with Anne-Marie to see if it's time to begin your healing journey

Schedule a Free Call!

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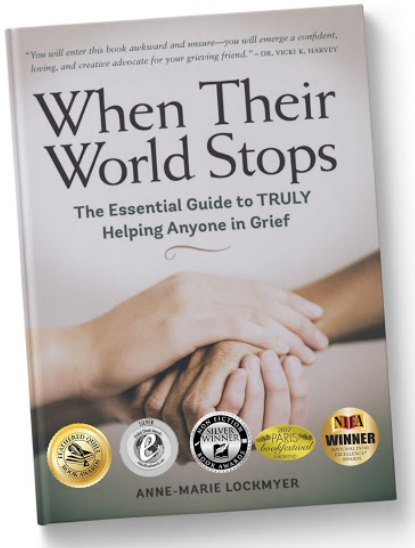

Available at amazon

Get Anne-Marie's bestselling book here!

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TUG Days (Temporary Upsurges in Grief)

When you have lost a loved one, certain days are more significant than others as they remind us more specifically of the person who died. These days can be especially difficult - anniversaries, birthdays, anniversary of their death, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas and other holidays. You will be able to identify many occasions on which your loved one's absence will be felt more deeply.

You may think it means you are not "getting over it" or you are "getting worse" and it can be discouraging and overwhelming if you do not understand how grief works. Grief comes in waves. You can be doing pretty good and then you suddenly get knocked to your knees by a big crashing wave. Some people call these experiences grief attacks. I like what Dr. Bill Webster calls them - Temporary Upsurges in Grief or TUGs. And they are temporary, but it is hard to believe it when you are going through it.

Coping with TUG Days

The first thing you need to know about TUG days is that you are not moving backwards in your grief when they hit. If you can learn to allow yourself to feel the loss and plan how to deal with the day, it is actually an opportunity to remember your loved one's death and their life and a chance for you to get some control back. **Grief invites us to remember, not to forget**. To try to ignore the occasion, or pretend that it is just like any other day is unnatural, and actually increases the tension. It takes more energy to avoid the situation than it does to ***confront it***.

1. ***Plan in advance***
2. ***Observe these days in ways that are comfortable and meaningful for you.***
3. ***Plan a departure from your usual activities***
4. ***Pick who you want to be with***
5. ***Don't wait for people to remember***
6. ***Give yourself permission to cry***
7. ***Give yourself permission to feel good***
8. ***Feel and express your feelings***
9. ***Remember your loved one and your memories***
10. ***Don't be afraid to have fun***
11. ***Your loved one died but they also lived. Find a way to celebrate their life.***

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TUG Day Planning Worksheet (Temporary Upsurges in Grief)

ANTICIPATING and PLANNING are the keys to handling the special days and occasions that make your loved one's absence felt more deeply. They can be opportunities for grieving, healing and remembering your loved one.

What are the occasions and days that you dread? Take some time to think about them and make a plan. (anniversary of their death, their birthday, your birthday, anniversary, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, Easter, 4th of July, etc)

TUG Day	What Do I Want To Do?	Who Do I Want With Me?

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Holiday Planning Worksheet

Your goal for the holidays is not to move on without your loved one, but move with them in a new way. Use this holiday to honor them and your relationship in a good and healthy way.

Take the time to answer the following questions:

- What is your biggest concern with the upcoming holidays?

  _____

- What do you think other's expectations are?

  _____

- What are your expectations for yourself?

  _____

- What do you think is unrealistic?

  _____

- What are some ways to be kind to yourself during this time?

  _____

Holiday traditions can be sources of joy but they can also be Temporary Upsurges in Grief Days. With planning,they will still be hard, but we can create some good moments in the midst of them and make them not as bad as they could be. We can create opportunities to remember our loved one

You may want to maintain some holiday traditions, especially when they involve other family members. But this is also the time to begin new traditions. I encourage you to initiate a conversation with your family (especially the children) and decide together what you may want to keep, change, drop entirely and any new traditions you may want to create.

This process is a healing opportunity for the family.

These holidays will be different. These holidays will be tough. But these holidays can still be good.

"The Family That Grieves Together, Heals Together"

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Holiday Planning Worksheet

	KEEP IT Why is it important to you?	CHANGE IT What's the new plan?	DROP IT How will this help?	Do you need help? If so, who could help you?
Thanksgiving				
Meal				
Visit Family and Friends				
Other Thanksgiving Traditions (who, what, when, how)				

When someone tells you what you should do, a great response is "Thanks for offering that advice but here's what I've decided to do"

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Holiday Planning Worksheet

	KEEP IT Why is it important to you?	CHANGE IT What's the new plan?	DROP IT How will this help?	Do you need help? If so, who could help you?
Christmas				
Christmas Cards				
Decorate House				
Shopping				
Go to Parties				
Visit Famly and Friends				
Holiday Music				
Traditions:				

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Holiday Planning Worksheet

New Traditions

Look at the **Ways to Remember List** on the next page and select any ideas you might like to use or come up with your own and write them below.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

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Ways To Remember

**What feels comforting is just as unique as grief,
so choose the ones that feel right to you and your family**

Light a "celebration of life" or memorial candle. You may want to consider their favorite color or scent when choosing a candle.

1. Go to the cemetery with holiday balloons, flowers or notes
2. Give someone an unexpected special gift in memory of your loved one
3. Plant a memorial tree or flower bed
4. Volunteer to help a charity in their memory
5. Create your own memorial service
6. Memory stocking, memory box or other special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure.
7. Write memories at Thanksgiving, wrap them in a box and read them at Christmas
8. Play their favorite game
9. Adopt a family in memory of your loved one
10. Pick a few special items that belonged to your loved one and gift them to friends or family who will appreciate them
11. Make a memorial ornament, wreath or other decoration in honor or your loved one
12. Play your loved one's favorite holiday music
13. Pull out old photo albums or family movies and watch on the holiday
14. Make a dish they used to make or make a meal with all their favorite dishes. Food can be a great spark for talking about memories and stories.

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Ways To Remember

15. Leave an empty seat at the table and set a place setting. Decorate it with a single flower, poem, card or memento.

16. On strips of paper, write memories that family members have of the person who died or special gifts that person left with you. Loop the strips to create a chain.

17. Share an important lesson you learned from the loved one

18. Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity

19. Make a large family photo collage, including pictures with the deceased loved one. Display the collage along with holiday decorations in a special place, perhaps by the tree or the dinner table.

20. Make a toast at dinner in honor of their memory. As you make the toast, give everyone at the table a chance to say something, or perhaps share what they miss about not having them there for the holiday. If you want to, make the toast as if you are directly speaking to the person. For example, "Merry Christmas, honey. We sure miss you. You always made the best pumpkin pie…"

21. Light a special candle and place it on the dinner table. After everyone sits down, acknowledge that the candle is being lit to honor the life of your deceased loved one. You may want to add a sentiment such as: "His/Her love will burn brightly in our hearts forever." Perhaps you would like to say a special prayer.

22. A few days before the holiday, set up a small table. This will be a "memory table." On the table are placed various remembrances of the deceased: a photo, a card from the deceased, or perhaps a gift or memento received from the loved one. These memory tables are great because contributors to the table do not have to say much. The objects speak for themselves, but can also stimulate warm conversations about the person.

23. Write or draw about past holidays. Create stories about past holiday memories.

24. Write a poem about the person. Share these stories, pictures, poems, and memories over hot chocolate or eggnog on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, or Christmas morning.

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In Memory of a Life Well Lived – Candle Ceremony

Below is a memorial candle idea that you can use for your loved one on milestone dates. You simply need four candles and a copy of the memorial to read. One person can read the memorial while another lights the candles, or simply take turns. The candles can then be displayed in a special place in the home or at the place setting of where the person sat at the dining room table.

If you would rather have a memorial candle ceremony alone, that is okay too. The act of ceremony helps with healing, especially on milestone occasions. Plus, feel free to change or add to the memorial verse to make it more meaningful.

This memorial candle ceremony can also be shared with others who are not present. For example, a family that lost their daughter sent a similar memorial poem with four candles on a pretty tray to their friends and family. The recipients could then do a memorial service in their own home when it felt right.

Memorial Verse for Your Loved One

As we light these 4 candles in honor of you,
we light one for our grief,
one for our courage,
one for our memories,
and one for our love.

This candle represents our grief.
The pain of losing you is intense.
It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.

This candle represents our courage –
to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to change our lives.

This candle represents your memory –
the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other,
the silly things you did, the caring and joy you gave us.

This candle represents the light of love.
As we enter this holiday season, (or recognize a special date)
we cherish the special place in our hearts
that will always be reserved for you.

We thank you for the gift your living brought each of us.
We love you (say your loved one's name).

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Grief Letter

The best time to communicate is **before you end up in an uncomfortable situation.**

One way to accomplish this is by writing a newsletter, letting people in on how you're doing , what's going on with you and what they can expect.

A helpful suggestion by H. Norman Wright is to write your friends and family a grief letter coming into the holiday season, or prior to specific holiday get togethers or events. While you may feel awkward giving someone a grief letter, this will ease the stress of your situation.

How to write a grief letter:

1. Briefly describe your experience and your feelings.
2. Let people know what they can expect from you in your current state
3. Give your friends instructions on what they can do to help during this time. Let them know what is needed and when it is needed. Tell them what they can do and say that you'd find comforting, and what's not comforting to you.
4. List specific, practical needs they can help with.
5. Briefly describe your experience and your feelings.

When Writing Your Letter, remember:

Share only your immediate needs. As your needs change, you can send or share a new letter.

People won't be offended if you tell them exactly how to help you. They will appreciate your clear instructions. It takes the guesswork out of serving you.

If you don't tell people what you need, you risk not being cared for and/or receiving unwanted help.

Give this letter to everyone you know. The people who receive the letter will appreciate knowing how they can better help you, and you will have less stress and more appropriate help suited to your unique grieving style.

If you don't have energy to write, ask someone to help.

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Sample Letter

H. Norman Wright shares this sample grief letter in his book, Recovering from Losses in Life (Revell, 2006)

Dear Friend (family, pastor, fellow workers . . .)

Recently I have suffered a devastating loss. I am grieving and it will take months and even years to recover from this loss. I wanted to let you know that I will cry from time to time. I don't apologize for my tears since they are not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. They are God's gift to me to express the extent of my loss, and they are also a sign that I am recovering. At times you may see me angry for no apparent reason. Sometimes I'm not sure why. All I know is that my emotions are intense because of my grief. If I don't always make sense to you, please be forgiving and patient with me. And if I repeat myself again and again, please accept this as normal. More than anything else I need your understanding and your presence. You don't always have to know what to say, or even say anything, if you don't know how to respond. Your presence and a touch or hug lets me know you care. Please don't wait for me to call you since sometimes I am too tired or tearful to do so. If I tend to withdraw from you, please don't let me do that. I need you to reach out to me for several months. Pray for me that I would come to see meaning in my loss someday and that I would know God's comfort and love. It does help to let me know that you are praying for me. If you have experienced a similar type of loss, please feel free to share it with me ... This loss is so painful, and right now it feels like the worst thing that could ever happen to me. But I will survive and eventually recover... Thank you for caring about me. Thank you for listening and praying. Your concern comforts me and is a gift for which I will always be thankful.

(Revell, 2006)

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Help Them Help You

Use this sheet to create the content of your grief letter.

What do you wish your friends, family, and coworkers understood about you and your grief? What helpful advice could you give to them? By taking the time to consider the following statements, what we do and don't want or need becomes more apparent. As you know what you need, you can share it with them verbally or in a letter.

- [ ] Remember: The greatest gift is sharing memories
- [ ] Let me know when you are hurting or missing them too. The worst is thinking I am alone in my grief.
- [ ] Help me to honor them in some meaningful way.
- [ ] Allow me to cry, laugh or leave when I need to. It's important for me feel the emotions I am feeling, even though this is considered the season of cheer.
- [ ] Allow traditions to change to accommodate the missing space.
- [ ] Allow me to say no to invitations.
- [ ] Allow me to change my mind often.
- [ ] Remember that much of what I do is a reflection of my grief not my feelings about the holidays or my friends and families.
- [ ] Though I am hurt I still love and care.
- [ ] Ignoring my grief does not make it go away.
- [ ] If you not sure, please ask me

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Help Them Help You

- [ ] Sometimes it may appear that I'm functioning fine and that I'm doing well. Understand that outward appearances can be deceiving.
- [ ] Don't make comments about next year being better or time healing my wounds; my concerns are in the here and now
- [ ] Understand that I can't do everything I used to do in holidays past, but don't hesitate to invite me to holiday events anyway
- [ ] Let me cry if I need to. You don't have to say anything – just hand me tissues and be there for me.
- [ ] Understand that grief can go on for a number of years. There is not established time limit. Please don't make judgments about how long it's taking me to grieve.
- [ ] Don't tell me you know how I feel.
- [ ] Don't try to say something positive about my loved one's death, like "he's in a better place" or "at least you had many good years together"
- [ ] Be patient with me and lower your expectations for me
- [ ] Don't tell me what to do, what I need or what to read please. It doesn't help.
- [ ] _____
- [ ] _____
- [ ] _____

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7 Tips for Helping Children With Grief and Loss at Holiday Time

The holidays pose special concerns for children coping with grief and loss. At a time when the world around them seems merry and bright, children with grief may struggle to a great extent. It can be a time of confusion as they can be excited about the holiday season, yet sad about their missing loved one.

1. **Do You Hear What I Hear?** LISTEN. Listen. It's simple, it's effective and it matters. Allow grieving children to talk about whatever it is they wish. Validate their feelings. "That's tough." "How frustrating." "Your sad is super-sized right now." Notice the "right now"? That's a really important qualifier. It recognizes the current state of emotion, yet offers hope for the future.

2. **Allow all feelings.** While it's normal for us to want to tell grieving children, "It will all be okay," it's important to refrain from this. We need to stick in the moment with the child, hear how they are feeling right NOW and not try to pull them towards moving on before they are ready. Grief must be expressed one way or another. Talking about feelings is a healthy way to express it.

3. **Get Their Input.** Ask kids what they think about how to celebrate through their grief. Past family traditions may be too difficult to manage. Ask about what traditions the child thinks should be "kept" and what should be "put on hold". Play things by ear and tweak as you go.

4. **Be Flexible.** A child may say, "I don't want to go caroling this year. I'd miss mom too much." On a later date, they may change their mind. That is okay. Be flexible. Go with the flow.

5. **Create New Traditions.** Ask the child if she would like to come up with a new way to celebrate or honor the memory of the deceased loved one. Perhaps lighting a candle in their memory through the holidays, creating a special "memory" tree with ornaments that reflect the deceased person's hobbies, or making a donation in their memory to a favorite charity.

6. **Don't forget to have some fun.** Grief is heavy and taxing. It exhausts young and old alike. When moments of laughter seep in, grab onto them. Find ways to lighten the load and take a break from the heaviness of grief.

7. **Keep the communication flowing.** Just because a child or teen does not feel like talking about something one day, or even one hour, does not mean he won't talk about it later. Keep asking, without harassing. .

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Please Remember

These Holidays Will Be Different. These Holidays Will Be Difficult. But These Holidays Can Still Be Good.

1. Lower Your Expectations of Self and Others
2. Talk About Your Grief
3. Be Tolerant of Your Physical and Psychological Limits and Eliminate Unnecessary Stress
4. Plan Ahead; Minimize Fears and Worries
5. Be with Supportive, Comforting People
6. Talk About your loved one
7. Communicate Your Needs Beforehand
8. Honor Your Loved One in Memory
9. It's Okay to Be Sad and It's Okay to Be Happy
10. Watch Out for Social Media

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Grieve Well:
A Journey Of Healing From The Losses of Life

Feeling hopeless or stuck after a devastating loss? Whether it's the death of a loved one, a loss of a relationship, a divorce, or and other significant life loss, you know your life is not what it should be. You may be feeling depressed, overwhelmed and just surviving.

You don't want to stay where you are but you have no idea what to do.

My friend, hope and healing are possible. I have experienced it myself, after the sudden loss of my husband, and I've guided people all over the world on a healing journey.

ARE YOU READY TO LIVE FULLY AND LIVE FORWARD? LET THE HEALING BEGIN!

Program Options:

- 6 sessions online or in-person
- 2 day intensive

Schedule a Free Call!

Email Anne-Marie!

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Testimonies

"Hands down one of the best experiences with a healer I have ever encountered. Anne-Marie as a person is healing, so the work she does flows naturally. She creates a sacred space for you to be yourself, unhurried and without judgment. She is truly gifted!"

- Talia Bombola, Marriage & Family Therapist

"It's been an eye-opening experience! I've learned I am not broken or damaged, but completely normal. I was given the tools needed to clean out all the pain in my heart. When I have another loss, I NOW have the ability to work through the anger, hurt and pain, and make more room in my heart for future love, joy, and happiness! I'm looking forward to the new memories I plan on making and getting to know and like and accept the new me. I was given a lifelong gift, that I will treasure forever."

- Tammi Risse

"I am still reaping the benefits of the program. I didn't even realize all the baggage I carried through life until I first came to Anne-Marie Lockmyer. She is fantastic, a Godsend."

- Joseph Netzel

"Anne-Marie is amazing! I felt completely understood and validated. It was like I mattered! It is just the way she speaks to you and has the ability to look deep in your eyes and understand who you are. I felt so safe as we processed my unresolved grief. I have a lightness in my life now. Everyone needs to do this!"

- Monica Nordquist

See more testimonies on website.

Schedule a Free Call!

Email Anne-Marie!