

Continuing Bonds Rituals

The idea of Continuing Bonds is something we have used a lot in My Grief My Way. This is the idea that one of the tasks of grieving is learning how to live in the world without your loved one(s), but that does not mean letting go or forgetting them. It's healthy to consider: "How am I carrying the memory of them with me into the future?" This can be as simple as talking about them to people who knew them, or to people that you meet. It could also be about marking anniversaries. Some people describe continuing to set a dinner place for their loved one or raising a glass to them at a family occasion.

The idea of Continuing Bonds Rituals is that you create **helpful** ways of carrying their memory with you. The qualities of these continuing bonds rituals is that they are comforting to you **and** they help you to engage in everyday life. You can use this worksheet in combination with the "How are you dealing with grief and what are the consequences?" worksheet to help yourself decide if your continuing bond rituals are helping you, or if they are not.

There are some examples below, and then space for you to think through creating your own ideas.

1. Visiting a favourite spot that your loved one liked, or that has special significance for you, such as a grave or place you scattered ashes.
2. Creating a memory box of particularly special possessions of the deceased, photographs and so on. Spending time looking at the memory box (and putting things away because you know you can visit again when you want to).
3. Marking important anniversaries in some way, such as their birthday. This could be as simple as writing them a birthday card.
4. Organising a meet up with friends or family that knew the deceased to celebrate their life and share memories about them.
5. Continuing a task from the deceased such as tending their garden, looking after a collection, continuing a legacy, for example fund raising for a particular charity that they used to be involved with.
6. Continuing a shared hobby such as going to live music, or hill walking. It's likely that they would want you to continue that shared hobby, if it was something you enjoyed together.
7. Write a journal in which you imagine you are writing to them, sharing with them how things are going for you.

Space for your ideas: