

## “Gifts” You Can Give Yourself

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During times of crisis or loss, many of us experience feelings or emotions that can conflict with our ability to participate in life's daily events. Continuing formerly held routines or traditions can leave us feeling anxious or overwhelmed. Here are 6 GIFTS you can give yourself to assist you in your times of grief:

1. **Give yourself permission to feel whatever you feel, without the guilt associated with others expectations.**

Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall motivates us to make preparations to dress differently. When it's cold, we put on a sweater; when it's hot, we take that sweater off, no judgments, we make the necessary adjustment to accommodate our need for comfort. Take a deep breath, make the change that allows you comfort.

2. **Don't suppress your feelings, good or bad, express yourself.**

Grief is a normative expression and is an essential ingredient for a balanced mental health. Don't be afraid to express yourself! Find a friend you can trust, ask them to simply provide a thoughtful ear to listen. Ask yourself: *What am I feeling right now? How are my feelings influencing my body? How am I feeling about my thoughts, are they healthy?*

3. **Give yourself room to make adjustments.**

Eating meals out may not be your regular expression, think outside of the box — create a new response without committing to it forever, don't be afraid to be flexible, give yourself a break.

4. **Plan what routines and traditions are essential and what routines or traditions can be altered. Boldly declare a new routine/tradition, it's not too late to change.**

Remember, there is no hard and fast rule that you have to continue past routines, traditions or roles. Creating new routines or traditions is simply another way to deal with grief, without erasing your memories.

5. **Collaborate with others to lighten your load.**

Ask others what their preferences are; discover compromises. Think about new ways to celebrate being together. Remember, feelings of grief are a normative expression. Talking about our discomfort or grief can make room for peaceful moments this season.

6. **Be kind to yourself.**

Remember, you can only give to others what you have accepted for yourself: Love yourself.

Sincerely,

*Carlo Griseta*

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\* **Consider visiting [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)** (under "find a group", enter zip or city, discover in-person or online support groups within miles of your home).