

Grief Notes

December 2024

Grief In the New Year by Tim Soucy, Bereavement Coordinator

During the Holiday Season there are a number of firsts that we experience after the death of a loved one such as the first family gathering, the first social event, and the first faith tradition gathering. The loved one's absence coupled with well-meaning people asking questions, sharing their grief experiences, telling us how we should think, feel, or do will trigger responses in us. Our encounters with others may be helpful or unhelpful. Most likely we will experience feelings and thoughts benefiting from conversations with others and at the same time find some parts of the conversations were not helpful at all. Many of us will wonder if our grief will change in the New Year. Will it be different? Will it be more or less intense? Is there hope?

The truth of the matter is that our grieving and other life events do not change just because we enter a new year. We do not get to start over our grief journey, but we may be very aware of approaching a new year in which our loved one will not be present except in memory. How can we prepare for this? We might start by reflecting on questions like:

- What am I feeling?
- What would I like to feel?
- What would I like to change in the coming year?
- What steps do I need to take to begin to make desired changes?
- Am I ready to change or do I need more time where I'm presently at?

Your thoughts on the questions above can help you decide how you are going to care for your grief in the coming year. If you are looking ahead to the new year with hope that it will not be as painful as the past year, it is not a betrayal of your

loved one. We grieve because we cared for and loved the deceased. While our loved ones are not physically with us, they continue to be part of us. They remain in our thoughts and in the many ways they shaped our lives. In this way they are carried with us into the coming year.

Making New Year's resolutions may have been part of welcoming in a New Year for you or resolutions may have been something you shunned. I would like to propose the following resolutions for us to consider:

1. I will place no time limits on my grief.
2. I will be kind to myself when I'm not being as productive as I would desire.
3. I will make no apologies for my tears physically shed or felt silently in my heart.
4. I will place realistic expectations on myself and others.
5. I will have old ways and new ways to invest in myself and possibly others.

January 1, 2025 will be just another day with no particular meaning other than what we choose to give it.

If you are unsure what to do or how to move forward with your grief or have questions and/or concerns, consider contacting one of Northern Light's bereavement coordinators for support. Your local bereavement coordinator's name and contact information is on the other side of this Grief Note.