

How to mark the anniversary of a loved one's passing



The anniversary of the death of a loved one can be a complex and challenging time for many of us. It is often a reminder of how special a person was, but also of the space that they have left behind in our lives.

In many cultures, people choose to mark this special day in a particular way and dedicate some time to reflect on the lives of their loved ones. However, there is no obligation to do so, and it is down to your own individual preferences and feelings at the time.

Different Culture Traditions

If you do decide to mark the anniversary of a loved one, then there are many ways to do so. Some cultures and religious practitioners have strong traditions that they carefully follow. For example, some members of the Jewish community light candles which burn for 24 hours, while in countries like Japan and China offerings are left near resting places as a mark of respect.

In more secular circles, anniversaries have less defined practices. Some people decide to take time to visit a graveside or burial place and may choose to leave flowers, talk to their loved one or simply sit in contemplation. Others may choose to have a get-together at their house with family and friends or go out for a meal at a loved one's favourite restaurant.

Charitable Donations

In more recent years, many people have begun to raise money for charity in their loved ones' names. Running races, or taking part in skydives for instance to raise money for a charity close to their memory. Equally, many people still decide to stay at home.

Staying at home

If you decide to stay at home then there are still many ways that you can honour their memory. You might light a candle, relive their experiences through old photographs, call a friend to reminisce, listen to their favourite music, or raise a glass of something special in their name.

Choosing how to spend this important day is down to your personal choice, and there should be no pressure on you to do one thing or another. If you choose to quietly contemplate your loved one, and stay at home where you feel safe and comfortable, then that is just as acceptable as running a marathon in their honour.

If you feel as if you are struggling with your feelings of bereavement then it is important to reach out to those close to you and to reach out for professional support if you feel that you cannot cope. Organisations like Samaritans, Cruise Bereavement Care, Bereavement UK and The Compassionate Friends are on hand to help you when you feel ready.