



What Do I *Live For Now?*

Remembering & Honoring

As you think about your life, moving forward in a healthy way doesn't mean forgetting your loved one. Quite the opposite. Healing includes remembering your loved one and honoring the memory by reflecting on meaningful moments you shared together. And it also involves honoring your loved one by building on the lessons you learned from him or her to bless other people.

Through this session's video and exercises, you'll see that moving forward with your life can include:

- **"Legacy projects" that bless others & honor your loved one.**
- **Preserving memories & using lessons you've learned from your loved one.**
- **Pursuing interests or skills, which renews your sense of purpose.**



Video outline

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words, or questions you may have while viewing the video.

Remembering

By reminiscing

By activities

Remodeling

Looking for new opportunities

Healing further by helping

Step by Step

Daily comfort & encouragement



Dianne's story

"My husband died August 8th. In January I signed up for GriefShare. I thought, *I don't know if this will be a benefit to me or not.* Well, it was—it was a huge benefit being with other grieving people, hearing other people's stories, and putting mine in perspective with some of the things they were dealing with. I became convinced this was something I could do to pay forward to others. I had been through this [grief], and perhaps I could have something to offer to others?"

As you move through grief, you'll start to become more intentional about finding ways to honor your loved one's legacy, cherish the memories, and take steps forward in healing. Dianne found this through volunteering for GriefShare. Keep reading to find ideas that you might like to try.

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Continuing life



Maybe you've heard that it's important to "cut ties" with your deceased loved ones so that you can reinvest in other relationships. But that's not really what happens—nor should it! God brought you and your loved one together for a period of time and for certain purposes. So, preserving your memories of that relationship is important for rebuilding your life in a healthy

way. You might consider one of these ideas as a legacy project.

Think about (and share) the positive influence: God arranged for you to be influenced by this relationship. Your loved one likely gave you encouragement, advice, affection, or support, and your identity was affected and shaped by his or her example. You can honor your loved one's memory by living out the positive lessons you learned. Consider:

- How did your loved one influence who you've become?
- What positive traits, forged from that relationship, do you want to nurture?

Record special memories: As you reflect on your relationship and your loved one's qualities, you may find it helpful to record your memories of him or her and your time together. Consider writing in a journal,* creating a box of keepsakes, or putting together a photo album or photo book of special times with your loved one.

Contribute to a cause: Another way to remember your loved one while moving forward in your life is to contribute to a cause that touched his or her life. You might use your time, talents, or money to give to an existing organization (or even start a new one) that makes a contribution to society. For example, one woman donated teddy bears to a local hospital in honor of her husband, Teddy, and she hosted a benefit concert to help people with a terminal illness; another woman volunteered to read to groups of children at the library in honor of her deceased daughter. Ask yourself:

- **Are there any causes that you might contribute to in honor of your loved one?**

These contributions become part of your loved one's legacy.

* *Reflections: A Guided Journal* by GriefShare is a great tool for recording your memories and working through grief challenges. Visit griefshare.org/journal.

2 You have a purpose

In the early days of grief, your focus is going to be on your loss and its all-consuming nature, and that's okay. But at some point you will want to honor your loved one by taking steps toward healing and pursuing God's purposes for your life.

God's message to you

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

1. **What are some things that you like to do (gardening, painting, building, cooking, etc.)? Have you pursued these things lately? Why or why not?**

2. **In light of your interests, skills, and personality traits, how could you use those to do something good for others?**
3. **Yes, God has prepared good works for you to do—but maybe you're not ready yet. You may first need to take some steps to help yourself heal. Write down a step you will commit to taking (perhaps a way to store memories, express your emotions, or develop a new normal).**

Remember

- You have a purpose in God, and He will give you the strength to do the work He has called you to do.
- "My purpose in life didn't die when my husband did. I realized that I wasn't the only person in this world who was grieving. And that helped me to start taking the focus off me and start thinking about how I could help other people." – Barbara

3 Passing on your blessings

"When I got to the drive-through window, I was told the person in front of me had paid for my meal. So I paid for the person behind me." Have you ever experienced a "pay it forward" situation like this? When you receive comfort during grief, you're given a similar opportunity—to pass along the comfort to others, which in turn helps you.

God's message to you

"We must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35b)

1. **In what ways have you benefited from helping others?**

2. Let's say you hear about someone who recently lost a loved one. If you were to reach out to that person with simple words of support, how would that help you? How would it help the other person?

Remember

- Researchers have found that helping others can alleviate the negative thinking that is part of sadness, depression, and anxiety. Helping others has this effect, at least in part, because it taps into God's design for us as His image-bearers. "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them" (1 John 4:16b).
- "Helping somebody else is a great big part of the healing process." – Lois Rabey, Christian author

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Sharing comfort



You have something so important to offer people who are grieving the loss of a loved one. You're able to say: "I know it hurts. But you can make it through. I know, because I've been there." That reassurance can change the course of a person's journey.

Why share?

God has equipped you with a story to tell. We know that because of what the apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:3–4:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

When you share that comfort, you bless others, and in turn you are blessed.

How can you share?

One way is to help with GriefShare. Your pastor or GriefShare leader can help you understand where you're ready to serve based on your gifts and how far along you are on your grief journey. You could start by helping with registration, greeting, snacks, or other supportive roles.

Here's what others who have served as GriefShare volunteers have said about their experience:

"To be able to use something difficult in my life to help others is incredible." – Jeanie

"GriefShare has given meaning to this new chapter in my life." – Gail

"I've learned a lot, and it has really continued my healing." – Fred

"When I was given the opportunity to give back, I said yes." – Jeffery

Volunteer to help with GriefShare

A GriefShare group is a great place to move forward by giving back.

griefshare.org/comfort

5 Healing through Writing

Remembering is a part of rebuilding

Remembering your loved one is an important part of your grief journey. Use the following prompts to reflect on your loved one's life and its impact.

- **Write down characteristics of your loved one you want to remember (and perhaps adopt for yourself). Include why these characteristics are important.**
- **Write down some memories of special times with your loved one (events, conversations, etc.). Include why these times are important to you.**
- **Other family members and friends are grieving the loss of your loved one. What could you say (or write) to support one of them in his or her grief?**

Chart your progress

Place a check in the boxes to identify how you are feeling this week: emotionally, physically, etc.
Or, even better, insert a word to describe how you are doing.

	BAD	OKAY	GOOD	GREAT
Emotionally				
Physically				
Spiritually				
Relationally				
How your life is in general				

My Healing

Dianne's story

"One of the biggest things I can do for me is to be involved in helping others, moving outside of my own little life. So I asked to be a part of GriefShare, and I've been in it ever since. To watch God work through people, to see some of them begin to heal—that is an untold blessing. I've never done any kind of volunteer work that I have felt more blessed and satisfied to see the results."

Healing involves giving back

Talk with your leader today

GRIEFSHARE.ORG/COMFORT

