



Family and Caregiver Education

BEREAVEMENT

Gone But Not Forgotten: Creating a Memory Album

The death of a loved one is always hard. Different people grieve in different ways and over different lengths of time. Sometimes this grief takes such a strong hold, it is difficult to move on with one's life. Sometimes individuals feel that if they give up the feelings of grief, they will be giving up the memory of their loved one. One way to let go of the feelings of grief without "forgetting" about your loved one is by creating a memory album. A memory album can be made up of pictures, words, letters, poems and/or mementos. Some find writing to be a positive and easy way to get things off of their chest. Sometimes, however, this process is difficult to get started. The following exercise provides a format to help you express your thoughts and feelings about the relationship you had with your loved one.

1. To start, make a title page for your memory album. You can color it or decorate it any way you want.
2. Inside the album, describe your memories of your loved one. Start with your earliest memory of him or her. You might want to draw this or find a photograph that describes your memory. Title the picture or drawing, as well, and put the date when the memory occurred.
3. You can also use the following questions and sentence to write a letter expressing your thoughts and feelings. The letter or album can be an individual or a family project.
4. For the next several pages, draw, write, or use a picture that describes times when:
 - a. You were together with your loved one.
 - b. You were together with your loved one and the rest of your family.
 - c. You were doing something fun with your loved one.
 - d. You were upset or worried about your loved one.
 - e. You were angry with your loved one.
 - f. You admired your loved one.

Adapted by Joyce Vidal-Thornburg, MC, CT from
Bevilacqua, Louis J. and Dattilio, Frank M. (2001). *Brief Family Therapy Homework Planner*. John Wiley & Sons.

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