

HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Mary's mother died in 2010, Mary's 60-year-old husband David died in 2012, and Mary's 8-year-old grandson died in 2013.

BY MARY POTTERY KENYON, adapted from the book, *Grief Diaries: Poetry and Prose & More*
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Self care articles for the bereaved

From the award-winning Grief Diaries book series



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These suggestions for grievors stem both from personal experience and from talking to others who have shared their own stories about what has helped them get through the holidays.

- Grief is heightened during the holidays. This is a normal reaction to missing a family member or loved one. The first holidays, especially, are a milestone hurdle. Look for a way to honor your loved one's memory and mark the occasion in some way, whether it is with a butterfly tattoo, a balloon released to the sky, the purchase of a special ornament, or by making a donation in their name.
- Do whatever it takes to get through the holidays. My children and I did something unprecedented in the Kenyon family the first Thanksgiving without their dad: We went out to eat at a buffet-style restaurant.
- When I couldn't bear to pull out our artificial Christmas tree and the boxes of ornaments that had decorated our tree for years, I ordered a pre-lit tree online and had it delivered to my door.
- Our first Christmas without my grandson Jacob was going to be excruciating, but my daughter Elizabeth had three other children to consider. When one of them came up with the idea of exchanging "ugly" gifts and seeing who could find the most ridiculous one, I jumped on the idea. It was the first time I'd seen a light in Elizabeth's eyes since her son's death. She and I vied for the "most hideous" gift for several

weeks. I keep the ugly, misshapen sheep candle she found for me displayed inside a glass cabinet as a reminder of how something simple and even a bit silly can pull us out of misery for a short while.

- Don't just grieve, do something! You can become broken, or broken open. Will you waste your pain, or use it to help others? After my grandson died, my daughter and I designed Random Acts of Kindness cards that we use in his honor.

[When better than the holiday season to open our hearts, broken or otherwise?](#)
