

COPING WITH BELONGINGS

Dealing with a deceased's belongings is one of the harder tasks for many. Because the items represent a direct link to our loved one, it can feel as though we're losing yet another piece of him/her. Deciding what to do with their clothes, toiletries, tools, mementos, keepsakes and other belongings—and when to do it—is an individual decision that's best guided by your heart.

WHAT TO KNOW

- There is no right or wrong time.** The time frame for managing our deceased loved one's belongings and how exactly to go about it is unique to each of us. Some of us sort through, discard and/or donate our loved one's belongings immediately after the death. Others leave their loved one's belongings untouched for years.
- Do it in your own time.** Some mourners feel pressured by family or friends to begin sorting through belongings fairly quickly. Yet, some of your supporters might not have the best of intentions, such as wanting something for themselves that they believe you no longer need. Don't allow external pressure to dictate your actions.
- Do it at your own pace.** A deceased loved one often has years of accumulation that will take time to sort through. Unless you're under a hard timeline such as needing the space for something else or deciding to sell your home, there's no rule that says you can't take your time sorting through belongings. Go at your own speed.
- Do it in your own space.** Some mourners find comfort when supporters help them. Others find comfort in tackling it in private. Do what feels best in that moment.
- Don't make haste.** If in doubt about an item, keep it for now. You can always revisit what to do later but once you discard or donate an item, you can't undo it.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

Without judging yourself, what have you done with your loved one's belongings?
