

Name

**Not Just Another Day**

***by Sherry Williams White***

If a special day you usually shared with your deceased loved one is approaching you’re probably feeling especially blue these days. Maybe even surprisingly so.

It could be a birthday, anniversary, Mother’s or Father’s Day, or a day that the two of you set aside as your own. Whatever the occasion, there are ways for you to make it through these once wonderful and now painful occasions. Here are some tips on embracing your special days and the joy that you still can find in them.

Look. You’ll feel better if you confirm that your special day is near. Try not to ignore an approaching anniversary or birthday; that only keeps your tumultuous emotions churning right under the surface. Instead, recognize this day. Say it is coming. Plan to observe it.

Surprise. Don’t be surprised at the intensity of emotions your special day stirs up. Even if your loved one died years ago, a holiday or special day often becomes unexpectedly emotional. Don’t worry. It’s normal.

Observe. Do something to mark the day. Make it simple or as involved as you want. For instance, treat yourself to something special that you enjoy or that you and your loved one enjoyed: a movie, a meal, a treat. Call a few trusted friends and ask them to share a favorite memory of your loved one. Plant a tree or flowers in memory. Give to others who are in pain by serving at a soup kitchen or visiting a nursing home. Light some candles.

Change. You’ll do better with this day if you don’t try to do exactly what you and your loved one did. For instance, if you normally bought a gift for your loved one, and it’s just unbearable not to buy one this year, buy a gift and give it to someone else. You might choose to share it with someone in a shelter or a nursing home or you might just want to do something nice for a friend or family member in honor of your loved one.

Feel. You may feel more emotions than usual on this day; you may feel fewer than you expect. Don’t worry about either. Do go ahead and feel what you feel. You can trust your emotions.