

When Your Parent Dies

Here are some tips that may help you and the rest of the family recover from the death of your parents.

- Work at keeping the lines of communication open between you and your siblings. They understand more than anyone what your loss entails. Remember each member of the family has a personal loss and each will mourn the death of your parent for different reasons and in different ways.
- Find one or two close friends with whom you can talk. People often say, "My friends don't want to hear about this!" All your friends won't, but ask one or two for permission to use them as sounding boards. There are also professionals you may call on: your doctor, your clergy, a counselor or your funeral director.
- Do something to memorialize your parent. This could be a donation to a favorite charity. It could be a memorial in your family church. If possible you may want to create a permanent memorial at his or her college or university. Perhaps you would like to plant a tree in memory of your parent.
- Draw on the resources of your faith to sustain you. How does your faith or spirituality address the issue of dying? How does it help you make sense of life? Does it help you answer your questions?
- Although your parent is physically dead, he or she will continue to live through you. The values your parent gave you will affect you - for better, or worse - for the rest of your life. Take what is good from them and incorporate it more fully into your life and be thankful for the good you received.