

CorsoCare Hospice Bereavement Program

'Letting Go' Prayer

One of the most frightening things for a bereaved person is to conceive of "letting go" of the deceased. To many, this equates with "forgetting" the person who has died. A better way to understand it is to see it as a shift of focus. Whereas the life and death of the loved one has been the primary and frontal image in the life of the bereaved, the deceased begins to move slowly to the side, to accompany the bereaved on the continuing journey of life instead of being the ultimate goal. The memory remains as long as there is life but is no longer the reason for that life. One learns to move forward, taking memories along as companions.

This prayer is not meant to be said once, and then put aside, for 'letting go' does not happen in a single instance. Like grief, it is a process. The prayer is meant to assist in the changing of the focus.

To: _____,

Your death has left a gaping hole in my life and heart, producing an emptiness I know will never be filled. I miss your voice, the sound of your laughter, those funny endearing things you did, those moments when I was infuriated at you. I miss the dreams I had for and with you. I miss the future we will never have and the past, which no matter how long it may have been, will never be enough.

I have wept for you as well as for myself. I have raged in anger at you, at God, at Fate, at the world, at anyone and anything that seemed to be an appropriate target. I have tried to understand why you are no longer with me; others have turned away, unable to hear the pain I carry. Do not ask them to share it with me, only to listen as I talk and cry. I have waited in the darkness for some sign that you are in a better, safer place, and even when I may have received it, I could not help but question how it could be better if I am not there with you. And I have wanted to join you so often when the aloneness threatened to overwhelm me.

Through all of this turmoil and doubt, I have managed to come this far. I have not achieved my goal, but at least I can not recognize that I am on the road to recovery. I am not sure how I will go on without you; no matter how many other important people there are in my life, you have always held a special place, and it is hard to imagine you not with me.

Will you walk beside me now as a friend, comrade, and loving companion? I cannot come to you at this time; I can only trust that we will be reunited in God's love and compassion. But my life must go on; it is time for me to begin my life for others and myself. As I think of letting go of you, I must now ask that you also let go of me. Your new life must seem as strange to you as my new life seems to me; perhaps the memory of me is as comforting to you as your memory is to me. Let us, then, agree to explore these new existences, these new spheres of reality, knowing that we carry the other with us, not with chains, but with loving open hands.

I let you go, my dearest. I know you will never leave my side, as I will never leave yours. Thank you for this wonderful, unique relationship we shared. When we meet once more, I look forward to sharing these new experiences with you. I love you. I miss you. I will never forget you.

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