

## Honoring Your Loved One on Thanksgiving

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/remember-loved-ones-on-thanksgiving-1132555>

1. Writing down your thoughts and feelings often proves an effective way to [cope with grief](#). Whether you prefer using a computer or pen and paper, **journal your favorite Thanksgiving memories** surrounding your loved one, and continue adding entries during the holiday each year thereafter.
2. Many communities hold fundraising walk/runs during the Thanksgiving holiday, so consider participating in a **walk/run to support a cause** your loved one would champion, or to help find a cure for the illness/disease from which he or she died. Exercise can also help take your mind off of your loss and work off some of those Thanksgiving-meal calories.
3. Regardless of whether you will host the Thanksgiving celebration in your home, **create a [memory board](#)** and display it.
4. **Leave an empty chair and place setting** at your holiday table in remembrance of your loved one. If this gesture proves too challenging emotionally, you can also forgo setting out plates and silverware at the table and place the empty chair off to the side.
5. During the holiday meal, **offer a special toast** in your loved one's memory and/or ask your family members and friends at the table to share their favorite Thanksgiving memories of the deceased, if you feel up to it.
6. **Donate food** or an entire meal to someone who might otherwise go hungry this Thanksgiving, or make a financial contribution to an organization that feeds those in need.
7. If the weather and the season in your area permits, **plant a tree** in memory of the deceased to serve as a living reminder of the love you carry in your heart—not just on Thanksgiving but *every* day of the year.
8. If you are hosting the holiday festivities, **light a special candle or small electric lamp** in your home, perhaps next to a favorite photograph, as a quiet reminder signifying your loved one's presence in your heart and mind during Thanksgiving.
9. Using computer software, **create a tribute video** from your favorite photographs and/or existing video of your beloved, set it to music and share it with your family members and friends after the meal.
10. If you're asked to bring a dish for the meal, **prepare your loved one's favorite food** and make this fact known as people pass it around the table.
11. Ask family members and friends to help you **craft a "memory capsule"** by contributing meaningful items associated with your loved one—such as cards, letters, photographs,

souvenirs, etc. Place them in a sturdy vessel and bury it on your property after holding a small ceremony or sharing a favorite memory, if you wish, after deciding upon a future "do not open until" date.

12. Volunteer your time to **help a local service organization** or your place of worship fulfill its mission of helping those in need on Thanksgiving Day.
13. The long holiday weekend provides a great opportunity to clean out your closet or dresser and **donate your gently used clothing** in your loved one's memory, particularly jackets, coats, gloves, hats, etc., to others who might benefit from them as colder weather approaches.
14. Hospices, funeral homes, churches and other places of worship often hold remembrance services on or around Thanksgiving. Because holidays can prove challenging for surviving loved ones, **attend a remembrance service** this year, which usually incorporates music, inspirational and/or religious readings, and other special moments to help grievers honor and remember their departed loved ones.
15. As noted above, exercise offers many benefits, particularly after a heavy Thanksgiving Day meal, so **get outside and walk** around your neighborhood or visit the park you associate with a beloved family member and/or pet.
16. The meaning underlying Thanksgiving Day is to give thanks for the blessings in our lives, including our family members and friends. In that spirit, **create and give memorial gifts** to those who knew your beloved, such as personalized silicone wristbands, [memorial window decals](#), framed photos, memorial garden stones, handcrafted items, etc.
17. Previously, families often chose to **watch a home movie** of earlier Thanksgivings, holidays or other meaningful moments. If you feel up to it, gather everyone together, turn off the football game and your various handheld devices and view a blast-from-the-past in whatever format you have available.
18. **Make a financial contribution** to a cause your beloved would champion, whether in his or her name or anonymously.
19. Thanksgiving is a time for giving thanks but many find this difficult given their circumstances. Therefore, **"adopt" a less-fortunate family**, whether through your church or other local charitable organization, and help make their holiday brighter in memory of your loved one.
20. After the holiday meal, **attach a note written to your loved one** to a helium-filled balloon and release it outside with your family members and friends present. This action generally proves more cathartic than you might think.

21. During the long holiday weekend, **visit your loved one's gravesite** or the place where you scattered the [cremated remains](#), share your feelings with him or her and leave some flowers or a memento to signify his or her continued presence in your heart and mind. This is also a great time to clean the headstone or grave marker if the weather permits.
22. After your holiday meal, **watch your loved one's favorite movie**, whether with other family members and friends or by yourself.
23. **Create a "memory chain"** by writing your favorite Thanksgiving memories, your present feelings, adjectives that reflect your loved one's special qualities, or the things for which you feel thankful onto long, narrow strips of colored paper (about 8" long by 1" high). Form interlinking loops with each piece to form a chain you can use to frame a doorway or hang it on a wall or along the edge of your dinner table.
24. We often associate the Thanksgiving holiday with tasty food and special dishes, so contact an area hospice, nursing home, shelter or other caregiving facility ahead of time to determine what you can **bake/cook and then deliver** to brighten the holiday for someone else, such as cookies, candies and/or other special foods.
25. If you will host your holiday celebration this year, ask your family members and friends ahead of time to bring a small memento, favorite photograph or personal note they can quietly place on a **"memory table"** you set up in your home in your loved one's honor.
26. **Create a special centerpiece** using items from around your house and/or purchased from a craft store, and then place it on your Thanksgiving Day table.
27. If you feel up to it, **take a road trip** and spend the long holiday weekend in your beloved's favorite location or somewhere meaningful, attend his or her favorite sporting or recreational event, or simply perform an activity that the two of you loved doing together.
28. Many families decorate their homes for Thanksgiving so **make a memorial wreath** for your front door or above the hearth by adding ornaments, decorations and/or photographs of your beloved to a real/artificial wreath.
29. If you feel up to it, schedule some private time before or after your holiday celebration to **write a love letter** to your beloved and pour out the thoughts and feelings you would express if he or she were with you. Afterward, seal it in an envelope and tuck it away in a special place.
30. Whether you perform a few of the preceding suggestions or think of some other meaningful way to remember your departed loved one this Thanksgiving, the greatest gift you can give your beloved is to **just remember**. The only form of immortality

available to us is to live on in the hearts and minds of our loved ones, so trust your instincts and do what feels right for you.