

Alternatives to Journaling

Writing a journal or keeping a diary may not be your thing, some of us prefer to express ourselves differently but you might want to consider some other alternatives that still have the same benefits.

Story-telling

Do you enjoy telling or writing stories? If so, what would you say about your own story of loss? Sometimes, it's much easier to write in the third person, making yourself the central character in your story. We can often see ourselves more objectively from this viewpoint and you might find it gives you greater insights into yourself, your emotions and your grief. You may even want to add illustrations to your story to add further dimension and creativity to it.

Poetry

Poetry often uses a lot of imagery through words and maybe you can find a different language to convey your feelings through this art form. Poems don't need to rhyme or have nice, even verses – they can be as abstract as you want them to be – it's your words, expressed in your own unique way.

Visual grief journal

Sometimes finding any words at all is hard and a visual grief journal provides an alternative outlet when you cannot find the words. You might find it useful to use an art notebook for its sturdier paper and fill it with cuttings from old magazines/newspapers (second-hand stores can be a cheaper way of picking up stacks of used magazines). Look for pictures, colours, images, phrases or sentences that express your emotions at that time. It's not about your artistic skills, it's purely an avenue to explore your feelings.

Or, if you are more technical or you prefer a different/tidier way of working than sticking and gluing, maybe you might like to create an online version of it using digital images.



Gratitude lists

Understandably, you may first balk at the idea of creating a gratitude list when you're grieving but it's worth just keeping an open mind on how it can help you ...

In the midst of our pain and sadness, it is often impossible to see the good in life anymore but to acknowledge just those *little moments of happiness* that you may have experienced from a random unexpected act of kindness from someone or a friend/family member who did something thoughtful for you, can help to reverse the overwhelming feeling of negativity.

It's useful to do this exercise in the evening and write down three, specific good/nice things that happened to you that day, keep it simple ... eg. a phone call with a good friend, a walk in the park in the sunshine, a lovely meal cooked for you, a cuddle with your child, a compliment from someone.

And finally, of course you can do anything else that offers to give you an opportunity to express yourself in way that works for you – painting, dancing, cooking, singing, making music, photography, molding clay and so much more ... and try experimenting with something that maybe you've never done before, don't over think it, if it helps just a little, it's a good thing.

