



Carrying Them With You: Gentle Journaling for Grief

Prompts for remembering, for saying what's still unsaid, and for resting when you need to.

Grief doesn't follow a schedule, and it doesn't ask permission to show up: in the grocery store, in the middle of a song, on an ordinary Tuesday. These prompts are a place to put what you're carrying when it does. There's no wrong way to use them: skip any that don't fit, come back to one again and again, or write a single sentence and call it a day. Whatever you bring to the page is enough.

Before you pick up the pen

You don't need a fancy notebook or the right words. You need a few quiet minutes and permission to be honest. You have that here.

A gentle way to begin:

1. Choose a time and place where you can be soft with yourself: a comfortable chair, a mug of something warm.
2. Pick one prompt. Just one is plenty.
3. Write for five or ten minutes, or one sentence. You can stop any time, even mid-thought, and come back whenever you're ready.
4. When you finish, close the notebook and do one kind thing for yourself: step outside, stretch, text a friend.

Remembering them

Love doesn't end when someone dies, and neither does your relationship with them. It changes shape. Keeping memories close is a healthy part of grieving, not a way of getting stuck. These prompts help you gather what you want to keep.

1. A memory of you I never want to lose is... Write the small details: what you saw, heard, and felt. Small details keep memories close.
2. Something you taught me that I still carry is... A saying, a recipe, a way of treating people. Write how it shows up in you now.

Saying what's still unsaid

Many people find real comfort in writing directly to the person they lost. It isn't strange. It's one of the oldest ways humans have stayed connected to the people they love.

1. Dear _____, here is what today was like without you. Write to them the way you'd talk to them. Ordinary news counts.
2. What I wish I could still say to you is... The unfinished things are welcome here, even the hard ones. You don't have to finish them today.
3. I miss you most when... Name the moments, places, or dates. Knowing them ahead of time helps you be gentle with yourself when they come.

Every feeling is allowed here

Grief is rarely one clean feeling. It can hold sadness and relief, anger and gratitude, tears and laughter (sometimes all in the same hour). None of that means you loved them any less.

1. A feeling I haven't said out loud is... Relief, anger, numbness, even moments of joy. Every one of them can sit right beside love.
2. Something that would have made you laugh this week is... Smiling is not forgetting. It's another way of keeping them near.

Carrying them forward, and letting yourself rest

Healthy grieving moves back and forth. Some days you lean into the loss; other days you turn toward ordinary life: work, errands, even fun. Both directions count. Rest from grief is not betrayal. It's how your heart paces itself for a long walk.

1. One way I'm carrying you forward is... Or one way you'd like to start. A ritual, a cause, a kindness done in their name.
2. Today I took a rest from grief by... Write it without apology. Breaks are part of grieving, and you're allowed every one of them.

If it feels like too much

Some prompts may touch places that are still very tender. If writing starts to feel overwhelming, you have full permission to stop mid-sentence. Close the notebook. Put your feet flat on the floor, look around, and name five things you can see. Take one slow breath, then another.

And if something heavy keeps surfacing, especially anything painful about how the loss itself happened, please don't work through it alone on the page. Bring it to session. That is exactly what our time together is for, and we will go at your pace.

There's no finish line here, and no grade. You're doing something brave every time you open this notebook, and every time you decide today isn't the day. I'm honored to walk this with you.

This handout is a companion to therapy, not a replacement for it. Bring whatever it stirs up to our next session, and we'll hold it together. If you're in crisis, call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) — any time, day or night.