

preparing for goodbye

anticipatory grief carries a strange, painful gift: time. there is still a chance to say things, to ask things, to be present in a way that sudden loss never allows. none of this is about hurrying the ending or giving up hope, it is about not leaving unsaid the things you would ache to have said. there is no script, and no test. only the time you have, used however feels right.

being present now is its own kind of love. you do not have to do it perfectly. you only have to be there, in whatever way you can.

THINGS YOU MAY WISH TO DO, IF YOU CAN

say the things that matter. “i love you,” “thank you,” “i forgive you,” “please forgive me.” these four sentences carry almost everything a heart needs to say. say them while they can be heard.

ask the questions only they can answer. what are they proud of? what do they want you to remember? a recipe, a story, a wish for those left behind. their answers become things you keep forever.

gather their voice and their stories. a recording, a written note, a hand traced on paper. small keepsakes of who they are become unspeakably precious later.

just be present, wordlessly. if there is nothing to say, you can simply be there, hold a hand, sit in the quiet, watch something together. presence speaks when words run out.

let them lead where they can. some people want to talk about the ending; some do not. follow their pace, not the one you think you should be on.

A GENTLE REMINDER

preparing for a goodbye is not the same as wishing it sooner, and it is not disloyal. it is one of the most loving things you can do with the time that remains, to make sure that when the moment comes, less is left unsaid.

let every feeling have room. you can grieve who they were and treasure who they still are, in the same hour. that is not giving up on them. it is loving them in two tenses at once.

IF THE DAYS FEEL UNBEARABLE

if you are struggling to carry on, please reach out. you should not have to hold this alone.

SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group): 0800 567 567

Lifeline South Africa: 0861 322 322

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