



## Grief: Loss & Bereavement Rituals and Traditions by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

In our hour of grief, there is a great deal to be said for personal traditions or religious grief rituals. Even when they might seem "scripted," there are sound reasons why every culture throughout history has had grief rituals and has passed them down for centuries. I encourage people to follow their hearts. See which feel right for you. In addition to established traditions, consider creating your own personal bereavement rituals to find meaning in the life and legacy of your loved one.

When I lost a beloved sibling, it felt necessary to me to create a family ritual to soothe the grief of another loved one. A cherished family member, profoundly disabled with cognitive impairment, was unable to attend the memorial. We needed to create an appropriate symbolic bereavement rite of some kind. On a clear, beautiful day, I brought my disabled loved one out to the garden. I wrote her loving dictated message onto a pink helium balloon, and together, we released it into a clear blue sky and watched as it sailed toward the heavens. This rite provided a loving and meaningful farewell, under these unusual circumstances. (With apologies to the environment.)

In that experience, I learned an important life lesson. The faces of my friends and loved ones who came to my sister's memorial service brought me indescribable comfort. I made time to write meaningful notes of heartfelt appreciation to each for their loving support. If you are grieving, please see several other tips to offer support during the grief process on my website at <http://www.relaxintuit.com>

*"My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness." -His Holiness, The Dalai Lama*

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