

Who Am I Now?

An important issue for those whose loved one has died is concern with their own identity. For example, parents whose only child has died often ask themselves, "Am I still a parent?" Siblings may ask themselves, "Am I still a little sister now that my brother has died?" A spouse who spent many of her last years of marriage caring for an ailing husband may find the shift away from the role of caregiver to be more difficult than expected.

The most current bereavement writers stress that it is wholly appropriate for you to want to maintain continuing bonds with a loved one who has died. The challenge is to restructure your relationship with someone who is no longer physically present and when things clearly cannot be the same.

It can be comforting to keep your loved one close in one's heart and mind, to talk about them openly and recall special times shared with them. Even though many things are different, they are, in a way, still with us; there is a legitimate sense to still value that role of a parent, sibling, or partner, even when it takes on a new meaning.

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