

# Qualities That Help

**B**efore the death of your loved one, you may have spent much of your time and energy being the caregiver. If you did, your opportunities to visit friends and socialize were probably limited.

And if your family lived far away you may have had limited support.

Recovery from the pain of loss is more complicated without a support network and some outside activities to add

meaning to life. If the illness was a long one, it may be years since you joined a new group or made a new friend.

You may be shy or self-conscious about taking the first step, especially if most of your social activities were in the company of your loved one.

You are out of practice, but you have nothing to lose. And you may have more support resources than you've thought of. It might help to make a list of:

1. People who are close to me: (include your family, friends, neighbors, past or present co-workers, clergy.) Which of these can you talk to? Who could help? Who have you missed the most in your life.
2. Clubs, groups or activities that interest me: (include sports, art, crafts, educational, church, veterans', men's or woman's, work-related or civic groups, or any other that come to mind.) Which ones did you belong to before? Which ones would you like to go to now if you could?



**When you finish your lists, consider this list of qualities that help with grief, see how many you have (assume you have at least some of each), picture yourself growing stronger and having them in a greater degree:**

- ♥ **Courage** to face your feelings; being afraid but doing it anyway.
- ♥ **Patience** to accept that you're not always strong and recovery takes time.
- ♥ **Resilience** to bounce back (this ability increases with age and experience).
- ♥ **Faith** that you can endure the pain and find healing.
- ♥ **Detachment** so you can see your loss from a distance and move to recovery.
- ♥ **Humor and Laughter** to provide emotional release. Laughter is not a betrayal of your loved one; it relieves pain and promotes healing.
- ♥ **Openness** to those who offer support. Family and friends can help ease the pain and loneliness. . . if you let them.