

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

WILLIAM R. SPENCER, M.D.
LEGISLATOR 18TH DISTRICT

15 PARK CIRCLE – SUITE 209
CENTERPORT, N.Y.
11721

CHAIR
HEALTH COMMITTEE

VICE-CHAIR
WAYS AND MEANS

MEMBER
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE



PHONE: (631) 854-4500
FAX: (631) 854-4503

December 15, 2014

Dear Editor,

As we are in the thick of the holiday season and busy celebrating, I want to reach out to those who are coping with grief. With good cheer all around, those who have suffered a loss may find their heartache to be accentuated and even feel unmotivated to participate in the usual holiday traditions. This lack of motivation may even lead to a sense of guilt, but be kind to yourself and consider some small steps that can be taken to honor your loved one as well as your emotions.

The most important thing is to be patient with yourself. Grieving does not have an expiration date and often comes in waves. Remember that with time, you will get better at handling the holidays, but until then, permit yourself to mourn. It is ok to communicate that you're not in the holiday spirit when invited to dinners or parties, don't worry about being a downer. If you are undecided, you can take your own transportation so you are free to leave at any time.

Starting a new tradition is a wonderful way time to remember your loved one; it is also a powerful healing activity. Perhaps continue a tradition that your loved one looked forward to. Or, light a candle and ask everyone to tell a story about the deceased. This dedicated time will allow you and others to open up and share; tears will come, but it's an instant elixir to heartache.

The gift of giving is also powerful in lifting spirits and healing the heart. Make a donation or volunteer for a cause that relates to the deceased. You can also buy a gift your loved one would have appreciated and present it to someone who would appreciate it as well. This will certainly bring you some joy.

Lastly, find a way to express your emotions. Whether it is with a friend, family member or therapist; have someone you can lean on as you are grieving. Remember that you don't have to always hold it all together, it's ok to cry.

If you are in need of bereavement counseling, you can contact the Suffolk Bereavement Center at (631)666-6873 Ext.200; (631)666-6863.

Sincerely,

William R. Spencer, M.D.
Suffolk County Legislator
18th Legislative District