

# CONNECTIONS

FOR TEENS

  
HopeWest  
HopeWestCO.org

## Grief Anniversaries

While grief does not follow the calendar year, many people find the first twelve months are the hardest. This time is full of firsts: the first holiday season, the first spring, the first birthday without the person who died. The pain of loss is great during the first year – and yet, you have made it through this time.

You may be surprised to realize how resilient you are. You may find you are able to survive painful losses and be enriched by them. You may have discovered new strengths, resources and a keener appreciation for life.

You may feel you are still struggling to cope and adjust to your loss. At the first year anniversary mark, memories of the details of the death may come flooding back. Emotions very similar to those experienced when your loved one died may come unexpectedly. The coping skills that we have introduced you to in “Coping Corner” for the past issues of Connections may come in very handy during this time. Look back at your past issues to remind yourself of helpful coping skills. You may also find it interesting to look back at your past journal entries to see how far you have come in your grief journey.

## Coping Corner

### Ideas You Can Use to Help Your Grief Heal

Create a ritual to remember and celebrate the life of your loved one. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Visit the cemetery or other special place. Say a prayer or bring flowers with you.
- Create a scrapbook of pictures, stories or other moments that you can look at from time to time.
- Plant a tree, bush or other plant in memory of your loved one.
- Make a donation to a charity in the name of your loved one. Pick a charity that was special to your loved one. The donation does not have to be large – every little bit helps.
- Prepare your loved one’s favorite meal and share it with friends and family.
- Light a special candle in memory of your loved one. This candle could be kept in your room or at the dinner table to share while you are having dinner with your family.

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The melody that our loved one played upon the piano of our lives will never be played quite that way again, but we must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust. We must seek out other artists of the spirit; new friends who gradually will help us to find the road of life again, who will walk that road with us.

- Rabbi Joshua Liebman

## Celebrate Your Loved One's Life

Grief anniversaries also provide a special opportunity to celebrate the life of your loved one. Memories can generate pain and sadness, but they can also bring us stories of joy and precious times we shared together with the loved one who has died.

One idea for a grief anniversary is to create a ritual. Over time, rituals have been created to mark important events. Rituals may mark closure or significant dates, all while offering great opportunities for healing.

Rituals for remembering loved ones can include things like: lighting a candle, reading a poem, sharing memories, saying a prayer, singing or listening to music that is meaningful or visiting the cemetery. It can be helpful to create a ritual that can be repeated in the same or similar way every anniversary. Rituals can be private or they can be shared with friends or with family.

### Other Ideas

Some teens like to express themselves through the arts. This could mean making a collage of both fear and hope, painting broad strokes of color to represent emotions or playing, singing or composing music allowing “different” sounds to express emotions.



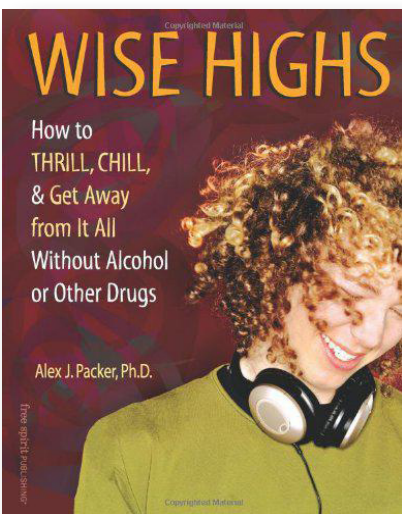
# This Month's Helpful Book & Movie



## Movie:

### *Hachi – A Dog's Tale*

Young Ronnie reveals to his classmates that his personal hero is a dog named Hachi. Ribbed by his fellow pupils, Ronnie goes on to tell the remarkable story of his grandfather's friendship with the dog.



## Book:

### *Wise Highs*

by Alex J. Packer, Ph.D.

The best-selling author of *How Rude!*™ describes more than 150 ways to feel really, really good - naturally, safely and creatively. From breathing and meditation to exercise and sports, gardening, music, and games, these are “highs” that can change teens’ lives without leaving them dull, burned out, or hung over.

