

This time of year, we are inundated by the media with suggestions for changes we can make to greatly improve our lives in the new year.

New Year's resolutions to improve our health and surroundings may be useful and even beneficial. However, if you are among those who have experienced the loss of a loved one during this past year, the typical media messages may ring hollow for you as the calendar turns. (How can it possibly be so important to eat more broccoli or walk 10,000 steps a day when there is an empty chair at the dinner table and a pair of sneakers by the back door waiting for an occupant who isn't returning?)

Perhaps it would be fitting to consider a different sort of New Year's resolution—a set of suggestions suited especially for those who are entering a season of their lives grieving someone whom they loved.

Such a set of resolutions might look like this:

- **I resolve to** not place time limits on my grief; it will take as long as it takes.
- **I resolve to** acknowledge my grief as my own—that it is as individual as I am—and will take shape in its own unique way.
- **I resolve to** be mindful of the need for flexibility when it comes to the expectations of others (and myself).
- **I resolve to** not be pressured by “shoulds.”
- **I resolve to** cut myself some slack when I am not as productive as I might like, behave in ways uncharacteristic of my usual self or simply “don't care.”
- **I resolve to** accept that others may not understand my pain, and it is probably not realistic to expect that of them. (Until one has walked the path, how can one know the terrain?)
- **I resolve to** express my feelings without guilt, and not apologize for tears.
- **I resolve to** be grateful for concerned others who willingly just listen.
- **I resolve to** recognize that my acceptance of assistance and support of others allows them the blessing of giving.
- **I resolve to** forgive those who say or do that which feels hurtful, recognizing that unkindness is not intended.
- **I resolve to** extend to myself the same grace and patience I would to others, were they in my situation.
- **I resolve to** find some little way each day to begin to reinvest in life, in an effort to move toward hope and a sense of purpose.
- **I resolve to** continue to speak my loved one's name, tell our stories and embrace my memories.

Whether or not you are one to make resolutions, it is our hope that one or more of these thoughts will resonate with you. Turning the page to begin a new year, you can be resolute as you move forward in your season of grief.

Hospice of the Red River Valley has many resources available for the public, on a loan basis, through the resource libraries in each of our offices. Topics include caregiving, terminal illness, dying, death, grief and loss. For more information about grief and loss, visit our website: www.hrrv.org or call us at (800) 237-4629.