



March, 2009

Dear Jean,

You have recently experienced the death of someone close to you, and the funeral or memorial service is likely over. Those who came from a distance have gone home. Friends nearby seem to be getting back into their usual routines again. For you, however, life is anything but normal.

Maybe the reality of it all has yet to even sink in. If this is the case for you, know that a sense of numbness and disbelief can help you survive your early grief; it lets you absorb the impact in small pieces. There is little time in the first weeks to tap into your grief anyway. Business matters need to be settled, phone calls made, and thank-you notes written. In spite of so much to do, it's important to be realistic in the expectations you have for yourself. Be patient and work at a reasonable pace, as you are likely worn-out.

Also, be aware that when emotions are running high, tensions and misunderstandings with or between family members can easily surface. There may be disagreements over how to divide your loved one's possessions, or irritation with the different way each person expresses their grief. This demands a spirit of tolerance and cooperation by all.

Lastly, don't forget that taking care of yourself is extremely important at this time for the sake of your physical and emotional health. If you were involved in the care of your loved one, you may have put your own needs on the back burner. Review the enclosed "Survival Guide for Early Grief" and post it in a prominent place as a reminder to make self-care a priority in the days and weeks ahead. You owe it to yourself!

May you be blessed with health and peace in this time of fresh grief.

With warm regards,

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