

# Strategies to Move Ahead

After your elder dies, moving ahead with your own life and that of your immediate family is inevitable. If your elder's spouse is still living, he or she will also need to reshape a life without the deceased person. This moving ahead can be difficult, but it is the natural progression of life. People change, circumstances change and life goes on. There are, however, coping strategies that can make this natural progression easier.

## Remember and Honor

Remembering, honoring and celebrating the deceased person's life is a good first step in moving ahead. This process recognizes your elder for what he or she gave to your life and the lives of those around you, and honors those contributions. It is also a recognition that, despite the fact that the person is gone, he or she lives on in memory.

## Reconcile Past Conflicts

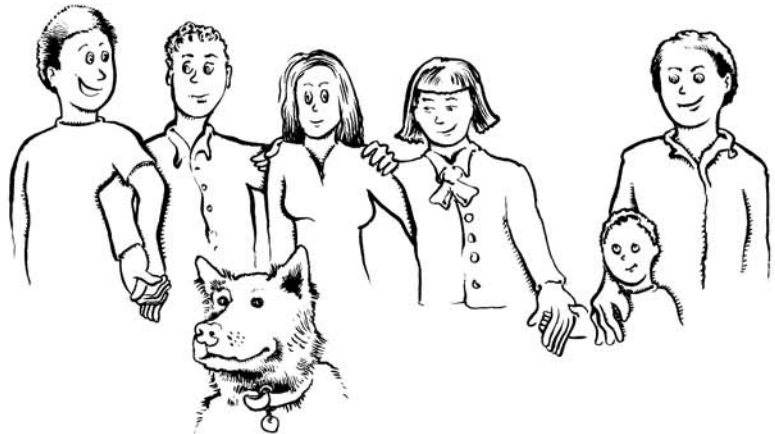
If your elder died before you had a chance to reconcile conflicts, disagreements or other negative emotions, you'll need to reconcile these on your own now. Try to work through the problems, forgiving both your elder and yourself for failings or stubbornness, and accepting that you did everything that you could, given the circumstances. It won't do you any good to harbor anxiety or frustration about your relationship with your deceased elder; try to accept, forgive and move on as much as possible.

## Accept Change

Change can be frightening, but it can also be healthy. After your elder dies, you'll need to accept that both you and those around you will change. Relationships will change, as will patterns of behavior. Try to accept these changes as normal and expected, working with people as they are now and not how they once were.

## Commit to the Living

The living—your own children, your spouse, your other relatives, your friends—need you now. Commit your life to them, and to yourself. Consider what they need. Especially if you spent the last months or years committed as a caregiver for your elderly relative, your family may now welcome you back and feel the need to make up for lost time. Rejoice in new births, in the accomplishments of your children, spouse, and siblings and—most of all—commit to taking care of yourself.



## Plan for the Future

After going through a grieving process for your elder, your priorities may have shifted. You may decide in the future to spend more time with your family. Or you may decide to change your career, take up new hobbies, reorganize your finances. These plans for the future are healthy and can help you regain a sense of your life and your purpose.

*Rejoice in the living  
as a way to cope with  
the loss of a loved one.*