WORKSHEET 143 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The bond that continues

What I keep of the person, and how I honour them

AIM

Explore “continuing bonds” with the person who died (memories, legacy, values passed on, rituals) and direct them towards forms that support present life.

WHO IT IS FOR

Grieving people who are afraid of “forgetting”, or whose bond with the person stops them living in the present.

DURATION

20 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Explain that keeping a bond with the person is common and often helps (Klass et al.).
2. The person notes what they received from the one who died: memories, qualities, values, habits.
3. They choose ways of honouring that bond in their current life.
4. Explore whether the bond helps them live or holds them outside the present.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Continuing bonds are more difficult when the person can’t make sense of the loss (Neimeyer et al., 2006): pay attention if the bond comes with intense distress. Grief is not an illness: these worksheets offer support and must not push the person to “move on”. Watch for signs of prolonged grief (at least 6 to 12 months of intense, pervasive yearning with impairment) and for suicide risk, especially the wish to be reunited with the person.

REFERENCES

Klass, D., Silverman, P. R. & Nickman, S. L. (Eds.) (1996). Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief. Taylor & Francis.

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Worden, J. W. (2018). Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner (5th ed.). Springer.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 143 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The bond that continues

Death ends a life, not necessarily a relationship. Many people keep a bond with the person they have lost: an object, a habit, a phrase they used to say, a value they passed on. That bond can become a source of strength.

1. Think about what the person gave you: memories, qualities, values, small habits.
2. Write them in the table.
3. For each one, choose a way of keeping it alive today.
4. Ask yourself what they would say to you about your life now.

What I received from them	A related memory	How I keep it alive today

What I think they would tell me today:

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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