

# I Don't Know Who I Am Without You

Loss can change more than who is beside you. It can change roles, routines, belonging, plans and the way you recognise yourself.

When a relationship or significant part of life ends, identity can feel shaken. You may no longer be a partner in the same way, a carer, part of a pair, a colleague, a member of a familiar household, or the person who followed a shared routine. The question "Who am I now?" is not selfish. It can be part of understanding what the loss has changed.

**The part of myself that feels most changed**

**The role or identity I miss**

**What feels unfamiliar about my life now**

# I NEED TO SCREAM — I DON'T RECOGNISE MY LIFE ANYMORE

This page is for the shock of looking at your own life and feeling as though it belongs to somebody else.

You do not need to find a positive meaning here. Write what has changed, what you hate, what you want back and what feels impossible to accept today.

**I want my old life back because...**

**I hate that I am now expected to...**

**I do not recognise myself when...**

**What I really need to scream is...**

# Who Was I With You?

Relationships shape ordinary identity: language, routines, responsibilities, humour, habits and the way we are known.

Think beyond formal labels. Who were you when you were together? Perhaps you were the organiser, the one who cooked, the person they rang first, the one who was cared for, a co-parent, a travel companion, a sibling, a friend, or simply someone who could be completely yourself in their presence.

**The roles I had with you**

**The version of me that existed around you**

**What you knew or understood about me that others may not**

# The Routines That Disappeared

Identity often lives in tiny repeated moments. Their absence can make an ordinary day feel unfamiliar.

Morning habits, messages, shopping, meals, television, journeys, weekends, appointments, celebrations, household jobs and private jokes can all carry a sense of “us.” Losing the routine can feel like losing the structure that told you where you belonged.

**The routine or ordinary moment I notice missing most**

**A place or time of day that now feels different**

**One routine I want to keep, change or create in my own way**

# When Relationships Around Me Change

A major loss can alter family roles, friendships and the way other people relate to you.

Some people may become closer. Others may disappear, avoid the subject or expect you to behave as you did before. Invitations may feel different. Family dynamics can shift. You may discover that people knew you mainly as part of a pair or role. These secondary losses can be painful in their own right.

**A relationship that has changed since the loss**

**What I miss about how people related to me before**

**What I need from relationships now**

# The Future I Thought I Was Going to Have

Grief can include mourning events that never got the chance to happen.

Plans may have included ageing together, holidays, children growing up, retirement, a home, work, celebrations, care, shared goals or simply next Tuesday. Grieving an imagined future is not grieving something unreal. The expectation was part of your life and its loss can be deeply felt.

**The future I thought we were going to have**

**The milestone or ordinary future moment that hurts to imagine differently**

**What I am not ready to decide about the future yet**

# Who Am I Now — Without Rushing the Answer?

You do not need a new identity immediately. “I do not know yet” can be an honest answer.

Instead of forcing reinvention, notice what has remained. Values, humour, skills, relationships, interests, memories, beliefs and ways of caring may still belong to you even when the context around them has changed. Other parts may need time to emerge.

Something about me that the loss has NOT taken away

A part of myself I would like to reconnect with

Something I am curious about, without committing to it

# Guilt About Becoming Someone Different

Change after loss is not the same as leaving somebody behind.

You may feel guilty when you laugh, make a new plan, change the house, meet new people, enjoy something they never knew, or discover a part of yourself that did not exist before. Continuing to live does not require forgetting. New experiences and continuing bonds can occupy the same life.

**A change or new experience that brings up guilt**

**What I fear that change might mean**

**A more generous meaning I could allow**

# Carrying the Relationship Forward

Identity after loss does not have to be built by erasing what came before.

Continuing bonds can include stories, values, sayings, traditions, music, places, recipes, objects, rituals, causes, lessons or ways of seeing the world. You can decide what belongs in your ongoing life. The bond may change shape without becoming meaningless.

Something from you / us that is part of who I am

A value, lesson or tradition I want to carry

How I might make space for both memory and change

# You Are Allowed to Become Without Erasing What Was

Identity after loss can grow around what mattered rather than replacing it.

## A message from Maggie

When somebody or something has been woven through your everyday life, it makes sense if you no longer recognise yourself in quite the same way. You do not have to rush to discover a new you, and you do not have to return to the person you were before. Some parts of you may remain steady, some may feel lost for a while, and others may emerge slowly. Becoming different is not betrayal. You can take memories, values, love and parts of the relationship with you while still allowing your own life to keep unfolding.

## What I want to give myself time to discover

## What I want to carry with me as I change

Further reading and support: Julia Samuel — Grief Works (2017). Megan Devine — It's OK That You're Not OK (2017). Klass, Silverman & Nickman — Continuing Bonds (1996). Lois Tonkin — Growing Around Grief model. Cruse Bereavement Support.