

HOSPICE *of the* VALLEY
Bereavement Literature

CREATING THE CHERISHABLE MEMORY

Denman Dewey believed that one element in healthy grieving is creating a cherishable memory. Without denying any of a mother's mistakes or negative qualities, a son or daughter can choose to stop rehearsing the wrongs, or hunt for the slightest good to remember . . . Sometimes we must remember a mother in new ways before we can love her in new ways. If we create a cherishable memory, our mothers will be easier to carry into our futures. Creating a cherishable memory is not unlike creating a work of art or a quilt. It requires sitting in the quiet of a beach or a park or woods and giving oneself permission, "I want to remember the time Mom . . ." or "I choose to remember how Mom always . . ."

*In the scrapbook of our mind,
there are some snapshots we put toward the front,
some we place toward the back.
Some pictures we choose not to include.
It is, after all, my album of memories.*

Some will need a safe place or space, a workshop in which to fashion, over time, a cherishable memory . . . One task for some grieving sons and daughters is to frame unpleasant memories of mother . . .

*Part of my mourning is not hanging out
with memories of the last years of mother's life
as dementia wreaked havoc.
I am not ignoring the memories.
I am not afraid to go there.
I just don't stay long if
I am summoned by a particular painful memory.*

-Harold Ivan Smith, in *Grieving the Death of a Mother*