

# How to Celebrate Mother's Day Without a Mom

Explore this Article ■ [Accepting Your Feelings](#) ■ [Feeling Close to Your Mother](#)  
■ [Making the Day Your Own](#) ■ [Questions & Answers](#) ■ [Tips and Warnings](#) ■ [References](#)

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Last Updated: April 2, 2021

Mother's Day can be a tough holiday for anyone who has a complicated relationship with their mom, or whose mom has passed away. If Mother's Day feels painful or triggers difficult memories, it's important to remember that it's OK to feel that way. By paying attention to your needs, whether that's celebrating your mom or distracting yourself from the day, you can make it through Mother's Day feeling strong.

## Method 1

### Method 1 of 3: Accepting Your Feelings



**1 Allow yourself to feel without judgment.** No matter what complicated emotions you might be feeling—sadness, anger, loneliness—do your best to open yourself to them, even when it feels hard. Notice each emotion as it comes, feeling it physically in your body and giving yourself the time and permission to experience it.<sup>[1]</sup>

- This is primarily a form of self-kindness. Your feelings are valid and deserve to be listened to; it's OK to experience everything you're going through today.
- Numbing yourself to your emotions might feel like a way of protecting yourself, but it often leads to more hurt, frustration, and sadness in the long run.



- 2 Vent your feelings in a healthy way.** Don't be afraid to let yourself cry if you need to. Share your feelings with friends or family if you feel comfortable doing so, or try expressing your feelings in by writing or drawing.
- Letting your feelings out in whatever way feels right for you is often healthier than pretending you're fine. It's OK to feel the way you're feeling, and it's OK to express your complicated emotions.



**3 Talk with other people who can't or don't celebrate with their mothers.** You might find solace in talking about your feelings with others who understand what they're going through. Seek out a friend or family member who's going through this day without their mom and ask if you can lean on them for support. You can even offer to do the same for them, if you feel comfortable.<sup>[2]</sup>

- You can also go online for a supportive community. Look for Facebook groups, forums, and websites made for people who don't have their mothers around and see what advice and comfort you can find.
- It's OK if you don't feel comfortable talking with a friend about this tough situation, or if they aren't ready to talk with you about it. Look for comfort from another source and remind them that you'll be there for them when they're ready.

### Method 2 of 3: Feeling Close to Your Mother



**1 Surround yourself with people you love, if it feels right.** If you'd rather not pass the day alone, spend time with close friends or family members instead. Share favorite memories of your mom, or look through a photo album and tell the stories behind each picture.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Filling the room with memories of your mom can help you feel her love and spirit, even when she's not there.
- If you don't or didn't have a good relationship with your mom, spend time with the people who nurtured you, whether that's another family member or a good friend.



- 2 Bake one of her favorite recipes.** If your mom loved to cook, pull out one of her old recipes and cook up a sweet treat or an old favorite entree. The familiar tastes will bring back great memories and remind you of great times shared around the table.<sup>[4]</sup>
- Sharing the dish with friends and family can also remind you that there are many more great memories yet to be made around a recipe that your mom has passed on to you.



- 3 Spend time in one of her favorite places.** If your mom loved a certain city, an old building, or even a park or hiking trail, make a trip there. Take the time to admire a view she loved, or sit on her favorite bench.<sup>[5]</sup>
- If your mom took pictures there, try to recreate them to help you connect with her.



**4 Write down her unique sayings or your favorite memories of her.** Think back on her favorite expressions, from the pearls of wisdom to the funny exclamations, and jot them down in a journal. Remembering and reading over her words can help comfort you, remind you of her voice, and even offer advice when you need it.<sup>[6]</sup>

- You can also jot down favorite memories you have with her to remind you of your great times together.



**5 Look back through pictures you have through her.** Go through old photo albums and flag your favorite pictures of your mom. Pull out a few to make copies of, or frame them on an open spot on your wall to ensure that your mom always has a presence in your home.<sup>[7]</sup>



**6 Visit her grave site or mausoleum, if she has one.** If it feels right, you could bring flowers or a wreath to her grave site or mausoleum. You may also want to talk to her during your visit. Do what feels right for you.

- Don't feel like you have to go to the cemetery, especially if you're feeling too sad about it.

Method  
3

### Method 3 of 3: Making the Day Your Own



**1 Stay in and relax.** If you're not up to thinking about your mom or Mother's Day, make it into a day for yourself. Stay home and do whatever makes you feel relaxed and calm, whether that's watching movies, reading, or pampering yourself with an [at-home spa day](#).

- If this is a hard day for you, make sure to show yourself a lot of love and care.



**2 Exercise to distract yourself and get out of the house.** Try going for a long walk, a hike, or a run to take your mind off of the day. Getting outside can refresh you, and the endorphins can ease your pain and stress as well.



**3 Get away for the weekend if you have time to plan.** If you have the funds to travel, book a flight or take a road trip out of town. Exploring a new area, even if it's not too far from your own town, is a way to get your mind off of the holiday and spend the time doing something you enjoy

- Mother's Day is celebrated on different days in other countries, so if you can afford it, spending the weekend abroad will ensure that you don't see Mother's Day advertisements or events.



**4 Avoid things that could remind you of your mom or the holiday.** Some people who go through Mother's Day without a mom find it best to avoid typical Mother's Day activities, like brunch, or certain locations or activities that could trigger painful memories. You may be able to confront these things in time, but if it feels like too much for today, it's OK to work your day around them.

- Try to avoid social media for the day and for a few days afterwards if you don't want to see Mother's Day posts.



## Community Q&A

### Question

**My mom is in the military on a work trip. How can I celebrate without her?**



**Rose**  
Community Answer

Just because she is on duty doesn't mean you have to be alone! Send her a video or call her and share gifts, you could also make art or send her a photo of a card that you bought or made for her.

Helpful 0 Not Helpful 0



## Tips

- Be kind and compassionate to yourself, no matter what you're going through. Be patient with yourself and remember that it takes time to heal from pain and sadness.

- There's no wrong or right way to feel about Mother's Day, no matter how much pressure you might feel to put on a happy, smiling face. Do whatever you have to do to get through the day.

## References

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## About This Article



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 38 votes - 72%

Co-authors: **10**  
 Updated: **April 2, 2021**  
 Views: **15,120**

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