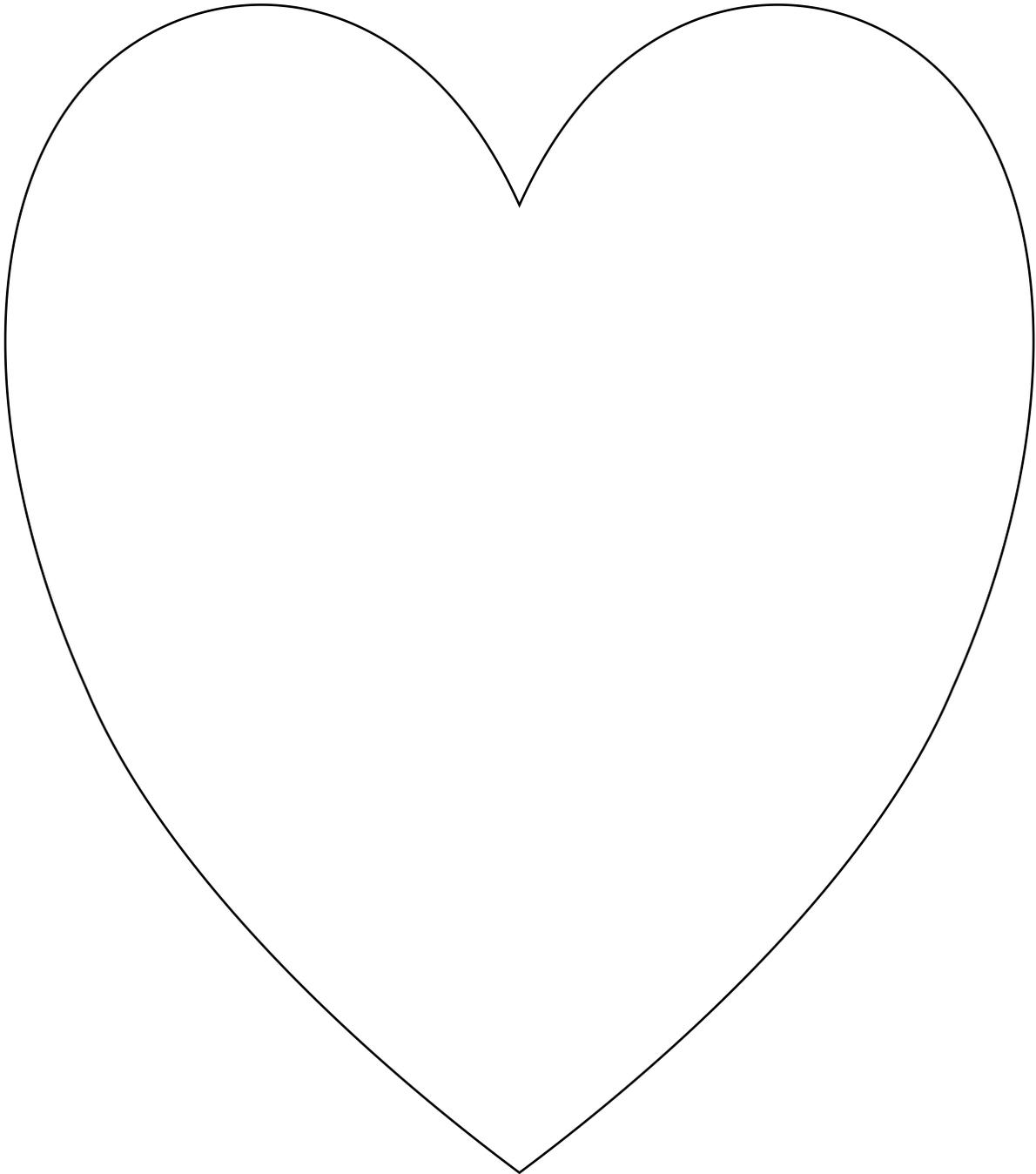


Grief Workbook

www.keepyourchildsafe.org

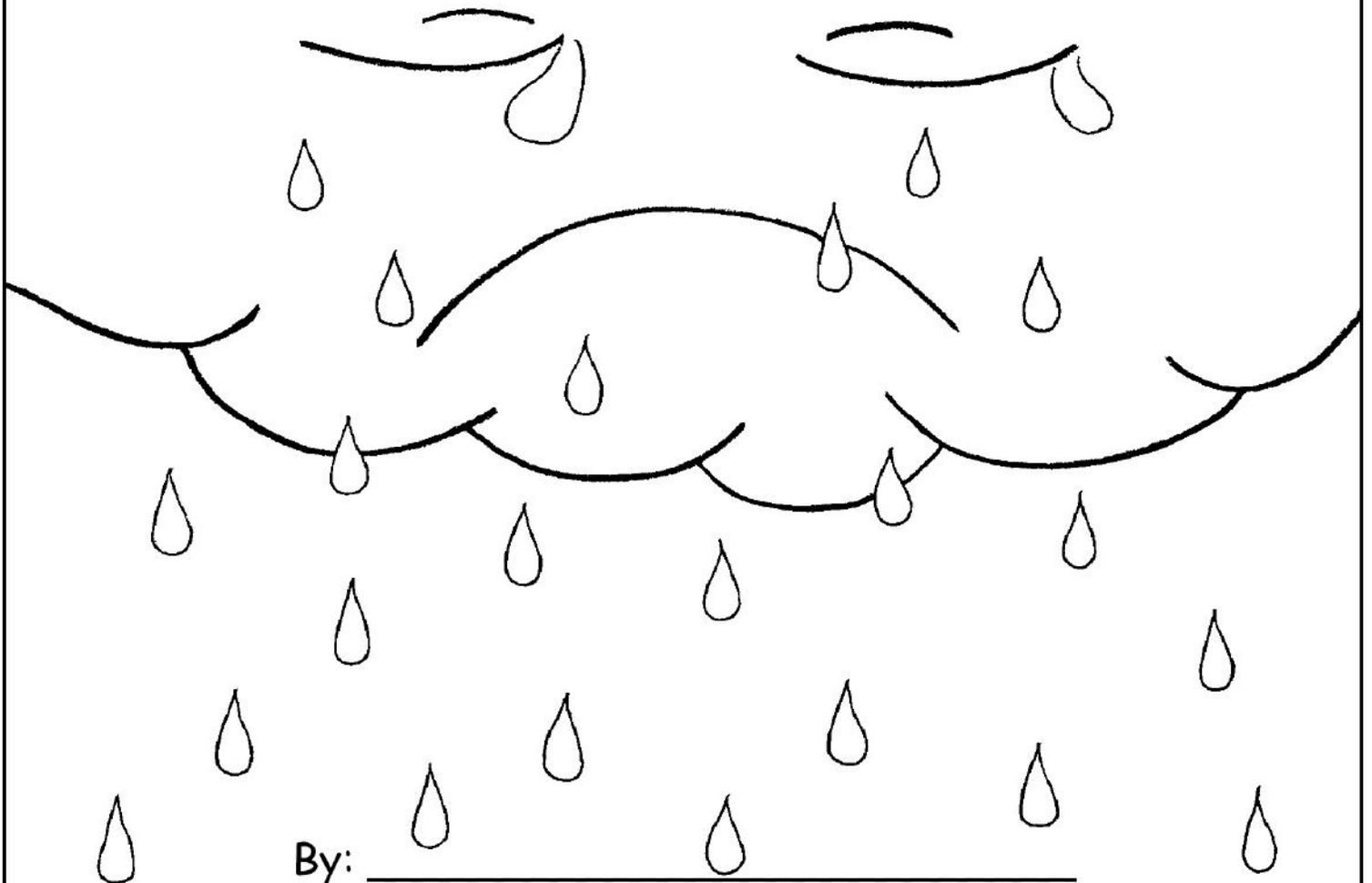


By: _____

Bereavement Workbook

When someone you love dies, it hurts deeply. Your head is likely to be filled with all sorts of emotions. You'll probably feel sad and depressed. Perhaps you feel afraid. You might feel angry. There may be times when you feel oddly okay. There may even be occasions when you feel all of these things at the same time.

You may be in shock at first. In your disbelief, it may seem like what happened isn't even real. You might feel numb and dazed, almost like you're living in a dream. Some kids try to put on a tough face,
pretending it doesn't bother them. Maybe they hope that pretending this might make it easier to deal with.



By: _____

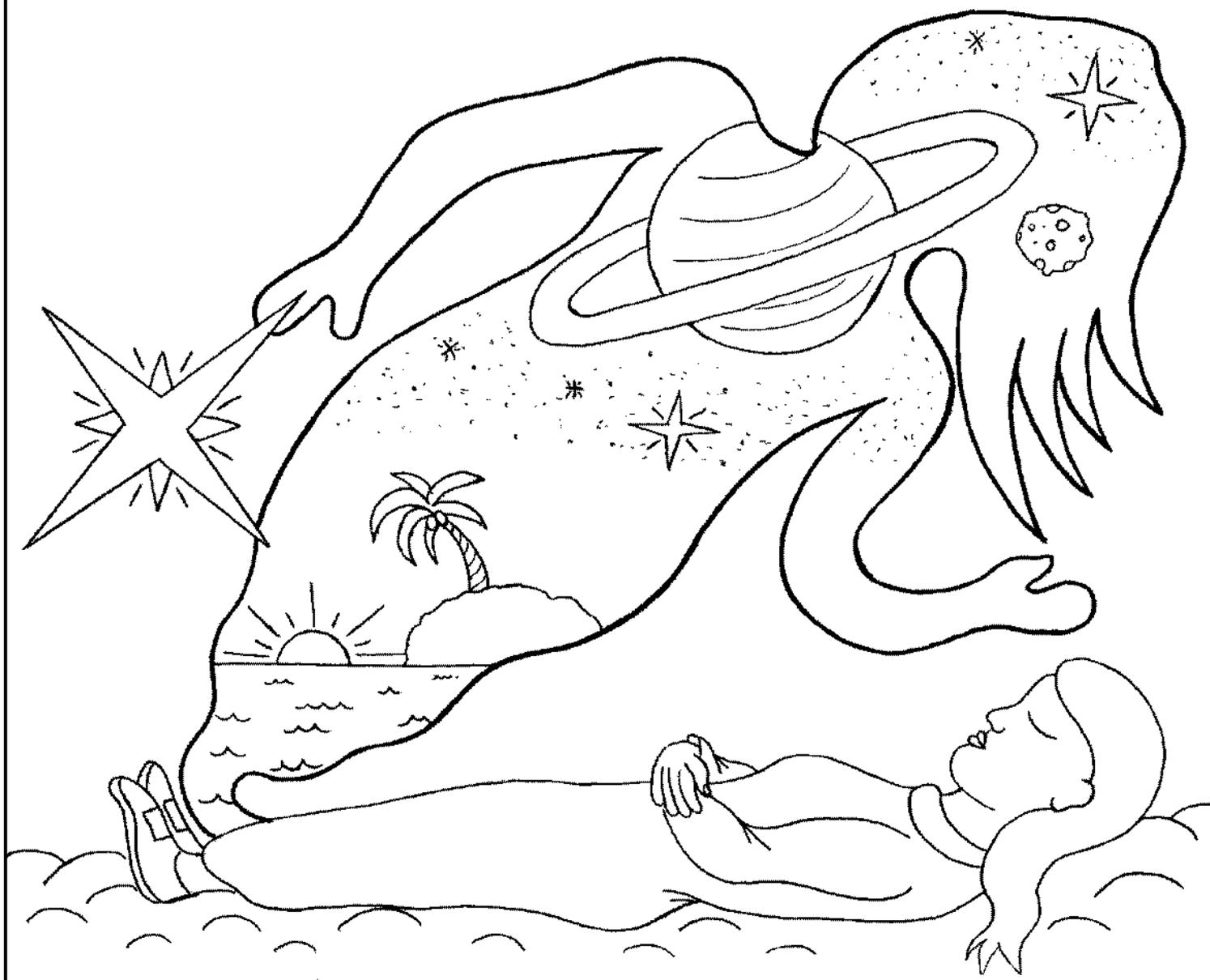
When somebody you know dies, it can leave a lot of questions. Most kids will start to wonder about things like:

Why did this happen? What caused this person to die? What about the other people in my life -- will they die too? Is it my fault? Did I do something to cause this? Why would God allow this to happen? Will I ever feel happy again? Where do I go from here?

Color this page while you're thinking about all the questions you might like to ask. When one comes to mind, write it on the next page.



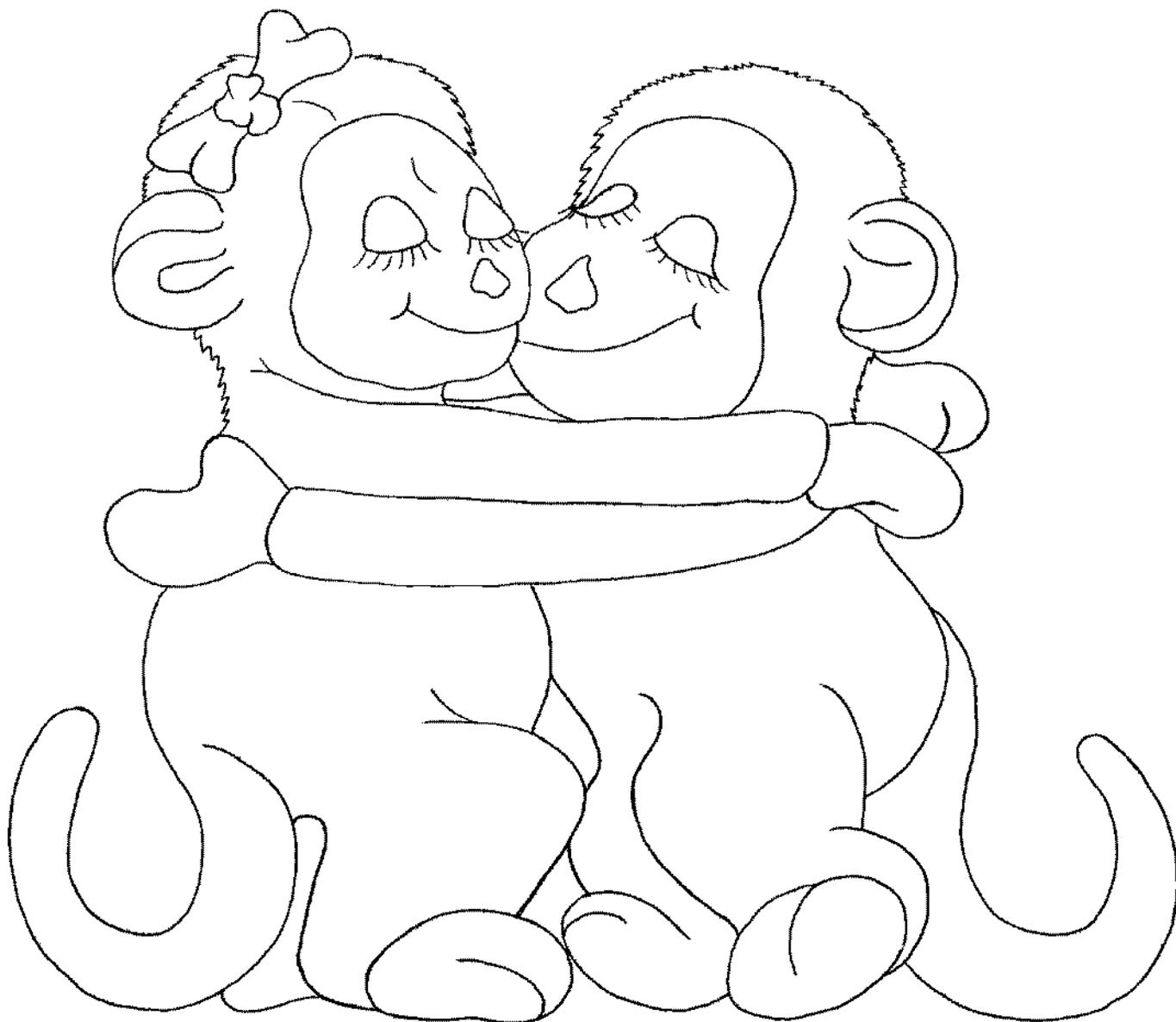
People have various beliefs about what happens when we die. Some people think we go up to heaven, which is a magical place both far away and close to everywhere at the same time. They believe those we love watch over us from there in times of need. Some people say we wait in Gods memory until the time comes when he makes us live again in a paradise. Others believe that our soul is freed from our physical body to explore the Universe as a spirit. They imagine their loved one seeing amazing things, only to rush back to Earth with specks of Jupiter in their hair in time to watch your Little League game. Still others believe we are born again into another body, to start life all over again.



What do you think? Draw a picture and create a comforting story about where you imagine your loved one to be. Use a separate piece of paper if you have to.

When someone we love passes away, it hurts not to be able to hold them close. We miss the feel of their touch, and the warmth against our body, even their smell. We miss their presence and wish they could be right here with us. It often feels as though they are so far away, and it leaves us with an empty feeling inside.

Yet they are very much alive in your memory. They will always live there. So whenever you start to miss them, try closing your eyes and imagine that they are holding you close . . . you just might be able to feel it.



When a person dies, it changes our relationship to them. We no longer have a physical relationship that we can sense through sight, sound or touch. But we still have a mental relationship that exists in our mind and with our spirit. Switching from a physical relationship to a psychological one takes some adjustment. But here are some things to think about:

1. What can you do when you want to feel close to them?

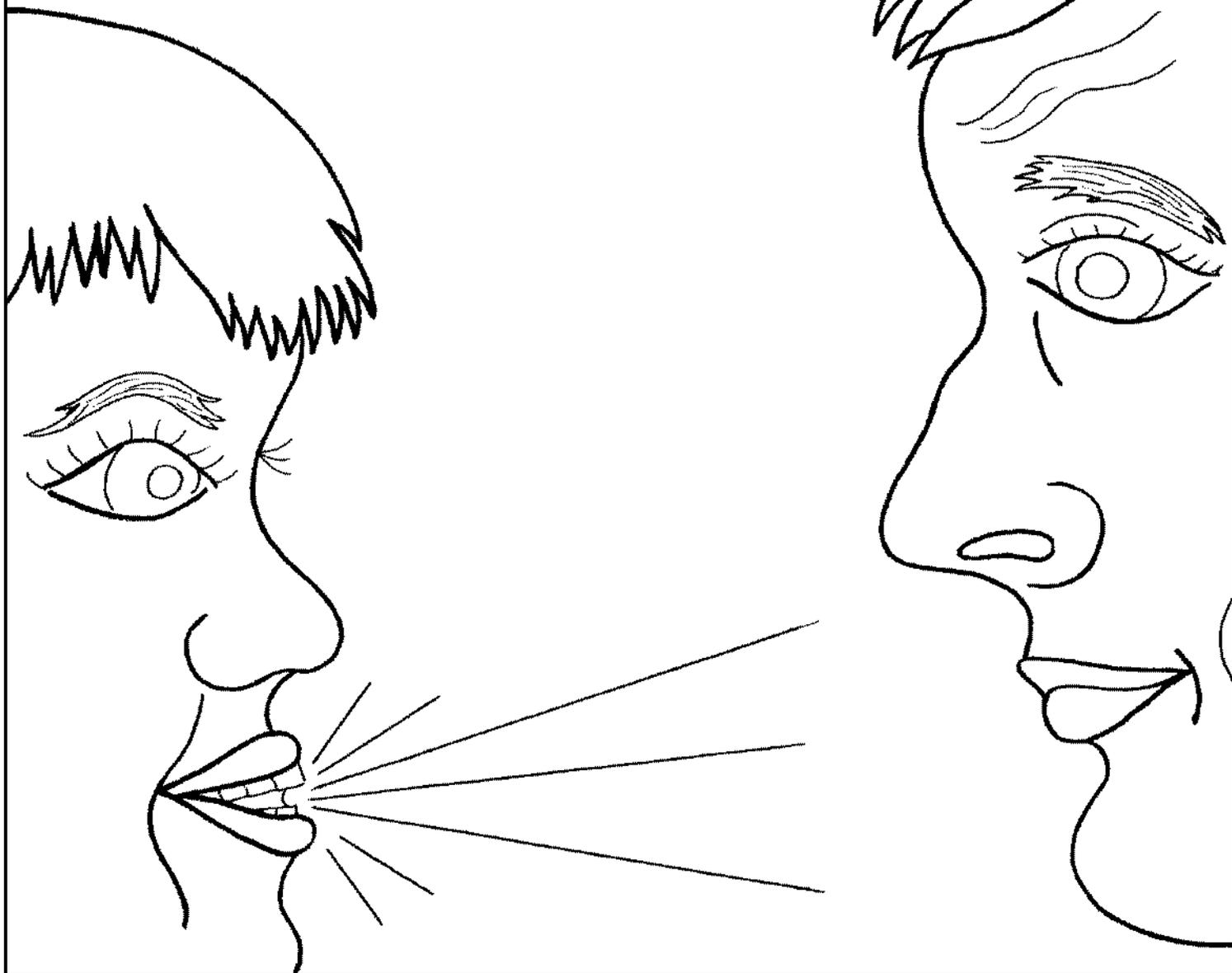
2. How can you keep them in your life?

3. In what ways can you keep their memory alive?

Those we've loved and lost are always with us in one form or another. In fact, their very essence is etched into your brain. Your time with them, the love you shared, their wisdom and advice - it's all been molded into the very structure of your brain, to be accessed through thoughts. In that sense, those we lose are never truly gone.

Sometimes people die rather unexpectedly, and we don't get to tell them everything we wish we had told them. Sometimes we don't even realize how much we love and appreciate someone until they're gone. This can be a tough thing to deal with. There can be so many things we wish we would have said, and so many things we wanted to make sure they knew.

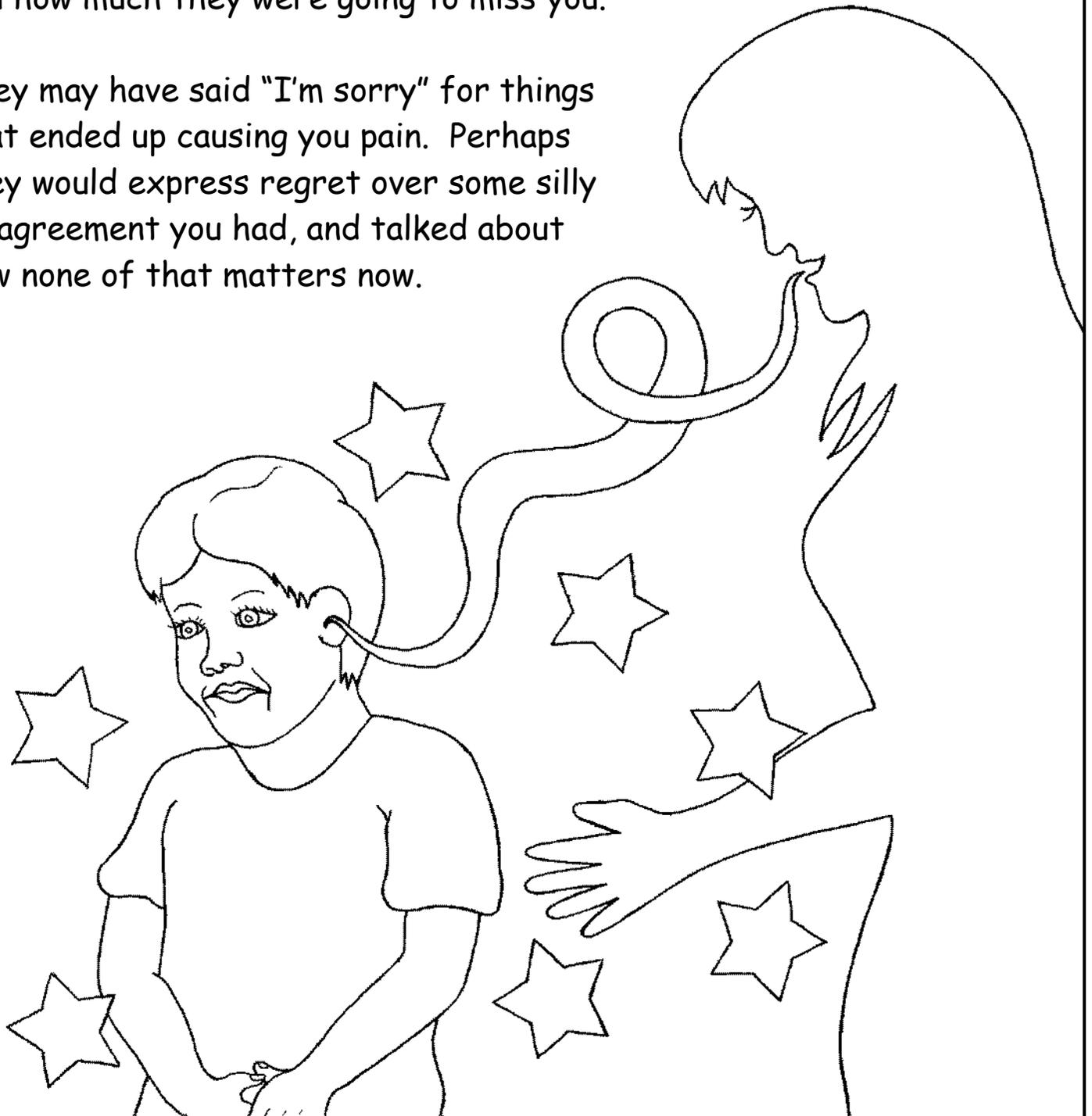
Perhaps you wanted to tell them one last time that you love them. To make sure they knew how you felt about them. Or perhaps to say "I'm sorry" for something you regret.



Another problem is that sometimes those we love don't get to say everything they would have liked to say to us. There were probably plenty of things they would have told you, if only they'd had the chance.

I'm sure they would have told you how much they loved you. They would have talked about how much you mean to them. They might have apologized for not being there at a time when you needed them, or told you how much they were going to miss you.

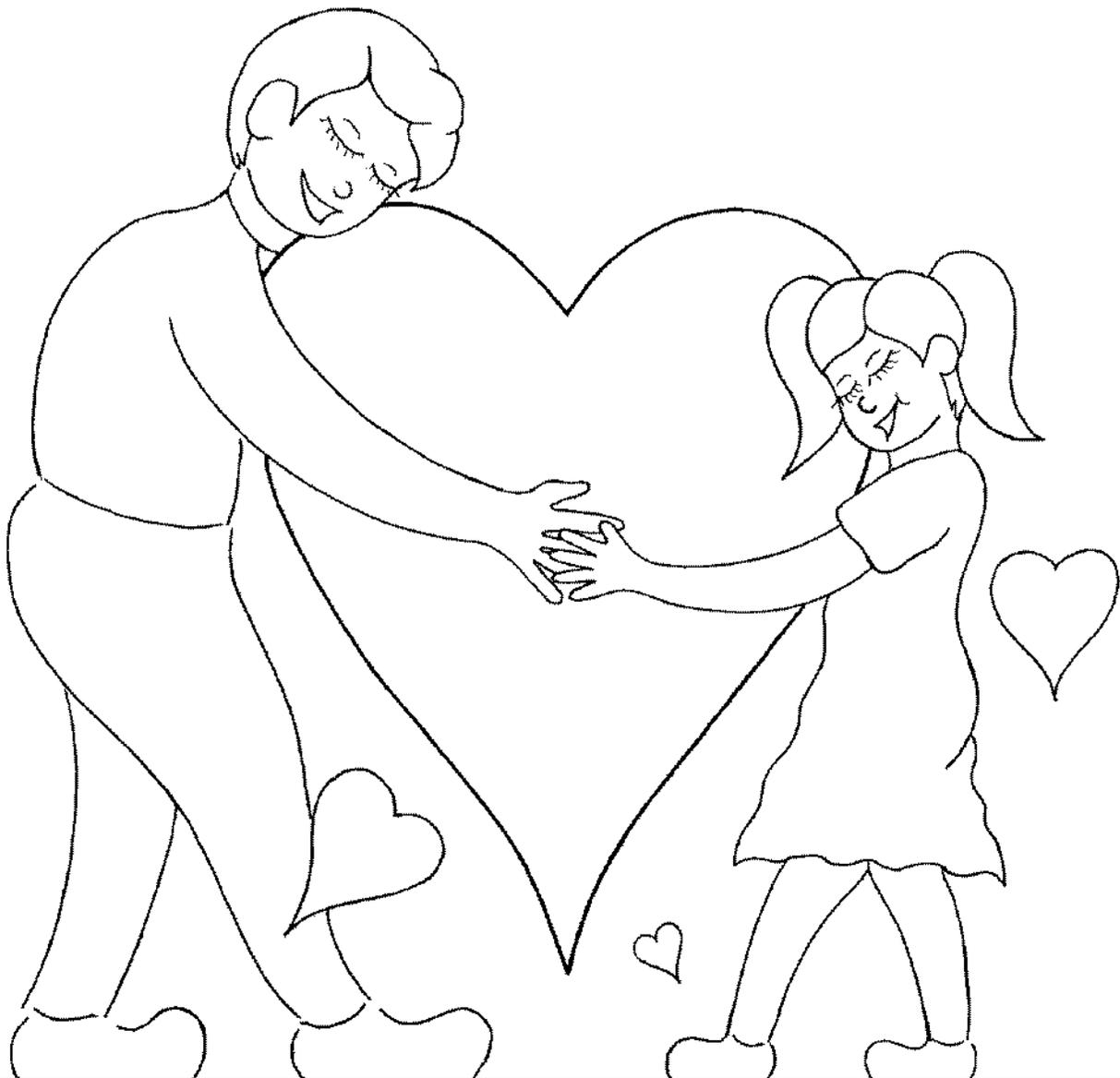
They may have said "I'm sorry" for things that ended up causing you pain. Perhaps they would express regret over some silly disagreement you had, and talked about how none of that matters now.



They would have said that, in the end, all that matters is love. How do I know this? Because when people know ahead of time that they will be leaving this world and **DO** have the time to talk to their loved ones, these are the things they say.

All the little arguments, the hurtful things said, the different ways we sometimes let each other down - none of that is important anymore. They soon discover that the only thing that matters, the only thing that's been real in this world all along, is love. Therefore I know that wherever they are in the universe right now, all they feel is love.

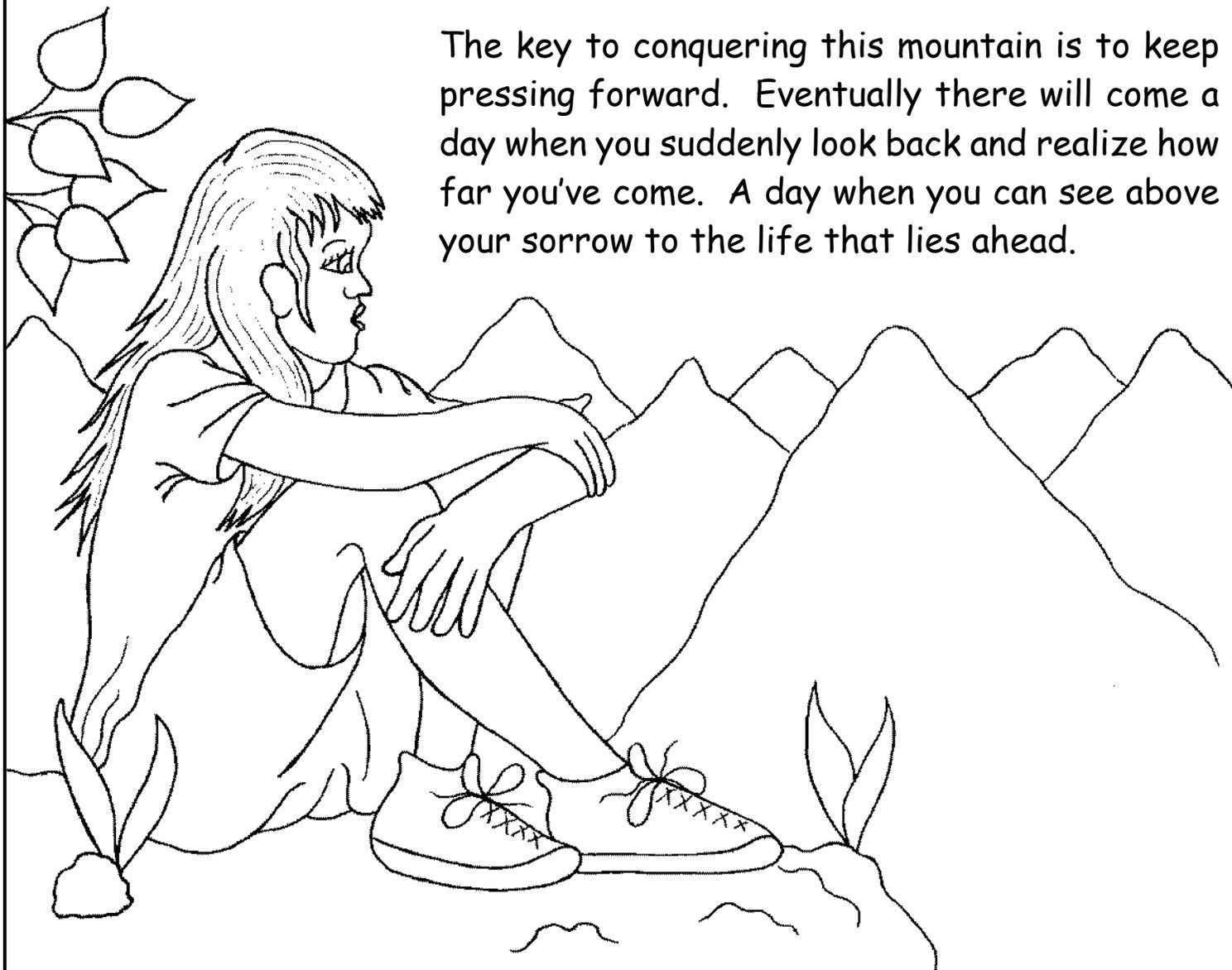
So no matter what regrets you might have, put them all aside. Remember only the love, because your love survives.



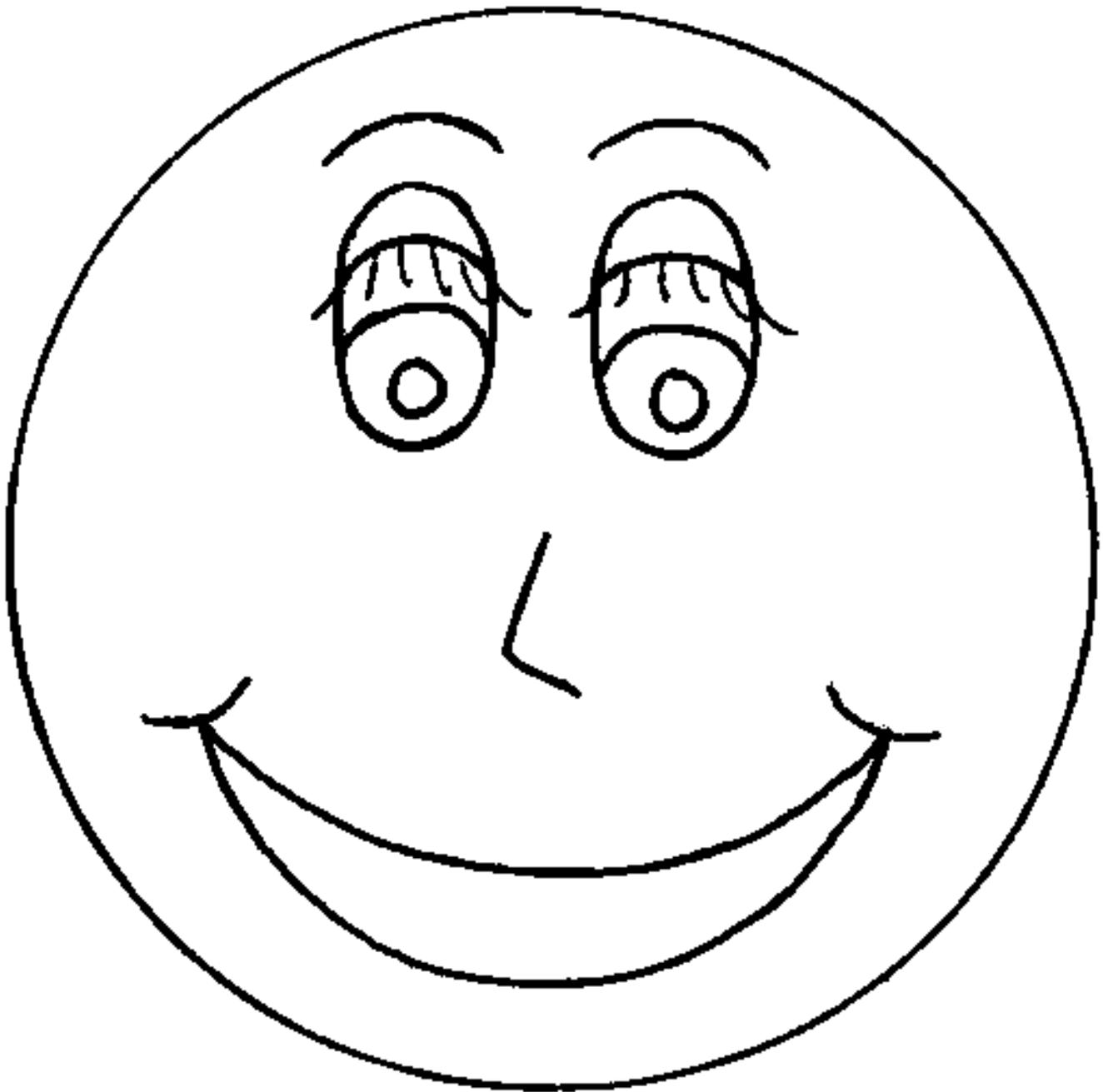
Your loved one also would have told you to be strong. They would have wanted you to be brave, even though that's a hard thing to do at a time like this. They'd have said that it's OK to cry, that it's perfectly alright to be sad. They would want you to find someone who can comfort you. You need to experience the full catastrophe of your emotions and work through them.

But they'd also have told you that at some point you need to put one foot in front of the other and try to slowly climb out of your despair. Overcoming the loss of someone we love is like climbing a tall mountain. It isn't easy, and it can be quite painful at times. There are high spots and low spots along the way, and sometimes we wonder if we're getting anywhere at all. But it's a mountain we climb because we must.

The key to conquering this mountain is to keep pressing forward. Eventually there will come a day when you suddenly look back and realize how far you've come. A day when you can see above your sorrow to the life that lies ahead.

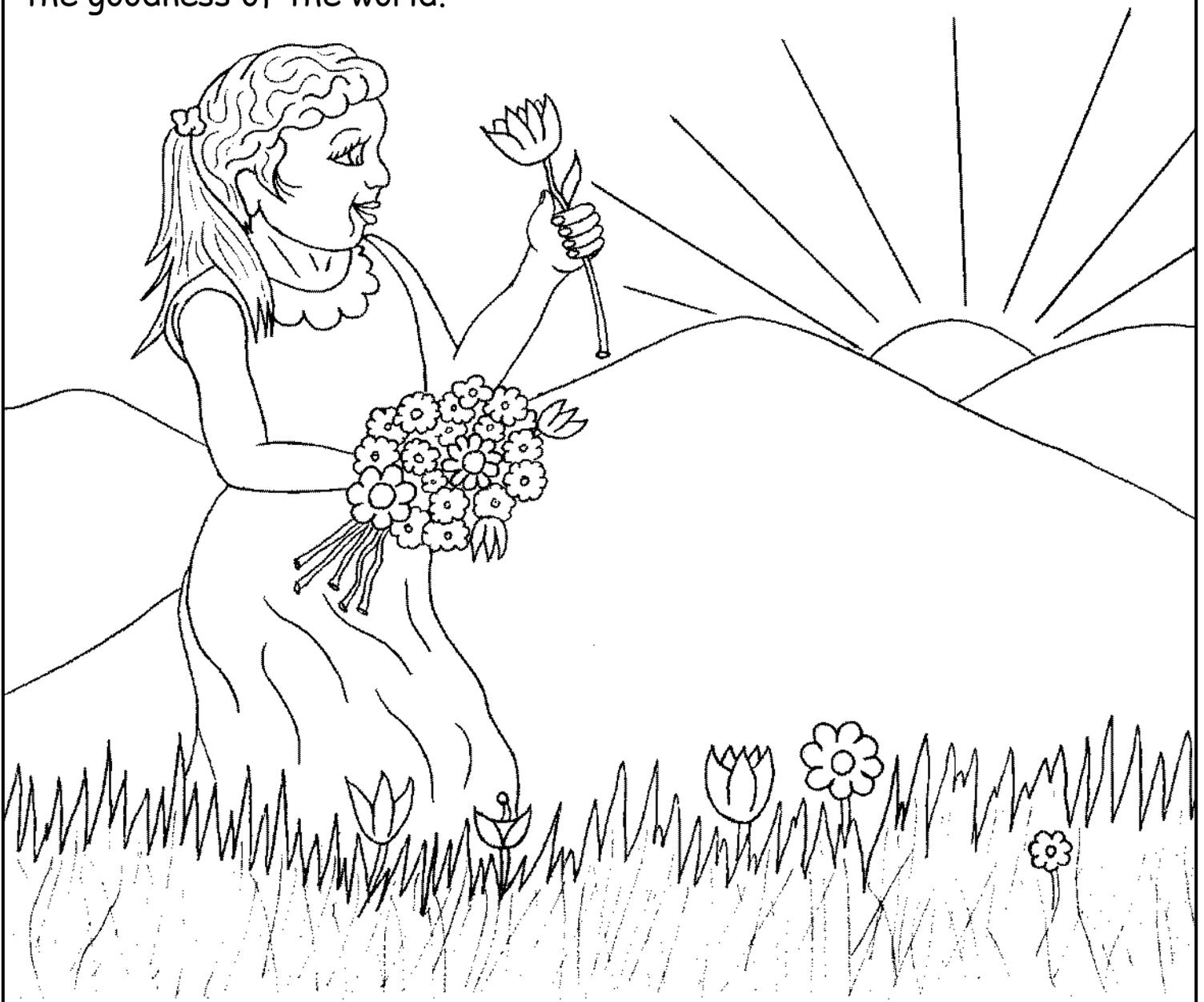


Above all, your loved one would have told you that it's OK to be happy again. They would have assured you that it's not a betrayal of your love for them if you smile or experience something of joy in spite of your grief. Because they love you so much, they would have wanted more than anything to see your pain subside and watch the joy return to your life. We can't force ourselves to be happy. This will take time. But we also must not pass up happy moments which do come our way because we think we need to be sad.



Don't forget to see the beauty in life, because it exists all around you. Take time out of your day to notice the little things. A field of flowers, a bird chirping in the trees, even a blade of grass seems special and unique when you examine it closely.

Know that when you smile, when you focus your attention to the everyday beauty in life, you're honoring your loved one's memory. After all, that beauty is where we can see the wondrousness of the world. It's where we can witness some of the miracles that the universe has to offer. That beauty provides a window into something more . . . something outside ourselves and our immediate existence. It's what restores our faith in the goodness of the world.



People can't be replaced. Everyone is unique, and those we love are uniquely special to us. There is no one on earth who could ever take the place of the person you lost. No one in this world has ever been just like them, nor will anyone ever live who shares all their special traits and unique personality. He or she will always occupy a special place in your heart that no one else can fill.

But the good news is that the happiness and joy they brought to our lives CAN be replaced. The love they gave us, the hugs and affection, the friendship or the friendly ear in times of distress – all of the things we needed them for can be provided by others.

This doesn't happen immediately. It takes time, which is why in the beginning we feel so hollow inside. Yet slowly but surely, we learn to depend on other people for these important needs. As the days go by and other love fills your life, their absence won't hurt as much.

