SUGGESTIONS TO AID SLEEP

1. Try not to become overly upset about not sleeping, as this just perpetuates your inability to sleep. Have confidence that EVENTUALLY you will sleep again.

2. Go to bed and get up about the same time every day, including weekends. A regular routine keeps your inner clock set. If you always awaken early, it may help to go to bed earlier.

3. Don’t try to force sleep. If you cannot fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something unexciting or peaceful, like knitting. Then go back to bed. Repeat this if necessary.

4. Take a warm bath and/or drink warm milk before going to bed. Warmth is soothing and milk contains an amino acid that helps you to sleep. Even cold milk may help.

5. Take time to unwind. Do not go to bed after a flurry of activity, either physical or mental, like balancing your checkbook.

6. Read light books, so the last thing you’re thinking about is the book instead of your grief and other worries. It helps to get your mind off your insomnia.

7. Learn some kind of relaxation technique, such as meditation or biofeedback. Try alternately tensing and relaxing your muscles as you lie in bed.

8. Exercise daily, but NOT close to bedtime.

9. Always avoid soft drinks, coffee, tea (hot or cold), cocoa, chocolate and Anacin which contain caffeine!! Drink herbal or decaffeinated tea or juices. Carry your own tea bags.

10. Don’t watch television in bed. Even dull, boring shows may keep you awake.

11. Be aware that sleeping pills, alcohol and cigarettes may even cause insomnia. Alcohol or sleeping pills may help us to go to sleep, but as soon as they are out of our systems, we wake up. We build up a tolerance and need more to get us asleep. Barbiturates can cause death when taken with alcohol.

12. Try not to spend daytime hours in your bedroom. Reserve that room for sleeping at night. Do not nap during the day. Avoid heavy meals before retiring.
13. Try sleeping in a comfortable bed in a dark, quiet room.

14. The hum of an air conditioner, fan or special bedside machine that produces soft noises may induce sleep.

15. Watch the temperature and humidity of the room. Warmth helps to relax muscles and induce drowsiness, but overheating and excessive dryness from high temperatures interferes with sleep. A cool room and an electric blanket may be a good combination.

16. Try curling up in bed with a pillow or large, soft stuffed animal. It may aid you as it did when you were young.

17. Lie on your side. Place a second soft pillow over exposed ear, leaving your face out between the two pillows…or use earplugs.

18. If problems and anxiety are causing you much sleeplessness, consider talking them over with an understanding friend. If this doesn’t help, consider counseling.

19. Widowed people suggest sleeping in a different room; sleeping on your spouse’s side of the bed so your side is empty instead; putting a pillow behind your back as you lie on your side.

20. Try mind games…counting sheep, recalling a nice day, plotting a novel, planning a trip, etc. Pleasant relaxing thoughts help to distract you from worries and the inability to sleep.

21. You may find the repetition of prayers to be sleep inducing.

22. Remember that many bereaved people have difficulty sleeping. Concentrate on the sleep that you do get. We often sleep more than we realize. Try to keep an optimistic attitude about sleep.