



U R A N T I A U N I V E R S I T Y I N S T I T U T E P R E S E N T S

Grief & Transitions

Ministry

Finding Healing, Meaning, and Growth Through Loss



1. Introduction to Grieving and Transitions Ministry	1
Introduction to the Workshop	1
Introduction to Grieving and Transitions Ministry	2
Introduction to Grieving and Transitions Ministry	2
2. The Grief Process and Growth	5
The Grief Process and Growth	5
The Stage Model of Grief	7
The Task-based Model of Grief	7
Models of Grieving Conclusion	12
3. Finding Meaning	12
Finding Support	17
4. Spirit-Led Counseling Methods	18
Spirit-Led Counseling Methods	18
How Jesus Ministered as He Passed By	19
How Jesus Ministered as He Passed By	19
Practical Grief Support	21
Ways to Support Someone Grieving	21
How Do We Grieve Loved Ones When a Funeral is Not an Option?	23
Journaling Activity	24
Journaling Activity	24
Complicated Grief	24
Complicated Grief	24
More on Complicated Grief	26
Effects of Complicated Grief	29
Healing and Resolution in the First Two Mansion Worlds	31
Healing and Resolution in the First Two Mansion Worlds	31
Written Prayers	32
Prayers for Healing	32
Resource Materials	33
Resource Materials	33

1. Introduction to Grieving and Transitions Ministry

Introduction to the Workshop

The Need for Training and Ministry Tools

A team of UUI mental health professionals has designed a special two-part workshop to provide our Urantia community with a perspective on life's transitions and a set of ministry tools to help ourselves and others better cope with significant life changes. Participants will learn about the stages of transition and grief and how this process can lead a person to new discoveries of profound meaning and value in living.

The ministry tool kit is for everyday use by everyday people who wish to enhance their ability to extend a friendly, Jesusonian hand and compassionate listening to others. Workshop participants will learn a variety of helpful techniques that reflect the ways that Jesus ministered to people, which invariably lead to growth and wisdom and maintain the integrity and health of the self.

Participants will also receive a set of supplemental materials to compassionately help ourselves and others as we all individually and collectively undergo the pangs of life's inevitable transitions and necessary losses.

Introduction to Grieving and Transitions Ministry

Introduction to Grieving and Transitions Ministry

Presenter: Bev Boyer



We begin with a story, an old, old story told by a number of tribes in what we call North America and this story is told by the Old Ones when things start to go wrong. This is the story:

They say... all people are looking for knowledge and wisdom because it is natural for humans to seek knowledge and wisdom, and they say that there is a place where the knowledge that everyone is looking for can be found.

A cave... It is a cave in which knowledge and wisdom are stored.

And they say... even though it is nearby and even though there are roads in all directions – highways and superhighways and backroad trails – and even though people are driving north, south east, and west in cars day and night, they don't seem to find the cave where the knowledge resides that people are looking for.

But they say that should you ever find that cave, what you would see inside in an old woman. An old woman is in that cave, and she is weaving. She is weaving the most beautiful garment that anyone has ever seen.

And she has been weaving it for a very long time. They say that she has been weaving this garment for so long that the grandmothers and the grandmother's grandmothers back and back and back cannot remember when she began. This garment contains all that is and all that has been.

Every once in a while she has to get up and go to the back of the cave because at the back of the cave there is a fire. And some people say that that fire is the most ancient thing in the entire world. For over the fire there is a cauldron and in the cauldron are the seeds of all the plants in the entire world – all of the flowers, all of the vegetables, all the bushes, all the trees – all things that grow from the heart of the earth.

And if she does not go back and stir the cauldron full of seeds from time to time, the seeds will burn, and all green growing things will die. And so she gets up every once in a while, puts the garment down on the floor of the cave, and goes to the back to tend the fire.

Because she is so old, and because she has been weaving for so long, she moves very slowly. And as she slowly goes to the back of the cave, the black dog – what black dog? – the black dog goes over to where the garment is now laying on the floor of the cave. And the dog sees one loose thread. And what can you do? It's a dog – it's a loose thread...

The black dog grabs the loose thread and begins to pull at it, and keeps pulling until the entire garment has been unraveled and nothing is left but a chaotic mess of threads on the floor of the cave.

Then the old woman comes back from stirring the stew of seeds and when she sees the fruit of her long labor unraveled into chaos on the floor of the cave, she STOPS and looks at the chaos in front of her and she feels her heart shake.

I don't know how long she looks. Long enough to consider that she has to do something. So she sits down in front of the chaos, and she sees the loose end of one thread. And she picks up the thread and as soon as she picks it up, she sees a vision of another garment, one even more beautiful than before. Slowly she picks up another thread and begins to weave again.

That is the story the Old Ones tell when everyone begins to worry that the world is falling apart. They tell that story when everything goes upside down and we feel like we are in free-fall. They tell that story when people realize we are in this together, but we are not sure how to get out of it.

(Story after Michael Meade's telling of "Holding the Thread of Life")

What do we do when our hearts are so shaken?

First, we need to STOP, look at the chaos, and acknowledge where we are – both individually and collectively. It helps to recognize and give language to our experiences

Unknown future

This is a loss of the assumptive world. All that we assumed about the future is now up for grabs. Loss of any sense of security about what the future might bring. What will happen next month? In 6 months? We don't know, but we have a growing sense that the world – and our lives – will never be the same. This can lead to a great deal of anticipatory anxiety – a vague feeling of dread about the future.

We must recognize that GRIEF is a natural response to the tremendously upsetting transition period that we are facing.

Let's remind ourselves of the definitions of transition and grief.

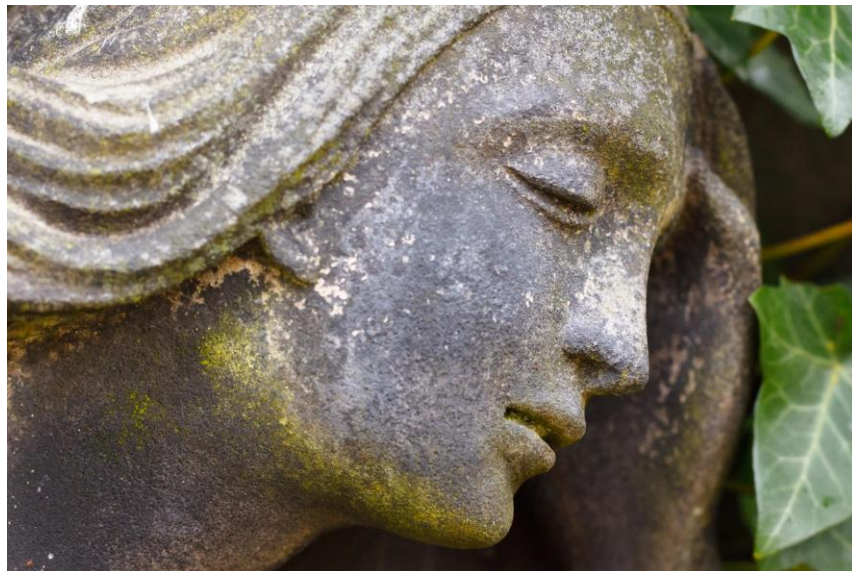
A transition is a period or process of changing from one set of conditions or state of being to another that is characterized by the loss of what is known, cherished or relied upon. It is often accompanied by thoughts and feelings of grief, uncertainty, insecurity, anxiety, and fear.

Grief is a process that occurs after any transition and involves adapting, healing, and growing from the consequent losses. It can be a time of increase in new meanings and wisdom as well as growth in our spiritual values and our ability to LOVE.

Remember always that grieving is a highly individualized process. There is no right or wrong way to navigate through grief. Nor is there a time frame.

Some factors that affect the way that we grieve are our innate personality, the prevailing culture, the way we were brought up, and our gender in that men tend to focus more on tasks and women tend to have a greater need to communicate their emotions.

It is very easy to have a bias toward one way of responding to grief versus another. Nevertheless, let us strive to honor and accept each other's unique journey.



2. The Grief Process and Growth

The Grief Process and Growth



Presenter: Arlene Weimer

What are some attitudes, responses and information that are helpful in ministering to ourselves and each other as we journey through the process of grief?

Let us look at Jesus' life and teachings to show us the way.

1. Being open and aware

The first technique of ministering is an attitude of being open and aware of experiencing our own grief in order to understand and have compassion for others.

Otherwise, we may be uncomfortable listening to and accepting another person's unique process of grief. We may give advice on how to feel better and too quickly encourage them to

accept their losses and unintentionally invalidate their painful emotions. There is great comfort in knowing Jesus experienced the full gamut of human emotions from joy to grief (129:4.4 (1425.3)).

2. Listening with compassion

The second technique is a response of listening with compassion while respecting the individual's personality and free will. Jesus' Way was to be tenderhearted, sensitive, and responsive to human needs (140:5.16 (1575.1)).

"Nothing ever seemed so important to Jesus as the individual human who chanced to be in his immediate presence." (138: 8.9 (1545.10)).

"Jesus was never in a hurry. He had time to comfort his fellows 'as he passed by'" (171:7.5 (1874.8)).

Also see the Urantia Book: 171:7.5, 132:4.2, 138:8.7, 159:3, 171:7.3-5

3. Having information about the grieving process.

We will look at two models of grieving, the Stage Model of Grief and the Task-based Model of Grief, that can help us understand and cope with our losses.

The Stage Model of Grief

Developed by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

This pioneering model of the grieving process was developed by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in which she proposed **five stages of grief** in her book *On Death and Dying* in 1969. The five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. You can find a free copy of this book through the Internet Archive [here](#)...

- This stage model was innovative in that it **normalized** and helped people become aware of their feelings of grief after the loss of a loved one.
- One limitation of this model might be that people tend to think there is a "right" way to grieve or misapprehend that grieving always goes in a straight progression from denial to acceptance. That is not the case.
- The **grieving process is unique to the individual**, with mixed recurring emotions that can happen in any order. For example, men are more likely to focus on a project and think about their loss while women are more likely to express and need to share their feelings.

David Kessler added a **sixth stage** to the process of grieving that expanded on Kubler-Ross' fifth stage of acceptance. The book is called ***Finding Meaning***.

The Task-based Model of Grief

Proposed by William Worden in 1989

The task-based model of grief reflects a fluctuating process, unique to each individual and is not necessarily sequential. It is a way to adapt and grow after any transition or change in life and consequent losses. Even positive transitions have both losses and gains.

Task 1: To accept the reality of the loss.

This is a time of shock, denial, searching behavior, and sensing what has been lost. Emotional pain is similar to a physical injury. At first, the body goes into shock and has minimal pain. The pain becomes more intense as healing begins.

Coping Strategies:

1. **Share our experiences** of the transition with compassionate, respectful people who accept our process in a manner similar to Jesus' way.
2. **Enact rituals** such as funerals and memorial services which help us acknowledge the reality of the loss.

Task 2: To experience the painful emotions of the loss.

What you are feeling is moving you toward healing!

Jesus experienced the painful emotions of grief when he was "weeping" because none of his family had come to bid him farewell before going to Jerusalem to proclaim the Father's kingdom (141:0.2 (1587.2)). He also experienced mixed emotions such as sadness and confusion in Gethsemane in the process of deciding to leave his apostles (182:3 (1968.2)).

- This is a time of being **disorganized and feeling intense emotions that come and go like waves.**
- When emotions are strong our cognitive abilities are compromised. We have **difficulty thinking clearly, making decisions, and concentrating**, and we may even experience temporary memory loss. There are feelings of being overwhelmed and out of control with difficulties in sleeping, eating, and extreme fatigue.
- There are **mixed emotions** that come in waves such as sadness, anger, guilt, depression, hurt, shame, anxiety, confusion, missing what is lost, and relief. For example, many times after a loved one dies, there is Relief that that the person is out of pain and has moved on toward perfection and finding God.

48:7.14 (556.14) The greatest affliction of the cosmos is never to have been afflicted. Mortals only learn wisdom by experiencing tribulation."



Coping Strategies:

Balance between experiencing the thoughts and feelings of grief and restorative activities. It is good to resume activities that bring normalcy and diversion to our life.

Self-Care is critical during times of transitions.

Physically we need sleep, water, nutritious foods, and consistent exercise, all of which may be difficult during this second task of grief.

Emotionally it is helpful to allow our feelings to come and go as waves in the ocean. When we suppress the waves of emotions, the dam eventually breaks and there is a tsunami of feelings.

Studies show that crying releases toxins and is like an inside shower. It is also helpful to express thoughts and feelings verbally, in writing, and creatively (e.g., projects, art, music, movement).

1.

Forgiving ourselves and others through understanding compassion and mercy is a key to moving through the grieving process. Many people get stuck in grief because of their guilt and anger. (See 48:6.25; 96:2.9; 140:5.13; 140:5.14) However, there is no quick spiritual bypass in forgiving.

Cognitively it is helpful to be aware and challenge the reality of our negative thoughts with truthful, compassionate, and self-soothing thoughts.

Are our guilt and anger based on real or unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others?
Many times, our ideals are not necessarily what God's will is for us.
Is anger due to misunderstanding the motives of others? It helps to ask: "Help me understand."

Are you certain about your future fears? Do you have a crystal ball? Are your fears reasoned or unreasoned?

Socially we need frequent **Social Contact** with supportive friends and family. Isolation is dangerous and can result in prolonged depression.

Selfless Service helps both ourselves and others as we feel the joy in ministering and receive the loving kindness of others. Jesus said: "But I come with a new message of **self-forgetfulness and self-control**" (143:2.2 (1609.3)).

Spiritually we can achieve relations through practices of conscious breathing, gratitude, prayer, worship, meditation, and laughter. See 160:1.10,11,12; 140:5,11; 193:2.2.

We have Faith and Trust in a friendly universe knowing that we are all children of a loving God. Our faith leads us into an uncertain future with undying hope and enduring peace, bearing the Fruits of the Spirit.

The importance of deep, slow, conscious breathing . . .

We want to mention the healing power of **conscious breathing** as a way to mitigate the effects of stress on our bodies and minds. We may not realize how often we are living in state of stress, anxiety, and unspecified fear about our survival. Such a mental state of apprehension activates the sympathetic nervous system.

Sympathetic nervous system

The sympathetic nervous system is the body's ancient biochemical system that evolved to prime our animal ancestors for physical action by supplying extra energy to the creature when it was needed to face an enemy or to run away.

Under conditions of stress, the sympathetic nervous system responds by triggering a cascade of automatic bio-chemical responses known as the “fight-or-flight” response. This is helpful for short bursts of action and short periods of time, but living in a chronic state of stress erodes our health by contributing to a long-term inflammatory condition in our body.

When stressed, our heart rate goes up, our mouth goes dry, and we tend to inhale in short, shallow breaths. Our mind becomes focused on the real or illusory threats, robbing us of much of our capacity for clear, logical thought, creativity, and equanimity.

We can counteract the effects of stress by doing what’s called conscious breathing—deep, slow, aware breathing.

The effects of conscious breathing are remarkable. As we breathe deeply our mind slows down and our bodies relax as we move from a state of Activation to one of Relaxation.

Parasympathetic nervous system

Conscious breathing engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which evolved to perform in conditions where a threat to survival is absent. When it is engaged, we enjoy a warm infusion of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which stimulates the body’s slower processes like sleep, sexual arousal, immune activities, and proper digestion.

When the parasympathetic nervous system is online, our cognition clears. We feel a deep sense of calm. Our thinking slows down, and our focus is enhanced.

There are countless Internet sites devoted to conscious breathing and mindful meditation. One place to start learning more about this topic and many other positive healing practices is the Greater Good in Action research center at Berkeley.

<https://ggia.berkeley.edu/>

Task 3: To adapt to a changing environment and a new lifestyle.

Coping Strategies

1. Find new and/or renewed meaning and purpose
2. Develop new priorities and goals
3. Learn new skills
4. Creative problem solving

Task 4: To reinvest yourself in new relationships and new ways of living.

It is a time of recovery when emotions are less intense and of shorter duration and feelings of disorganization are less frequent. There is more of an acceptance of the losses with renewed meaning.

There is growth in our ability to express LOVE in our relationships.

Models of Grieving Conclusion

There is a **LIGHT** and a **LIFE** at the end of the tunnel of grief!

Those of us who adapt to transitions and have chosen to go through the grieving process, have renewed meaning and purpose in their life.

They grow in the ability to have loving relationships, take themselves less seriously (laugh a lot) and **Grow in their Faith!**

3. Finding Meaning

Presenter: Tommie Clendening

Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief ~ David Kessler

We need to fully experience the Stages of grief. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance come first. Finally we come to the sixth stage of grief—the discovery of **meaning** in what we have experienced.

What is meaning? Meaning is relative and personal. To find, arrive at, meaning takes time. It doesn't require understanding or logic, and even when you do finally find meaning, you may not feel it was worth the cost of what you've lost.

Loss is a part of life. It happens to each and all of us eventually, but this 6th stage of grief meaning – is where healing from loss often resides. Meaning is found in the reflection of the love we have for those we've lost. Healing doesn't mean the loss didn't happen. It just means that the loss no longer controls us.

We always have choices. Always. We can choose to experience loss as something meaningful and move forward, or only as trauma, which we can then choose to either avoid or stay stuck in. So, we can consciously choose to grow through the grief and find the meaning, or not. Let's at least make that choice a conscious choice.

Grief needs to be witnessed. We can't remove anyone's grief or hurt or change the fact of their loss, but we can support them. We can't know "How they feel." Only they can know exactly how they feel, but we can be there to offer our support.

Death ends a life, but not our relationship, our love, or our hope. Pain is first, often intense pain; meaning comes later. The steps to get to meaning often aren't linear, logical, or "finished."

Pain is inevitable in life, but suffering is optional.

The meaning of our life comes from how we create and explain who we are, what we think, what we dream about, what we fear, what family and friends mean to us, and what we've accomplished.

The meaning of our losses comes from the stories we tell ourselves about our loss.

We decide how we act or react. Sharing our feelings, especially pain, fear, secrets can help us heal and grow. Even just writing these things down, physically getting them out onto paper, can improve our well-being by decreasing anxiety and depression (James Pennebaker, University of Texas study).

The simple exercise of writing about your experiences can help you to rationally examine causes and consequences. It can help shift your perspective, your decisions about the way things are, and it can help you discover meaning in what you have experienced.

Finding meaning does not negate the "bad" but it can help you find some good out of even the worst events.

Events don't change, but their meaning can. We must always remember that the act of not deciding is still a decision.

39:4.14 (435.7) The keys of the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity. All men have these keys. Men use them—advance in spirit status—by decisions, by more decisions, and by more decisions. The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always—in any sphere, in all of them—this is to choose to do the will of God. If man thus chooses, he is great, though he be the humblest citizen of Jerusem or even the least of mortals on Urantia.

When you are interpreting your story, notice the original meaning of your thoughts and the new meaning which you create as your story.

Examples of the language of old and new meanings:

Original Meaning / New Meaning

- *This death happened to me.* / Death **happens**.
- *I'm a victim.* / I am a **victor** because I have survived this loss.
- *This death was punishment.* / Death is usually **random**.
- *Why did this happen to me?* / **Everyone** gets something this lifetime.
- *It happened because of something.* / There was **nothing** I could have done.
- *My story is the saddest one.* / My story **had** very sad parts.

We create our continuing from here, from this moment. The Buddha said, "If you are a lamp for someone else, it will brighten your path."

The parable of the long spoons

A person is ushered through the gates of hell where he is surprised to find that they are made of finely wrought gold. They are exquisite, as is the lush green landscape that lies beyond them.

He looks at his guide in disbelief. "It's all so beautiful," he says. "The sight of the meadows and mountains. The sounds of the birds singing in the trees and the scent of thousands of flowers. This can't be hell."

When the tantalizing aroma of a gourmet meal catches his attention, he enters a large dining hall. There are rows of tables laden with platters of sumptuous food, but the people seated around the tables are pale and emaciated, moaning in hunger.



As he gets closer, he sees that each person is holding a spoon, but the spoon is so long they can't get the food to their mouths. Everyone is screaming and starving in agony.

Next he goes to another area where he encounters the same beauty he witnessed in hell. He sees the same scene in the dining hall with the same long spoons. But here in heaven the people seated at the tables are cheerfully talking and eating because one person is feeding someone sitting across from him.



Heaven and hell offer the same circumstances and conditions. The difference is in the way people treat each other. Choosing to be kind creates one kind of reality. Choosing to be self-centered creates another.

Why did you wake up this morning?

- You woke up for a reason, and that reason is for the purpose of finding meaning in your life.
- The decision to live fully is about being present for life, no matter how hard life is at the moment. It's about what you are made of, not what happens to you.
- Another reason for being reluctant to live again (after a loss) is that we don't want the finality of a goodbye.

Fault, survivor's guilt, and God blaming

There is no making sense of the death/loss, but you can find a little control in your "how" question.

- How can you honor your loved one or the loss?
- How can you create a different life that includes them (the memories of the other life)?
- How can you use your experience to help others?

Loss is a strong current that infuses everything it touches.

We hope for more love and compassion. But that same current also runs through resentment, entitlement, and oppositional behavior. Remember: We grieve in character, both good and bad!

It's important to watch your expectations for yourself and for those around you, to realize and acknowledge those around you, and be ready to accept their own reactions/actions. They may have sensitivity to your feelings or not. It is not up to you how others choose to react!

Remember that expectations can be resentments under construction.

Your choices, reactions and actions are solely up to you, just as other's choices are up to them.

Grief can be postponed, but it cannot be eradicated.

You can try to avoid it, by becoming numb with drugs, sex, alcohol, busy-ness, or whatever distraction you choose. Creating an artificial high can help one avoid feeling, but it can't last.

The opposite of this choice to postpone grief is shown in Facing the Storm, by Robert Thomson, a documentary about the bison in Montana running into the storm, thus minimizing how long they will be in it.



Facing the Storm:
*Buffalo run to the storm
not away from it*

They don't ignore it, or just hope it will go away, which is what people often do when we want to avoid our storms of emotion.

Avoidance of grief only prolongs the pain of grief; somehow the bison seem to innately understand this.

Finding Support

Find support—a place, and others to share the loss with—not to fix it, but to share the process.

From this you can gain the strength to stay present for those close to you who are also grieving.

In the mid 1990's, Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun of the University of North Carolina coined the term “posttraumatic growth.”

From research they've identified five specific ways people can grow after tragedy:

- Their relationships grow stronger
- They discover new purposes in life.
- The trauma allows them to find their inner strength.
- Their spirituality is deepened.
- They renew their appreciation for life.

Life exists on the other side of pain.

So when is it time to move on, to move into the love?

When you feel you have fully felt the pain. Only then can you realize the love was always there—in the good times, in the illness, in the death, and in the grief of loss. Even in the worst moments, the love is there still.

Even death (of a loved one, a lifestyle, a relationship, etc.) is not strong enough to end love. And as students of the Urantia Book, we know this. We know that our Creator, God, is love and all His creation was done with love; even to the giving of “free will” to his lowliest creatures.

In grief, it is important to take your time. Remember the good, the “before,” and enrich it in your mind. Savor it and absorb the experience. See the relevance in what has happened. Then, discover, define, and amplify your own, personal meaning.

When we move through the pain, we can release it; we are still connected, love is still there. Grieve fully, but return to love, and keep loving, for love continues. When you feel it, you will find great meaning.

90:3.10 (990.5) Evolution unerringly achieves its end...
3:5.2 (51.1) "The Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men."
43:5.17 (491.13) Actually it is this Most High observer who "rules in the kingdoms of men."
114:6.8 (1255.7) It is particularly through the ministry of this seraphic division that "the Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men."
114:7.9 (1258.1) ...it is, to a certain extent, through these small groups of forward-looking personalities that spiritual civilization is advanced and the Most Highs are able to rule in the kingdoms of men.

4. Spirit-Led Counseling Methods

Spirit-Led Counseling Methods

Presenter: Marvin Gawryn

Initially, Tommie's parable of the long spoons is helpful to keep in mind.

- In loving, helping others, we may find some of our own healing
- Spiritually inspired listening – 130:2.6

130:2.6 (1431.1) Ganid was, by this time, beginning to learn how his tutor spent his leisure in this unusual personal ministry to his fellow men, and the young Indian set about to find out the motive for these incessant activities. He asked, "Why do you occupy yourself so continuously with these visits with strangers?"

And Jesus answered: "Ganid, no man is a stranger to one who knows God. In the experience of finding the Father in heaven you discover that all men are your brothers, and does it seem strange that one should enjoy the exhilaration of meeting a newly discovered brother?"

To become acquainted with one's brothers and sisters, to know their problems and to learn to love them, is the supreme experience of living.

Try practicing "Radical, loving curiosity"

- Not superficial, flowing from the reservoir of God's love
- Divine realities (persons) "must love in order to be known"

"Filling in the Picture" (Learn the "art of good questions")

- The more "open-ended" the questions, the better (enjoy ice cream?)
- Follow-up questions—getting more detail says, "I'm listening, I care."
- Acquiring a fine-grained picture, says "I'm listening, I care."

"Simultaneous Exterior/Interior listening"

Try to be open to the leading of your Indwelling Spirit, and Jesus' Spirit of Truth, while you are listening to the person in front of you. Follow your spiritual inclinations.

"Leading from Behind"

- Not telling – instead, sharing/exploring possibilities
- (Reframing) – "wondering" about a larger picture
- "What if" (more "art of questions")

How Jesus Ministered as He Passed By

How Jesus Ministered as He Passed By

Presenter: Marvin Gawryn

Jesus' four-part approach in personal ministry (132:4.2)

Let's look closely at the parts of this very instructive passage. What is your applicable takeaway from the opening sentence, and each of the four segments below? (132:4.2) [Emphasis in bold is mine]

132:4.2 **Always** the burden of his message was: **the fact of the heavenly Father's love and the truth of his mercy, coupled with the good news that man is a faith-son of this same God of love.** Jesus' usual technique of social contact was

1. **to draw people out and into talking with him by asking them questions.** The interview would usually begin by his asking them questions and end by their asking him questions. He was equally adept in teaching by either asking or answering questions. As a rule, to those he taught the most, he said the least. Those who derived most benefit from his personal ministry were overburdened, anxious, and dejected mortals who gained much relief because of the opportunity to unburden their souls to a sympathetic and understanding listener, and he was all that and more. And when these maladjusted human beings had told Jesus about their troubles, always was he able
2. **to offer practical and immediately helpful suggestions looking toward the correction of their real difficulties,** albeit he did not neglect
3. **to speak words of present comfort and immediate consolation.** And
4. invariably would he **tell these distressed mortals about the love of God** and impart the information, by various and sundry methods, **that they were the children of this loving Father in heaven.**

Jesus' Approach

Below is a summary from this passage, of the elements in how Jesus went about his ministry. How can you, over time, develop greater skills in these gracious acts of ministry?

Getting to <u>know</u> and <u>love</u> the person Only persons can "know and be known, love and be loved" • In a sense, it's the main thing we are here to do • Develop a real hunger for getting to know the person in front of you • Develop your skill in the "art of instructive questions"
"Practical suggestions" • Simple next action-steps, shared as questions/possibilities • Again, "leading from behind"
Comfort and consolation, emotional support
Creative sharing of core spiritual truths

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spiritual reframing• Socratic (teaching) questions |
|---|

Partnering with the Spirit

In preparing to minister, and **while ministering**,

- Request the assistance of Jesus' Spirit of Truth, our angels, and our Indwelling Spirit
- Request all three, be open to all three
- They function differentially

Simultaneous Exterior/Interior listening/interacting)

- This is a subtle set of skills, it develops over time, with use. Just get started, and ask for spiritual assistance, and your spiritual skills will accumulate.

130:2:6 (1431.1) And Jesus answered: "Ganid, no man is a stranger to one who knows God. In the experience of finding the Father in heaven you discover that all men are your brothers, and does it seem strange that one should enjoy the exhilaration of meeting a newly discovered brother?"

130:2:6 (1431.1) To become acquainted with one's brothers and sisters, to know their problems and to learn to love them, is the supreme experience of living."

Practical Grief Support

Ways to Support Someone Grieving

Presenter: Tommie Clendening

This section of this workshop was created when the Corona Virus was wreaking havoc. With that pandemic there was a lot of loss – loss of life, health, finances, special occasions, such as weddings, graduations, funerals, etc. And there was "collective grief" because the world we had known several months ago was gone. We had been told to isolate, at a time when we really needed extra support. I am leaving this small mention of that pandemic in this presentation, because as a former immunology researcher, I know we are not done with pandemics or other shocking, isolating world events. And loss and grief can come at any time.

For me, grief has always meant getting together, hugs, crying together, holding each other, being there for each other in so many individually comforting ways. It's a time for coming together to comfort and share with one another, NOT a time to isolate and be socially distant.

In the midst of the pandemic, we had to isolate, but the mechanics of the grief process is the same. We each must honor our own process. And it is a process, a necessary process.

As a mental health therapist, I used to frequently work with individuals (even some families) who were stuck in grief, some in complicated grief. I needed to help them try to recover, move on, and get back to living.

So, from my own experience, there are a few ways we can still be there for each other. Most important is just **showing up and listening (whether it can be in person or not).**

1. **Don't minimize** what anyone else is going through. Validate their feelings and the fact that it's okay to feel a certain way. Let them know whatever they feel is normal; there are no wrong feelings.
2. **Reach out** regularly: Video technology is a great way to get families & groups together safely.
3. **Ask** those who are grieving what would help them. Never impose what works for you on them. Always ask permission. Ask what they need and want.
4. Instead of trying to empathize, **just listen**. Don't jump in to offer agreement. **Just mirror their feelings** and let them get the feelings out. You might say, "That's really tough. I'm so sorry this is happening to you." Or words to that effect.
5. **Keep it simple**: The right thing is just showing up. Just be there, just listen, but don't try to fix the grief. Just being a witness to their pain, acknowledging it and holding that space for them can often be enough.
6. Even when there is social distancing, we can still **send a card, call them**, ask what they want or need most, and then follow through.
7. When you seek to help, **be aware of customs** and the meaning of certain actions. Remember that certain flowers mean different things within different cultures, just as certain foods do. Some may be appropriate, while others may not be. Consider possible allergies, as well as preferences. I remember when we lived in Japan, it was a sacred offering and sign of honor to put a bowl of rice at the gravesite with a set of chopsticks stuck upright in the rice. However, one should never stick their chopsticks upright in their rice at any other time. To do so is considered very disrespectful and rude!
8. It is safest to always **communicate with the person** you wish to help. Just ask. You can donate time/money to a favorite charity. Just don't make promises you can't or won't keep.
9. Whenever there has been a loss (lost jobs, opportunities, a home, etc.), we can **offer support**. We can help with things like any planning that's needed or updating resumes and interviewing skills, if we have those skills and experience.

How Do We Grieve Loved Ones When a Funeral is Not an Option?

We should offer the support they seem to need and want. Be conscientious, thoughtful/insightful and often, just letting someone know you care is enough. (During CoVid, social distancing was necessary and changed our traditional ways of supporting each other: No hugs, no visits, no food brought over, no help with children, no flower delivery, no social gatherings and outings, etc. We had to find new ways.) But all those ways of offering care are available again. Though now we live far apart and travel may not be realistic, so I include some ways of supporting even from a distance.

Don't deny grief. There is no one good way to grieve. Have a good cry – it can be very releasing and, actually, chemically good for you.

Talk to people (don't keep feelings bottled-up inside, connect with others (via Zoom, Skype, Facebook, etc.)

Consider a **Live-Stream Service**.

Host a **Virtual Memorial** (with candle-lighting, a story-telling event, etc.).

- Did they like old movies? Everyone could dress up as a favorite character to virtual-attend.
- Or maybe they liked craft beer. Then share some.
- Did they sing and appreciate music? Then share that way with music, etc.

When my mother-in-law recently and suddenly passed from COVID (we had not been allowed to see or be with her for awhile), we had frequent calls, shared many and pictures from happier times that we once had with her, and reminisced. We also posted old pictures and stories on Facebook.

It's so important to create your own rituals.

Create a ritual by sharing meaningful readings, poems, pictures, art, music, etc.

Personalize the way you grieve your loss. Cook their favorite meal, light a candle while remembering a special moment you shared, plant a remembrance tree or garden, or create a collage of memories. Get creative!

And it might be helpful and therapeutic to journal as you go through this time.
You can still plan a future Memorial Service (understand this time is temporary, we hope).
In this time of loss, take care of you. Do something special just for you. Pay attention to your feelings and needs and take care of yourself.
As you go through this, remember the Five Stages of Grief: Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Expect them. They may not come in order. In fact, they may not come at all. Just recognize that memories or nostalgia can unexpectedly trigger any of them. Grief is not a linear process. It can come and go, or get delayed. The process of grieving is individual and different for each person.

Journaling Activity

Journaling Activity

Presenter: Bev Boyer

Start a journal and write some thoughts about your experience every day! The simple exercise of writing about your experiences can help you to rationally examine causes and consequences. It can help shift your perspective and decisions about the way things are, and it can help you discover meaning in what you have experienced.

Complicated Grief

Complicated Grief

Presenter: Arlene Weimer

Definition of Complicated Grief

In complicated grief painful emotions are long lasting and intense, making it difficult to adapt, heal, and accept the loss. It may limit one's ability to find new meaning and purpose in life as well as express one's love in existing or new relationships.

What are some Factors that Increase Complicated Grief?

Types of loss that can result in complicated grief are:

- Multiple losses: e.g. Covid19, death, divorce, moving, work, finances.
- Unexpected or unnatural losses, e.g., Covid-19, an accident, suicide, homicide, or the death of one's child.
- Mary experienced both multiple and unnatural losses after the deaths of her husband Joseph and her son Amos.

The following Psychological Factors can also result in complicated grief:

Avoidance of problems and emotions, e.g., denial, suppression, repression.

Pre-existing neuro-chemical imbalances, e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis, addictions. People who have mental illness may avoid their grief because of fear of the overwhelming feelings of grief which may trigger an increase in symptoms of their neuro-chemical illness.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which may be due to childhood and adult abuse and or neglect, combat trauma, and other extremely painful experiences, results in feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Present situations, like the Coronavirus pandemic where there is uncertainty with minimal control can magnify these feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

People who have **difficulty forgiving themselves** and others often get stuck in the grieving process because of their anger and guilt relating to what is lost.

Types of relationship:

A **high degree of attachment to what is lost**, e.g., long-term relationships such as with a spouse, children, and parents. It is more difficult to grieve the loss of people whom you frequently spend time with and depend on and/or take care of.

Another factor in complicated grief is having a **high degree of emotional ambivalence with mixed emotions** such as relief, guilt, anger, sadness, anxiety. For example, people may feel guilty if they feel anger or relief when a loved one dies. During this time of COVID some of us

are feeling survivor guilt in that we are doing well financially and even enjoying having more time for themselves while others are struggling with losses of loved ones, work, financial stability and their children going to school.

Some Social Factors that increase the probability of complicated grief:

Family history of having difficulties in recognizing and expressing thoughts and feelings.
A person who lives in **isolation** with a minimal support system.

Lack of rituals for grieving, depending upon one's culture and religious upbringing.

More on Complicated Grief



Sometimes we can experience what's known as Complicated Grief, which is different from normal grieving.

Losing a loved one is one of the most distressing and inevitable experiences that everyone faces. Most people experiencing normal grief and bereavement have a period of sorrow, numbness, and even guilt and anger. Gradually these feelings ease, and it's possible to accept loss and move forward.

However, for some people, feelings of loss are debilitating and don't improve, even after time passes. This is known as complicated grief, sometimes called "persistent complex bereavement disorder."

In complicated grief, painful emotions are so long lasting and severe that you have trouble recovering from the loss and resuming your own life. In this time of COVID and such societal upheaval, our lives have changed. And not by our own choice!

If you're unable to move through these stages more than a year—or what seems a reasonable time—after the death of a loved one, you may have complicated grief. If so, seek treatment.

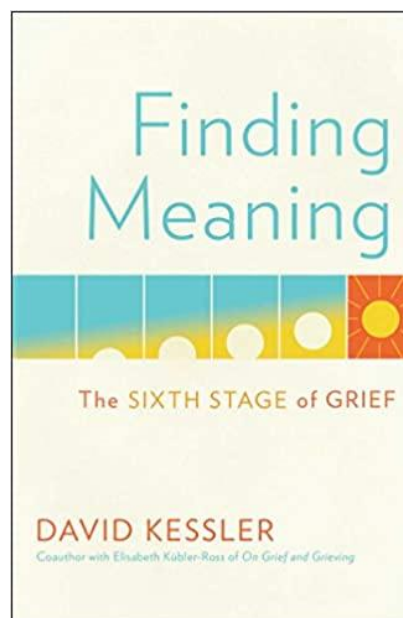
It can help you come to terms with your loss and reclaim a sense of acceptance and peace. There are many organizations and counselors on-line (in this time of social distancing) who can help. Seek their professional help and support.

As a student of The Urantia Book, I imagine that Mary, the mother of Jesus, probably experienced very confusing, complicated grief.

Excerpts from David Kessler's *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*

When we move through pain and we release it, we fear that there will be nothing, but the truth is, when the pain is gone, we are connected only in love. Though much of my work is about giving people permission to grieve fully after a loss, I also want to give them permission to keep loving.

When I talk about remembering my son with love instead of pain, I recognize that love didn't stop with his death. His body died but the love didn't. Look for the small seeds of love in the pain. Just like a delicate plant, we have to pay attention to it. If we do, the love will flower once again in our hearts.



*I often talk about **grief bursts**. Even though someone may think they've put the worst of their grief behind them, they have moments when, seemingly out of the blue, they burst into tears, overwhelmed with feelings of loss.*

These moments are all the more painful because they are so unexpected, and people are often caught off balance by them.

*But there are comparable experiences that I call **love bursts**—those moments when suddenly, for no reason at all, we feel a surge of emotion for someone and tell them how much we love them. Contrary to what you might expect, those moments don't end with death.*

When people tell me they're dealing with overwhelming emotions, I've learned to ask them, "Is this a grief burst or a love burst?" This is one more way I help them pay attention to the love... Sometimes I encourage people who are trying to comfort a bereaved person to ask about a favorite memory. Or to share one of their own.

And, lastly, be sure and take care of you!! Treat yourself and friends and family to a little fun: Set up a virtual wine or tea date, game or movie night, looking at photos together, etc.

Butterflies

Finally, there is also a phenomenon that occurs among many people who have experienced tragedy and loss: When asked to draw their feelings, they draw butterflies; beautiful, multi-colored, exquisitely patterned, gently fluttering butterflies.

Just like a butterfly emerging from a lowly caterpillar's cocoon, this personal tragedy can eventually lead to personal growth.

Slowly transforming into freedom, peacefulness, beauty and serenity—just like the metamorphosis of a butterfly.

Death/loss is not failure. Share favorite memories. See and feel the love—which is not gone. Find a long-term, more comfortable relationship with your grief.

Especially remember and expect to find your “personal meaning” through it all and in the ending and new beginning. It is my hope that you find and experience your own butterfly.

Look at the end of this handout for many helpful books and links to resources on grieving.

Remember: Pain is inevitable in life, but suffering is optional.

Read Viktor Frankl's inspiring book, Man's Search for Meaning.
This book can be read for free through the [Internet Archive here...](#)

In this book Frankl described the immense inner freedom he discovered in WWII while enduring the hellish circumstances of the Nazi concentration camps.

“The last of the human freedoms: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom; which determined whether or not you become the plaything to circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity...”

Effects of Complicated Grief

1. Physical Problems:

- Increased **visits to the doctor** and **medication**.
- **Increases in major illnesses** such as coronaries, cancer, autoimmune diseases, and psychosomatic illnesses..

2. Psychological Problems:

- Prolonged and intense **depression and anxiety**.
- Increase in symptoms of **mental illness** and suicides.
- Increase in symptoms of **organic brain disease** in seniors, e.g., dementia, short-term memory loss.

3. Social Problems:

- Increased **alcohol and drug abuse** including prescription medication.
- Increase in **anti-social behavior** such as an increase in homicides and other acts of violence.

4. Spiritual Problems:

- **Prolonged feelings of anger** with and separation from God, who is somehow responsible for our tribulations, rather than an all-loving, merciful, forgiving God. Consequently, it is difficult to have a personal relationship with God. Who would want to hang out a God who is judgmental and punishing?
- **Increase in fears of dying** and being punished.

Jesus's mother Mary experienced complicated grief after the loss of her husband Joseph, her son Amos, then giving birth to Ruth several months after Joseph's death.

126:3:2 (1389.5) Jesus endeavored to take the place of his father in comforting and ministering to his mother during this trying and peculiarly sad ordeal.

Mary continued to grieve for the next four years as the family increasingly felt the pinch of poverty. But Jesus would only say to his anxious and grieving mother:

127:3:14 (1400.6) Mother-Mary, sorrow will not help us; we are all doing our best, and mother's smile, perchance, might even inspire us to do better. Day by day we are strengthened for these tasks by our hope of better days ahead.

Jesus' sturdy and practical optimism was truly contagious; all the children lived in an atmosphere of anticipation of better times and better things.

Coping Strategies

If you have experienced any signs of complicated grief it is wise to seek professional help.

- Support Groups: grief group, 12 step group.
- Professional Evaluation and psychotropic medication.
- Psychological and Spiritual Counseling

Conclusion

The good news is that, if due to genetic or environmental conditions you are unable to grieve, the opportunity to heal from your losses will occur after death through deficiency ministry on the first two Mansion worlds. Marvin Gawryn will expand on this in more detail in the next section.

Healing and Resolution in the First Two Mansion Worlds

Healing and Resolution in the First Two Mansion Worlds

Presenter: Marvin Gawryn

[Emphasis in bold is mine]

47:3.8 (533.6) **Almost the entire experience of mansion world number one pertains to deficiency ministry.** Survivors arriving on this first of the detention spheres present so many and such varied defects of creature character and deficiencies of mortal experience that **the major activities of the realm are occupied with the correction and cure of these manifold legacies of the life in the flesh** on the material evolutionary worlds of time and space.

47:4.7 (535.3) **Biological deficiencies were largely made up on the first mansion world.** There defects in planetary experiences pertaining to **sex life, family association, and parental function** were either corrected or were projected for future rectification among the Material Son families on Jerusem.

47:4.8 (535.4) **Mansonia number two** more specifically provides for the **removal of all phases of intellectual conflict and for the cure of all varieties of mental disharmony.**

48:6.27 4. Morontia Counselors. These ministers receive their name because they are assigned to **teach, direct, and counsel** the surviving mortals from the worlds of human origin, **souls in transit to the higher schools of the system headquarters.** They are the teachers of those who seek **insight into the experiential unity of divergent life levels**, those who are attempting the **integration of meanings and the unification of values.**

Simple Takeaway

All mental and emotional issues related to our initial human lives will be fully resolved, and the **associated meanings and values will be unified and fully integrated**, by the time we move on to the third Mansion World.

There is a **LIGHT** and a **LIFE** at the end of the tunnel of grief!

Those of us who adapt to transitions and have chosen to go through the grieving process, have renewed meaning and purpose in their life.

They grow in the ability to have loving relationships, take themselves less seriously (laugh a lot) and [Grow in their Faith!](#)

Written Prayers

Prayers for Healing

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

The Serenity Prayer

by Reinhold Niebuhr

God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,

This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You
forever in the next.

Resource Materials

Resource Materials

The Grief Process and Growth – References

Hawland, Marcia L., PhD (2016). Worden's Task of Mourning: A Spiritual Exercise.
<https://crhcf.org/insights/wordens-tasks-of-mourning-spiritual-exercise/>

Kessler, David (2020). Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief. Scribner.

Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth (1969). On Death & Dying. The Macmillan Co. N.Y.

Worden, J. Williams, PhD (1982). Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy. Springer Publishing Co. Inc.

Noel, Brook & Blair, Pamela D, Ph.D. (2008). I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One. Sourcebooks.

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov – Gender Differences and Grief

Complicated Grief – References

National Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP | <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

complicatedgrief.columbia.edu – The Center for Prolonged Grief

griefcounseling.org

hospiceandcommunitycare.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

fromgriegtogratitude.com

Helpful Websites for Grieving

“Undoing isolation for young adults grieving the illness or death of someone close to COVID-19.” COVID Grief Network: <https://www.covidgriefnetwork.org>

Grief support for suicide loss survivors: <https://save.org/what-we-do/grief-support/>

What’s Your Grief.com “To put it simply, this website is about grief. That probably sounds oversimplified, but grief is a complex, heavy, frustrating, scary, enormous...ahem, big topic. It starts with a death and envelopes everyone from family to friends, to friends of family and friends. Not only is grief an emotional, logistical, and existential nightmare, but it is taxing. It requires us to navigate the world without someone important, deal with complex feelings and emotions, and figure out ways to move forward when everything seems kind of bleak.”

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/>

“Helping you cope with life after loss using meditation for grief, yoga and journaling.”

<http://mindfulnessandgrief.com>

“It’s OK to not be OK. If your life has exploded into a million little bits, you don’t need platitudes. You don’t need cheerleading. You don’t need to be told this all happened for a reason. You certainly don’t need to be told that you needed your pain in order to learn something about life. Some things cannot be fixed. They can only be carried.” <http://www.refugeingrief.com/>

“Modern Loss is a place to share the unspeakably taboo, unbelievably hilarious, and unexpectedly beautiful terrain of navigating your life after a death. Beginners welcome.”

<http://modernloss.com/>

This site aims to offer hope, comfort and support for survivors of suicide loss. Jessica and Becky met through Catholic Charities’ Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide support group in Chicago after losing their fathers to suicide within five months of each other. Both had the desire to elevate the discussion about suicide in an attempt to give a voice to those seeking support and encouragement. <http://www.oursideofsuicide.com/>

Will Carry On is about sharing miscarriage, stillbirth and loss resources, and about sharing hope. It is for ourselves and those who follow us. Started by Erin Kuhn-Krueger in 2011 as a place to heal after the loss of their fourth child, Will Carry On provides shared experiences and a collection of resources that are essential to survival. It does not take the place of these resources, rather serves as a conduit to guide those in need to the support that will best help them. <https://willcarryon.wordpress.com/>

The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children makes the difference through on-going emotional support, education, prevention, advocacy, and awareness.

<http://www.pomc.com>

[The American Association of Suicidology](#)

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

[Alliance of Hope for Suicide Survivors](#)

Local Hospices or Funeral Homes: Often your local hospice or funeral home will have information about what bereavement services are available near you. They may even be able to offer you services such as support groups and counseling through their organization.

Helpful Books

[How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies](#), by Therese Rando | Lexington Books

[How to Survive the Loss of a Love](#), by Peter McWilliams, Melba Colgrove and Harold Bloomfield | Prelude Press

[Living Through Mourning](#), by Harriet Sarnoff Schiff | Penguin Books

[FatherLoss: How Sons of All Ages Come to Terms with the Deaths of Their Dads](#), by Neil Chethik | Hyperion Press

[Healing a Parent's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Child Dies](#), by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD | Companion Press

[What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?](#), by Trevor Romain | Free Spirit Publishing | (Note: Written for children; appropriate for everyone)

[Making Loss Matter: Creating Meaning in Difficult Times](#), by Rabbi David Wolpe | Riverhead Books

[Michael Rosen's Sad Book](#), by Michael Rosen | Candlewick

[Hope, Make, Heal: 20 Crafts to Mend the Heart](#), by Maya Pagan Donenfeld | Roost Books

For Children

[What is Death?](#), by Etan Boritzer | Veronica Lane Books

[Our Special Garden: Understanding Cremation](#), by Karen L. Carney| Dragonfly Publishing

[Tell Me Papa: A Family Book About Children's Questions About Death and Funerals](#), by Dr. Marvin Johnson & Joy Johnson| Center for Thanatology Research

[The Big Chair: A Story of Grief and Discovery](#), by Beth Rotondo| Stillpoint Press

For Understanding Children and Their Grief

[35 Ways to Help a Grieving Child](#), by The Dougy Center

[The Grieving Child: A Parents Guide](#), by Helen Fitzgerald| Touchstone

[Helping Children Cope with the Loss of a Loved One: A Guide for Grownups](#) (also available in Spanish), by William C. Kroen, PhD| Free Spirit Publishing

Coping with the Death of a Child

[How to Survive the Loss of a Child](#), by C.M. Sanders| Harmony

[How to Survive the Worst That Can Happen: A Parent's Step by Step Guide to Healing After the Loss of a Child](#), by Sandy Peckinpah| Balboa Press

For Suicide

[After Suicide](#), by John H. Hewett| Westminster John Knox Press