WILSON SUPPORT CENTER
Grief & Loss
Affiliate of Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo

Adult Recommended Reading List

There are many books about grief that can offer comfort and reassurance. Reading can be as unique an experience as grief itself. This is meant to help guide you and give you a place to start. The list below is not comprehensive. It is organized by type of loss. If you're seeking something more specific, please call us and we can assist you in identifying additional resources.

General

"I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping, and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One"
Pamela D. Blair, PhD & Brook Noel
Appropriate for teenagers to seniors, this book provides guidance from two authors who know the pain of sudden loss firsthand.

"Bearing the Unbearable: Love, Loss, and the Heartbreaking Path of Grief"
Joanne Cacciatore, PhD
This author uses her years of experience working in grief to foster resilience amidst grief. Readers may embrace this as a companion guide as they navigate and integrate their grief into their life with honor.

"It's Ok that You're Not Ok: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture that Doesn't Understand"
Megan Devine
Focused on building a life that exists alongside grief, this book provides suggestions for managing stress, reducing anxiety, and improving sleep without trying to "fix" the pain of grief.

"When Breath Becomes Air"
Paul Kalanithi, MD
Written as a personal memoir, this book eloquently explores a neurosurgeon's questions in life as he faces death due to stage four lung cancer. Faced with a shortened future, this memoir seeks answers to the question, "What makes life worth living?"

"The Beauty of What Remains"
Steve Leder
A rabbi reflects on his experiences of supporting people during death and grief, teaching readers how to live and love more deeply in the midst of loss.

"How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies"
Therese A. Rando, PhD
This book provides comfort and tools to guide the reader through the pain of loss, incorporating healthy grief into their life to treasure and honor the past.

"Grief Day By Day"
Jan Warner
This handbook provides support for mixed grief emotions to find coexistence with peace and gratitude. Daily reflections give comfort, and weekly themes and exercises aid in working toward healthy coping.

Meditations / Reflections / Poetry

"Words to Comfort, Words to Heal"
Juliet Mabey
A compilation of writings, poets and philosophers share consolation, encouragement and hope.

"To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings"
John O'Donohue
This is a collection of blessings to support readers through life's most significant thresholds.

"New and Selected Poems: Volume One"
Mary Oliver
These poems offer reflections on fundamental questions of life and death with reminders of the powerful connections between each living thing.

"Healing After Loss"
Martha Whitmore Hickman
The author offers meditations in this book to provide strength, inspiration, and comfort.

"The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief & Healing"
Kevin Young
This is a collection of poems that explore all facets of grief and its various expressions.

After the Loss of a Child

"Life After the Death of My Son: What I'm Learning"
Dennis Apple
This autobiography shares the author's experience of the sudden death of his 18 year-old son. He highlights the reality of the grief process, family frustration, spiritual reckoning, and lessons learned.

"Blue Nights"
Joan Didion
Written as a memoir, the author explores her personal chaos following the death of her adult daughter. Highly personal and honest, this account reflects on the tragedy of a child's death at any age.

"Without Jenny"
Mark Gunther
This is a novel about a family's grief after the death of their 12 year-old daughter in a sudden accident.

"Beyond Tears: Living After Losing a Child"
Ellen Mitchell
Written by nine mothers who have lost children, this new edition includes chapters from the perspective of surviving siblings. Candid sharing offers readers guidance and understanding.

"Bereaved Parent and their Continuing Bonds"
Catherine Seigal
This is a book by a children's hospital counselor, providing both stories for readers to connect to and guidance for continuing to love after death.

"Healing a Parent's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Child Dies"
Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD
With a focus on compassion and practicality, the author shares ideas to help grieving parents understand and reconcile their grief.

"The Unspeakable Loss: How Do You Live After a Child Dies?"
Nisha Zenoff
This author uses her experience as a grief counselor to reflect on the sudden death of her 17 year-old son, providing a space for readers to mourn in their own way and recognize the impact of loss on others.

After the Loss of a Partner/Spouse

"The Year of Magical Thinking"
Joan Didion
In this personal exploration of grief, Didion describes the impact of her husband's death on her psyche, attempting to "magically think" in an effort to divert the pain of grief.

"A Widow's Journey"
Gayle Roper
As a widow herself, the writer shares her personal grief journey and the peace she finds in God's love. Drawing strength from her spirituality, the author provides a gentle guide to assist those grieving.

"When Your Soulmate Dies: A Guide to Healing Through Heroic Mourning"
Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD
Written with characteristic compassion, this book encouragers readers to mourn for their loved one grandly, treasuring their loved one in life and death.

After the Loss of an Adult Sibling

"The Empty Room: Surviving the Loss of a Brother or Sister at Any Age"
Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn
This book details the unique lifelong bond of siblings, illustrating the comprehensive impact of losing that bond, and tools necessary to heal from such loss.

"The Oxidation of Grief: Reflections on Adult Sibling Loss"
Maria Piantanida
This author shares her own grief experience following her younger sister's death. The second half of the book includes narratives from thirteen other adults who also grieve siblings from various circumstances.

"Healing the Adult Sibling's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Brother or Sister Dies"
Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD
This author provides compassionate guidance to help readers understand and embrace the unique ways we all process grief. Included are tips to assist with embracing grief and practicing self-kindness.

"Surviving the Death of a Sibling: Living Through Grief When an Adult Brother or Sister Dies"
T.J. Wray
The author explores the often-overlooked experience of a grieving adult sibling, offering practical advice for the many considerations that arise throughout the grief process.

After the Loss of a Parent

"Notes on Grief"
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
The author reflects on the death of her father during the summer of 2020 as COVID-19 hindered her and her family's ability to gather and mourn.

"Motherless Daughters"
Hope Edelman
Through the stories of women who have experienced such loss, this book explores what it means to lose a mother. The author writes about the universality of grief, while acknowledging unique circumstances.

"Always Too Soon"
Allison Gilbert
A compilation of 20 people's experiences losing both parents, the story tellers share how they found comfort and peace to navigate a new reality.

"The Orphaned Adult: Understanding and Coping with Grief and Change After the Death of Our Parents"
Alexander Levy
This book highlights the shifted focus on one's own mortality and the child-like sorrow that can cause shifts in identity and roles within the family after the death of both parents.

"H is for Hawk"
Helen Macdonald
In this powerful book, expert falconer Helen Macdonald explores both the devastating death of her father and the raising of a hawk. Combining her love of falconry with her personal account of bereavement, this book is a unique blend of nature writing and grief memoir.

"The Long Goodbye"
Meghan O'Rourke
The author shares her story of her mother's prolonged illness prior to dying, not long before her separation from her husband. This book highlights resilience and perseverance after deep loss.

"Forgiving Our Parents, Forgiving Ourselves: The Definitive Guide"
Dr. David Stoop
This book explores how family patterns can perpetuate dysfunction and shape adult identities. After a death of a parent, this can help to release readers from thoughts and behaviors that harm themselves and those they love by understanding their origin.

"Healing the Adult Child's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Parent Dies"
Dr. Alan Wolfelt
The writer provides readers with helpful information and hope as they navigate the loss of a parent.

Men & Grief

"Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing"
Thomas Golden
Intended for men and women, this book explores how genders differ in their healing and can help to lead to greater understanding of one another.

"When a Man Faces Grief"
James Miller
Half of this book is for men who are grieving and the other half is for those wanting to support a man grieving. Each chapter offers a helpful suggestion to better understand various factors of a man's grief.

"Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road"
Neil Peart
A member of the band *Rush*, the author writes about his need to continue moving after the death of his 19 year-old daughter and his wife, and the realizations made along his journey of grief.

"Cry Like a Man: Fighting for Freedom from Emotional Incarceration"
Jason Wilson
Sharing his experience of loss during childhood, this author's memoir illustrates one's self-discovery amidst grief by acknowledging emotions and deciding what it means "to be a man."

Helping Others Through Grief

"Come Grieve Through Our Eyes: How to Give Comfort and Support to Bereaved Parents by Taking a Glimpse into Our Hidden World of Grief"
Laura Diehl
Opening the door into the experience of bereaved parents, this book allows readers to take a step beyond condolences and build compassion to fully support devastated parents in their time of need.

"Healing a Friend's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas for Helping Someone Through Loss"
Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.
This book provides fundamental principles to aid a friend grieving the death of a loved one. The author includes compassionate and practical suggestions to help mourners throughout their grieving journey.

"The Art of Condolence: What to Write, What to Say, What to Do at a Time of Loss"
Leonard Zunin
A guide for those searching for the words and actions to express compassion.

If you have questions or concerns about the grieving process,
please give us a call at (716) 836-6460 or email griefsupport@palliativecare.org
for more information, resource and support.