



## Suggested Books on Grief for Adults

**Ashenberg, K. (2004). *The mourner's dance: What we do when people die*. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.**

When her daughter's fiancé died suddenly in early 1998, Canadian journalist Ashenburg was forced to confront contemporary Western culture's ambivalence about mourning-especially for the death of a young person. Lacking the rites and rituals that more traditional societies offer, we mourn as best we can; even so, we act similarly to mourning rites across times and cultures. Into her loving and intimate account of her own family's grief, Ashenburg weaves descriptions of mourning rituals from a broad range of traditions.

**Baird, J., & Bowering, G. (Eds.). (2011). *The heart does break: Canadian writers on grief and mourning*. Vintage Canada.**

The Heart Does Break was born of paralyzing grief: Jean Baird, struggling with the sudden death of her daughter, Bronwyn, consulted counsellors and psychologists to help her deal with her loss but found her greatest solace in literature. Baird and her husband, poet George Bowering, asked a broad spectrum of Canadian writers to share their experiences of grief and mourning. Each essay is compelling; the writing throughout the collection is honest and highly skilled. Writing about mothers and children, fathers and friends, lovers and artists, all the contributors struggle to understand their grief. In aggregate, the essays offer insight into a painful subject, a sense of community, and an understanding that although no two people grieve similarly, no one is alone in the experience.

**Cunyus, J.G. (2017). *Grief Relief from the Bible: A Workbook on Finding Strength in Times of Loss*. Searchlight Press.**

The book draws on the wisdom of scripture and the insights of secular therapists to help those dealing with loss. It is divided into two sections. The first section defines grief, provides opportunities for detailing our grief, and then outlines some biblical and secular approaches to dealing with it. The second section contains the 104 grief passages from the Bible, with brief attached descriptions and questions to help you go deeper.

**Devine, M. (2017). *It's OK that you're not OK*. Sounds True.**

The book offers a new approach to both the experience of grief and the way we try to help others who have endured tragedy. Having experienced grief from both

sides—as both a therapist and as a woman who witnessed the accidental drowning of her beloved partner—Megan writes with insight about the unspoken truths of loss, love, and healing. She debunks the culturally prescribed goal of returning to an everyday, “happy” life, replacing it with a far healthier middle path that invites us to build a life alongside grief rather than seeking to overcome it.

**Devine, M. (2021). *How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed: A Journal for Grief*. Sounds True**

This journal enables you to tell your whole story without the need to tack on a happy ending where there isn't one. Grief is a natural response to death and loss—it's not an illness to be cured or a problem to be fixed. This workbook contains no clichés, timetables, or checklists of stages to get through; it won't help you “move past” or put your loss behind you. Instead, you'll find encouragement, self-care exercises, and daily tools.

**Didion, J. (2005). *The year of magical thinking*. Alfred A. Knopf.**

Didion's book is a memoir, a book-length study of what happened to her in the year after her husband, the novelist John Gregory Dunne, died. Having been married for 40 years and having spent most days writing together, consulting with each other, and most evenings dining together or with friends, her book is a record of the hour of his death and the days after when she continued not quite to understand what had happened, and the months after that of grieving and being regularly stunned by the fact of his passing.

**Dyregrov, A. & Lytje, M. (2024). *A Handbook of Children's Grief: For adults supporting children*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.**

Bereavement is one of the most challenging experiences a child can face. It is crucial for individuals caring for such children to be well-informed about how to provide the best support. The authors delve into various aspects of grief reactions and processes in children, offering insights into bereavement in different settings, including home and school. The guide also explores therapy options, the impact on development and relationships, and the lasting effects beyond childhood. Drawing from scientific research, clinical experience, and the voices of bereaved children through stories and quotes, this guide provides practical and concrete advice for those who support children's grief. It is an invaluable resource for understanding and aiding children in their journey through loss.

**Edelman, H. (2014). *Motherless Daughters (20th-anniversary edition): The legacy of loss*. Da Capo Press.**

The death of a mother--mainly during one's young years--is traumatic. Writing of her own experiences of losing her mother when she was 17 and the grief of hundreds of women she interviewed who lost their mothers through death,

abandonment or another form of separation, freelance writer Edelman marshals a wealth of anecdotal evidence, supplemented with psychological research about bereavement, that indicates that one's longing for a mother never disappears. Though the focus is on early loss for girls and the implications for their developing identity, adult daughters also speak in these pages to provide another poignant perspective. The author succeeds in opening up cathartic dialogues, personalizing a life-changing event and offering guidelines to help women of any age live with their loss.

**Franner, M. (2018). *Moments in Time*. Austin Macauley Publishers**

Moments in Time is a fictional account of a spouse's struggle to overcome the grief of losing her husband. It is an engaging story that speaks directly to the reader in a candid and forthright narrative through a series of "moments" in their lives. The story is honest and compelling, captivating the reader from the first paragraph.

**Grollman, E. A. (2011). *Talking about death: A dialogue between parent and child* (2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition). Beacon Press.**

Why do people die? How do you explain the loss of a loved one to a child? This book is a compassionate guide for adults and children to read together. It features a read-along story, answers to questions children ask about death, and a comprehensive list of resources and organizations that can help.

**Horsley, G. & Horsley, H. (2018). *Open to hope: Inspirational stories of healing after loss*. Heritage Builders.**

Whether a death is sudden or anticipated, losing a loved one shakes us to our very core, destroying our belief in a just, safe, and predictable world. Grief often changes us quickly, both physically and mentally. It is like being kidnapped and suddenly transported to a foreign land without luggage, a passport, or the language to make sense of what's happening. Even if you have a road map for overcoming the pain and anguish, you still must take the trip. This book aims to help you find threads of hope that will assist your recovery and allow you to continue.

**Jenkins, C. & Merry, J. (2005). *Relative Grief: Parents and children, sisters and brothers, husbands, wives and partners*. Jessica Kingsley**

Kindle eBook: In this collection of first-hand accounts, parents, grandparents, children, siblings, and partners share their experiences of losing close relatives and friends through death from natural causes, genetic conditions, accidents, suicide, and murder. Looking at death from these different perspectives aims to encourage people to understand their grief and how those closest to them might be affected by what can seem a very private loss. The introduction examines the

short- and long-term effects of recent and past loss, the duration and intensity of mourning, and the complex and often conflicting feelings and behaviours that accompany it: loneliness, anger, guilt or relief, the birth - or loss of - religious faith, out-of-character behaviour triggered by shock, and "competitive" grief among close relatives and friends. Relative Grief is of interest to anyone who has been bereaved or supported someone who has.

**LaGrand, L. (2011). *Healing Grief, Finding Peace: 101 Ways to Cope with the Death of Your Loved One*. Sourcebooks.**

Whether the death of a loved one is sudden or follows a long battle with illness, there is no way to prepare for the loss of someone close. However, you do have a choice in how you cope with grief and - most importantly - finding the strength to grow through the pain of your loss. Grief counseling expert Dr. Louis LaGrand offers 101 practical, accessible pieces of advice to help mourners through the rough sea of their loss.

**Levy, A. (2000). *The orphaned adult: Understanding and coping with grief and change after the death of our parents*. Perseus Books.**

The death of one's parents is "the ultimate equal-opportunity" experience; becoming an orphan as an adult happens to nearly everybody. Psychologist Levy examines this profound life-changing event with compassion and understanding. Since our parents "project an illusion of permanence," writes Levy, their death forces us to confront our mortality (we are next in line to die) and to adjust to our new identities as orphaned adults.

**Livingston, B. (2018). *The Suitcase & The Jar: Travels with a daughter's ashes*. Caitlin Press.**

When a brain tumor takes the life of Becky Livingston's twenty-three-year-old daughter Rachel, her life makes an unconventional turn. An avid traveler, Rachel had one wish: to keep exploring the world. So, for twenty-six months, Livingston travels untethered and alone. In her suitcase: Rachel's ashes, heavy but compact. As she gradually merges her daughter's remains with the elements, Livingston learns how to forge a new sense of belonging in an unfamiliar world. Is it reckless for a fifty-three-year-old mother to quit her job and set off overseas with no agenda or timeline? Is such a journey squandering a life or saving it? *The Suitcase and the Jar* is a profoundly moving story of a mother's courage and resilience. It explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: how one finds the strength to reconfigure a new life by necessity.

**Markell, K. A. & Markell, M. A. (2008). *The Children Who Lived: Using Harry Potter And other fictional characters to help grieving children and adolescents.* Routledge.**

Harry Potter's encounters with grief and the experiences of other fictional characters can be used by educators, counselors, and parents to help children and adolescents deal with their loss issues. The Children Who Lived is a unique approach toward grief and loss in children. Focusing on fictional child and adolescent characters experiencing grief, this book uses classic tales and the Harry Potter books to help grieving children and adolescents. The text and the companion CD include several activities, discussion questions, and games that could be used with grieving children and adolescents based on the fictional characters in these books.

**Martin, J. D. & Ferris, F. D. (2013). *I Can't Stop Crying: Grief and recovery, a compassionate guide.* McClelland & Stewart**

"This book looks at how being bereaved affects relationships with family and friends, lifestyle, work habits, and hopes for the future." It includes statements and insights from bereaved individuals who share their unique voices around grief and loss.

**Martin, J. d. & Egan, E. M. (2016). *Help Me I Hurt.* Change It Books.**

The authors present a method for navigating grief using the Three R's—realize, recognize, and rebuild.

**Matero, R. (2019). *It Takes Courage: The young widow's guide to grieving and raising children alone (Kindle Edition).* Difference Press**

Losing a spouse is like waking up in a nightmare that never ends. Your grief is complicated enough to deal with, but it can feel like a daunting and impossible task when you have children to raise amid the loss. Are you afraid of what will happen now? Are you asking yourself, "How will I raise my children alone?" Do you wish you had someone to talk to who understands what you are going through? Dr. Matero will inspire and empower you through her COURAGE Process in this inspiring guide to living again after losing a spouse.

**Roper, G. (2015). *A Widow's Journey: Reflections on Walking Alone.* Harvest House Publishers.**

Have you recently lost your husband? Are there days you feel so alone that no one else can understand? The author writes  
So who am I now that there's only one place at the table...one pillow with a head dent, one damp towel after a shower? There's only one toothbrush in the holder. The seat is never left up anymore. I can still write Mrs. before my name, but I'm no longer in a marriage relationship. You need two people for a marriage, and

there's only me. The book offers a compassionate devotional to encourage you through your darkest days. It's in His love you'll find your most profound comfort.

**Rosof, B. D. (2001). *The Worst Loss: How families heal from the death of a child*. Owl.**

Research shows that the grief of parents lasts longer and is more intense than any other. Rosof, a California psychotherapist who works with bereaved families, offers compassionate advice to help parents cope. She explains why grieving is crucial to recovery, how the partners' relationship may be affected, and how surviving siblings grieve. She also shows parents how to break down psychological barriers that hinder necessary grief work and prevent full recovery. In perhaps the most enlightening as well as painful part, families tell of their children's deaths and their aftermath.

**Rowland, J. (2017). *The Memory Box: A book about grief*. Sparkhouse Family**

"I'm scared I'll forget you..."

From the perspective of a young child, Jennifer Rowland artfully describes what it is like to remember and grieve a loved one who has died. The child in the story creates a memory box to keep mementos and written memories of the loved one and to help in the grieving process. Heartfelt and comforting, the Memory Box will help children and adults discuss this complicated topic together. The unique point of view allows the reader to imagine the loss of any they have loved - a friend, family member, or even a pet. A parent guide in the back includes expert information from a Christian perspective on helping children manage the complex and difficult emotions they feel when they lose someone they love and suggestions on how to create their memory box.

**Sirota, C. (2015). *Someone Died...Now What? A personal and professional perspective on coping with grief and loss*. Corrie Sirota.**

This book provides practical and helpful tools for dealing with grief and loss. The author shares her personal story and professional tips for bereavement.

**Warner, J. (2018). *Grief Day By Day: Simple Practices and Daily Guidance for Living with Loss*. Callisto.**

Explore the stages of grief with a collection of quotes, musings, meditations, and more that are tied together by a weekly theme, allowing you to reflect on each concept in depth. Work through topics like loneliness, grief attacks, exhaustion, hope, love, and creating meaning. You'll find opportunities to write, draw, meditate, do breathing exercises, and more as you learn to live fully with your grief. This grief recovery handbook contains 365 Daily reflections—Find a year's worth of readings that can be revisited as many times as you like as you move through the grieving process. Weekly themes—Explore feelings and experiences

of grief every day, including things left unsaid, unhealthy coping mechanisms, guilt, intimacy, and faith. 52 Healing exercises—Discover activities that help you process your feelings at the end of each week and develop skills for coping with grief as it arises. Make peace with your grief one day at a time with the daily readings and exercises in this outstanding grief book.

**Wolfelt, A. (2016). *Grief One Day at a Time: 365 Meditations to Help You Heal After Loss*. Companion Press.**

After a loved one dies, each day can be a struggle. But you can also find comfort and understanding daily in this companion. With one brief entry for every day of the calendar year, this little book by beloved grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt offers small, one-day-at-a-time doses of guidance and healing. Each entry includes an inspiring or soothing quote followed by a short discussion of the day's theme. This compassionate gem of a book will accompany you.

**Wolfelt, A. (2013). *Finding the words: How to talk with children and teens about death, suicide, funerals, homicide, cremation, and other end-of-life matters*. Companion Press**

With this compassionate book by respected grief counselor and educator Dr. Wolfelt, readers will find simplified and suitable methods for talking to children and teenagers about sensitive topics with an emphasis on the subject of death. Honest but child-appropriate language is advocated, and various wording and levels of explanation are suggested for different ages when discussing topics such as death in general, suicide, homicide, accidental death, the death of a child, terminal illness, pet death, funerals, and cremation.

**Wunnenburg, K. (2015). *Grieving the Child I Never Knew: A devotional for comfort in the loss of your unborn or newly born child*. Zondervan.**

When the anticipation of your child's birth turns into the grief of miscarriage, tubal pregnancy, stillbirth, or early infant death, no words can ease your loss. But there is strength and encouragement in the wisdom of others who have been there and found that God's comfort is absolute. The book, a 31-day devotional to help mothers, is a warm, encouraging, and helpful devotional for anyone experiencing the terrible loss of a baby.

**Zonnebelt, S. & De Vries, R. C. (2001). *The Empty Chair: Handling Grief on Holidays and Special Occasions*. Baker Publishing Group.**

Like a firestorm blazing through a forest, the grief of losing a loved one seems to leave nothing but ashes in its path. The hope and meaning in life appear to vanish. And at no time is that pain more acute than on holidays and other special occasions. Whether you've lost a spouse, parent, child, friend, or sibling, *The Empty Chair: Handling Grief on Holidays and Special Occasions* invites you to

journey through grief toward life-giving healing. You'll learn to incorporate new traditions on special days like anniversaries and birthdays, create memorials that honor and affirm your loved one's life, rebuild your identity, and more. Most of all, you'll discover a new sense of joy that can become a special part of future holidays.

**Zonnebelt, S. & De Vries, R. C. (2019). *Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse*. Baker Publishing Group.**

There is little in life that rocks us, like the death of a husband or wife. Whether you're feeling alone, drowning under an ocean of emotions, or you've worked your way through to the darkest nights of the soul and are now wondering how to get on with your life, you'll find comfort and guidance from the authors of this book. One a clinical psychologist, the other a pastor and professor, both suffered the loss of a spouse at a relatively young age. Their empathy, valuable psychological insights, biblical observations, and male and female perspectives will help you experience your grief most wholly and healthily so that you can move forward to embrace the new life waiting for you on the other side.