COPING WITH grief



The Author



Jillayn Davis

COACH | GRIEF ADVOCATE | MOM

Hello! I am glad you are here. I know grief isn't something you get over, it is something you learn to carry. I lost my son Ryan Michael in 2024, and that loss changed everything about how I see the world. I built Grief Connections because I know there is a need for a space where people navigating loss can find real tools, honest community, and zero judgment. I don't pretend healing is pretty. I just help you keep going.

Table of Contents

Introduction 01

The heart of grief 02

Coping with grief before a loss 03

Adaptive and Complicated Grief 04

Dealing with depression 05

Loss of a parent 06

Life trumps death 07

Emotional intelligence 08

Overcoming worry & fear 09



Chapter 01

Introduction to grief

Have you ever lost someone close to you to death? We go through a grief process that was best described by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in On Death and Dying.

In it she talks about the five stages that people go through denial and isolation; anger; bargaining; depression and finally acceptance. The dying, as well as those who love them, go through these stages although rarely at the same time and these stages are not predictable. You may think you are in the anger phase, then jump to depression and then, back to denial again. There is no rhyme or reason---only what feels right for each individual at the time. No one can predict how long a phase will last.

If you are grieving and some well-meaning person suggests that you shouldn't be feeling what you are feeling, kindly thank them for their concern but know that you are exactly where you need to be.

INTRODUCTION

However, with grief, sometimes you will become aware of something not feeling right. You may think, “I should be over this by now” or “I don’t like feeling this way.” When you, yourself, recognize that it is time to move beyond where you are at, then trust that feeling as well.

I’d like to explore grief through a Choice Theory perspective. It may take several posts to explain fully, so I’ll begin with the principle that all behavior is purposeful. In Choice Theory, grief can be understood as behavior: everything we do is our best effort, in that moment, to pursue something we want—perhaps an image in our Quality World that helps meet one or more of our needs. Grief is no exception.

Once you understand that all behavior is purposeful and that grief is a person’s best attempt to get something they want, then it becomes easier to know what to do about it. What could we possibly be trying to get by grieving? Most people would say that there isn’t a choice. When someone we love dies, we have to grieve. I say it is natural that we will miss the person’s presence in our life, but it isn’t inevitable that we have to grieve, not in the way most people think of grieving.

The first thing I believe that we are trying to get with our grief is the person who died. When we grieve, it is our best attempt to keep that person alive, at least in our perceived world. We know they no longer exist in the physical world as we know it. However, if we continue to think about them, pine for them, grieve their presence, then it keeps the thought of that person active in our perception and it feels better to us than the total void or absence

of that person. Another possible advantage of grief is that it shows others just how much we cared for and loved the person who died. I'm not suggesting that people are being manipulative in their grief.

What I am saying is that there is a side benefit to grief in that it shows others how much we cared. It also says, "See what a good _____ I was." Fill in the blank with husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, mother, father, sister, brother, etc. Grief is also instrumental in getting us the support we need from others during our time of bereavement. People do things for us that we would normally be expected to do ourselves.

Again, please don't think that I am suggesting that a grieving person wakes up and "decides" to grieve so someone will stop by the house with a meal. None of this is conscious but I'm merely pointing out the potential advantages of grief. Once we become totally conscious and aware of what our grief does and doesn't do for us, then comes the hard part. We need to make some decisions about how we want to live.

> *There are always at least three options in every situation, and they can be framed up in terms of leave it, change it or accept it. With death, you may wonder how someone is going to "leave it."*



Well, some possible ways would be major denial of the loss, suicide, drugs and/or alcohol abuse, or sinking deep into mental illness, among others. When we get caught up in changing things, we may continue in our grief as our best attempt to get the person back. That might look like constant trips to the cemetery, frequent conversations with the deceased, refusing to believe he or she is truly gone, constantly talking about the one who's gone. There are many things we can do to attempt to change the reality of the loss.

If and when we come to accept it, we can experience some measure of peace and rejoin the living. A healthy step in this process is finding a way to somehow maintain that person's presence in our lives. Now, this is a very individual thing and you must be very careful not to judge the choices of the bereaved.

Most people saw Meet the Parents. In it, Robert De Niro's character kept the ashes of his mother in an urn on his mantle. Many people do this with the cremated remains of their loved ones. Others place some ashes in a necklace and wear it around their neck. Some will set up scholarship or memorials. When my son died, my neighbor worked with the STMA hockey association to set up a scholarship for kids in Ryan's name. There are all kinds of creative ways to maintain the person's presence. There is no wrong way. Whatever brings comfort to the bereaved should be supported by those around them.



Remember that just because a person is choosing something that may be distasteful or wrong to you, doesn't make it wrong for that person.

When acceptance occurs, then the grieving person can begin to reassimilate back into their life and the lives of those around them, but it won't happen overnight.



We need to show patience and understanding toward people who are grieving.

Sometimes a person doesn't appear to grieve at all. There may be many explanations for this behavior. The person may be very private and won't do his or her grieving where others can see.

Some people try to be strong for everyone else. I know I wanted my girls and my family to KNOW that I was going to be OK. I didn't want them to believe that they had to take care of me. To some, it seemed that I wasn't grieving enough, even to myself.

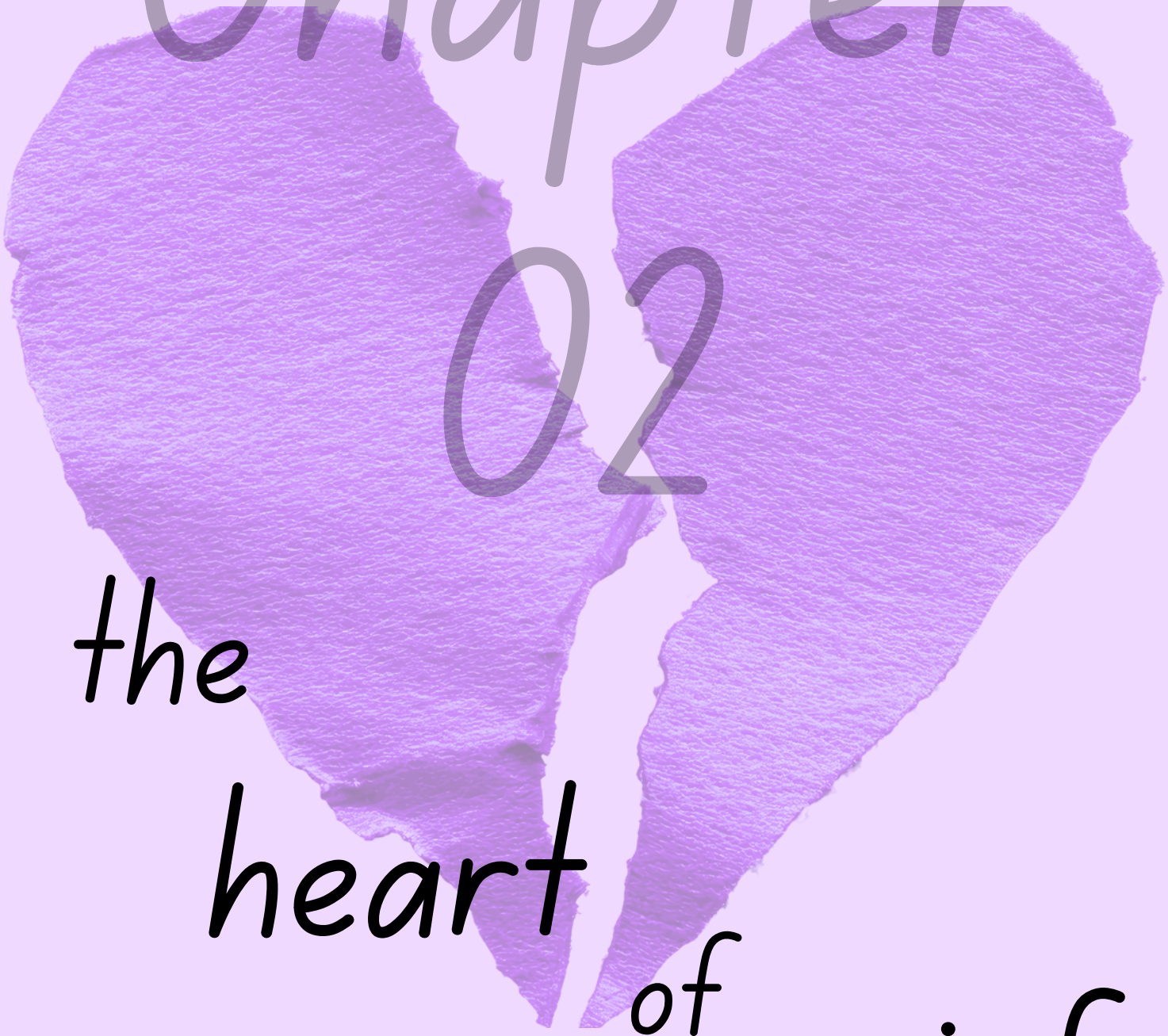
If you are grieving, or you are involved in the life of someone who is grieving, please don't judge yourself or them. Understand that all behavior is purposeful, and the person is getting something out of what they are doing.

When they become conscious that there is a choice, then they can make a conscious decision about which of the three choices they want to make.

Once they have chosen a direction, they can begin developing the details of their plan.


Grief never *ends.*
But it changes.
It's a passage; not a place to stay. It is not a sign of weakness; nor a lack of faith.
It's the price of *love.*

Chapter 02



the heart of grief

the grieving process.



the heart of care

the heart of compassion

an awakened heart

The heart of care centers its attention on the needs of the patient who is dying. Any attempt to move a patient away from his/her authentic character becomes a war of wills. As we listen and care for a person just as he/she is, we are allowing a person to die the way he/she lived. Our ability to meet a person in unconditional love will draw out the desire to be fully known by the patient. Here, we are given opportunities to meet him/her in grace and mercy. Patients are not a disease. Patients are awakening into soul. Ex: Mary was a strong-willed person who did not want to die. She had a strong personality. She had many roles she carried out in life, and she wanted to hold on to them all. She was a mother, friend, wife, among many other roles.

About two weeks before Mary died, she shared with me that she became aware of two identities: one was her strong personality and the other was a presence of peace she could not explain. The closer Mary came to her dying, the more she could identify with wanting peace over suffering. This identity with her soul became more appealing to her than living in a body that was failing her. She was awakening into her authentic self.



A dying patient releases so much as death approaches, and may feel tempted to hold tightly to what remains of life. Yet holding on can bring more pain and suffering. As caregivers, we need to respect this deeply personal process and offer the support and guidance needed to move from letting go—an act of will—toward letting be, a peaceful harmony with dying. Caring means offering the patient the space to move through this process in their own way.

As a person dies, personality gradually gives way to soul. This can break the heart. The longing to leave a suffering body and return to peace—one's authentic self—can exist alongside the wish to remain with those we love. Together, these longings create a path inward, beyond individual and collective awareness. In essence, this is a journey of survival for the soul. The soul moves forward, while funeral services remind us that it is the person's soul—not the body—that we honor as we face death. These rituals mark a passage for the person who has died and for those reflecting on their life.

A relationship once held in another person's physical presence changes after death. The relationship now lives within us, forming an invisible bond that forever connects our awareness to the unique quality of the person who has gone before us, drawing those left behind more deeply into the soul.



the heart of care

the heart of compassion

an awakened heart

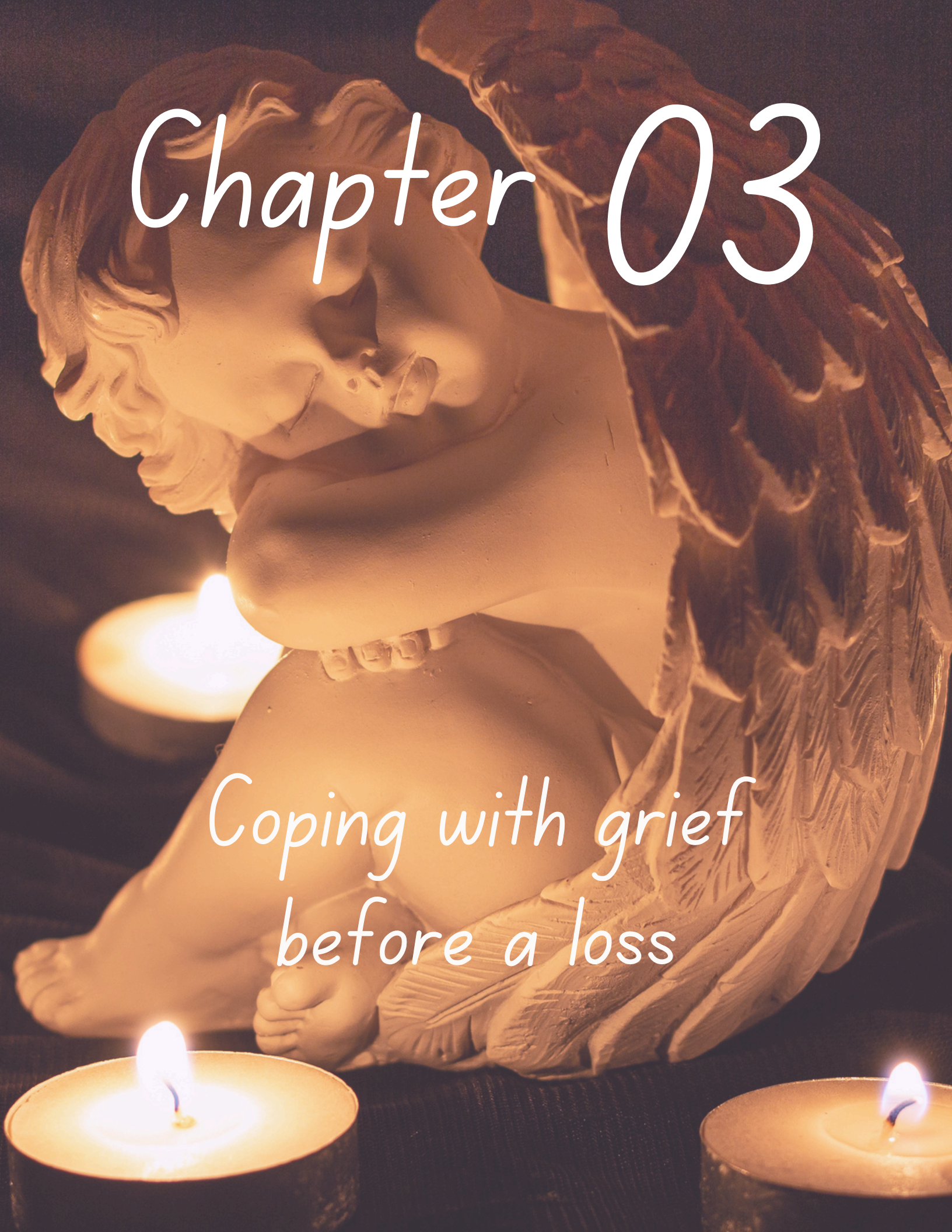
An awakened heart knows there is more to life than what appears on the surface. Dying people lead us to this place where eternal relationships are forged into the deepest aspects of our nature. It is our nature to love and feel love. Even grief has the capacity to deepen our sense of sacredness toward those we love. A few years ago, I travelled Los Angeles, CA, I was gone about a week. When I returned, my youngest son gave me a big hug. I missed him and he missed me. I could feel him literally fill my heart with love. In a real way, my soul was touched by my son's soul.

An awakened heart knows that this is the heart of relationships. In the landscape of the soul, what matters in life IS NOT matter. When we begin to look through our eyes and not with them, we enter into a view of life from the perspective of soul. Insight, to see from within, enables us to encounter death with hope, with faith, and with love. As we grow in our capacity to see from within, we enter into the heart of grief. This emergence into the nature of soul will sustain us through death and into life - eternal. May the Creator of us all give us strength for the journey.

It's okay if the only thing you did today was



breathe



Chapter 03

Coping with grief before a loss



How to cope with grief before loss

Anticipatory grief describes the emotions we may feel when we know a loss is coming and begin grieving before it happens. It is common after a terminal diagnosis, affecting both the person who is ill and the people who love and support them. A terminal diagnosis can reshape how we see our lives, leaving us feeling less in control and unsure of what lies ahead. When someone we love is facing a terminal illness, we may become more aware of life's fragility and confront fears about our own mortality.

Anticipating a death can bring many of the same emotional and physical responses as grieving after a loved one has died, including shock, anger, denial, pain, helplessness, and sorrow. Depression may also arise, along with changes in eating, sleep, and bowel habits. Uncertainty about the prognosis can deepen this distress, making each day feel like part of a countdown to the expected loss.



grief before loss

Some may feel a sense of surrealness and an inability to fit back into the pattern of life prior to diagnosis, this often intensified by the reaction of friends and acquaintances, who may be dealing with their own shock and dismay at the news and not knowing what to do or say, avoid us. It may be some time before we can truly accept that our loved one is dying and during this time, we may experience alternate periods of acceptance and denial. Often, necessity brings about acceptance for the carer as they need to make decisions regarding the best options available for the care of their loved ones.

The patient, however, may choose not to accept the prognosis and it is important for the carer to recognize and support their need to live in hope of a cure. Hope is paramount to quality of life for their loved one and may even contribute to their longer survival. Whether our grief is anticipatory or grief due to the death of a loved one, there is a very real need to talk to someone about the roller coaster of emotions we are experiencing.

This however is not always easy to do, due to a number of reasons which may include; trying to remain strong for the patient, trying to remain strong for the children, trying to put on a brave face for other family members and friends.

Although counseling is widely available, many people hesitate to seek it, believing that no one could truly understand their feelings or change what happens. When my dad was terminally ill, I experienced anticipatory grief and felt the same way. I approached my first counseling session with some trepidation.

When I shared my story, the counselor cried, which reinforced my belief that she could not help me. I was wrong. After a few sessions, I began to recognize the value of counseling and looked forward to meeting with her each week. For a little while, I could stop pretending everything was fine. When it wasn't, I could set aside my brave face and lower my defenses.

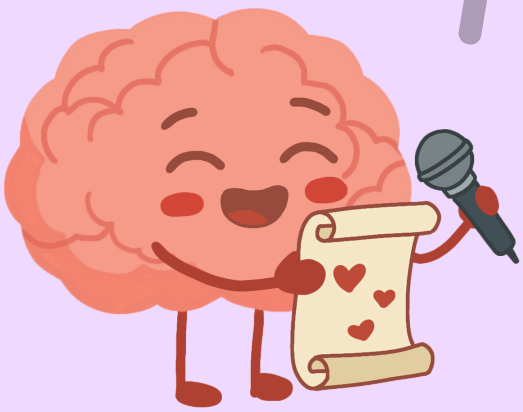
The difficulty with counseling is that it may not always be available when you need it. For those moments, I highly recommend keeping a personal diary. During the three years of my dad's terminal illness, my diary was, without a doubt, my strongest coping tool. I wrote in it every day, often in the form of poetry, pouring my anger, fear, and heartache onto the pages.

Periodically, I would read back through it and through this I came to know myself very well - later I could see my strength coming through.

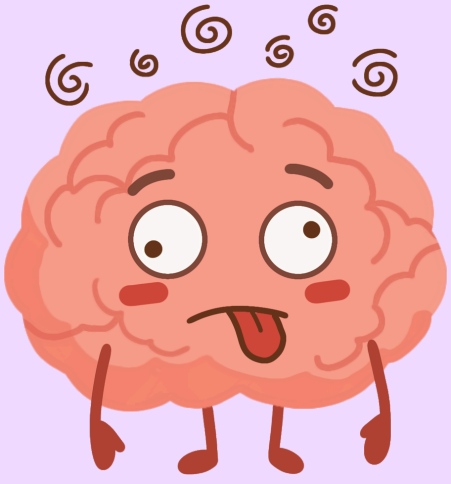



I choose to heal from within.

Chapter 04



Adaptive and



Complicated Grief

Grieving the end of a relationship can help us process what we feel and gradually adjust to life after the loss. When we acknowledge and express our grief, we create space for healing while still honoring what the relationship meant. But grief can also become painful and isolating when we remain trapped in thoughts about the past and struggle to reconnect with daily life. Often, the difference lies in what we believe we have lost—and whether we can continue to find love, security, and meaning within ourselves and through supportive relationships.

What separates people who move through grief from those who feel trapped in it? Often, it comes down to what they believe they have lost. When someone believes they have lost their only source of love, grief can feel endless. Healing becomes more possible when they recognize that love, connection, and meaning can also be found within themselves and through supportive relationships.

Adaptive grief & complicated grief

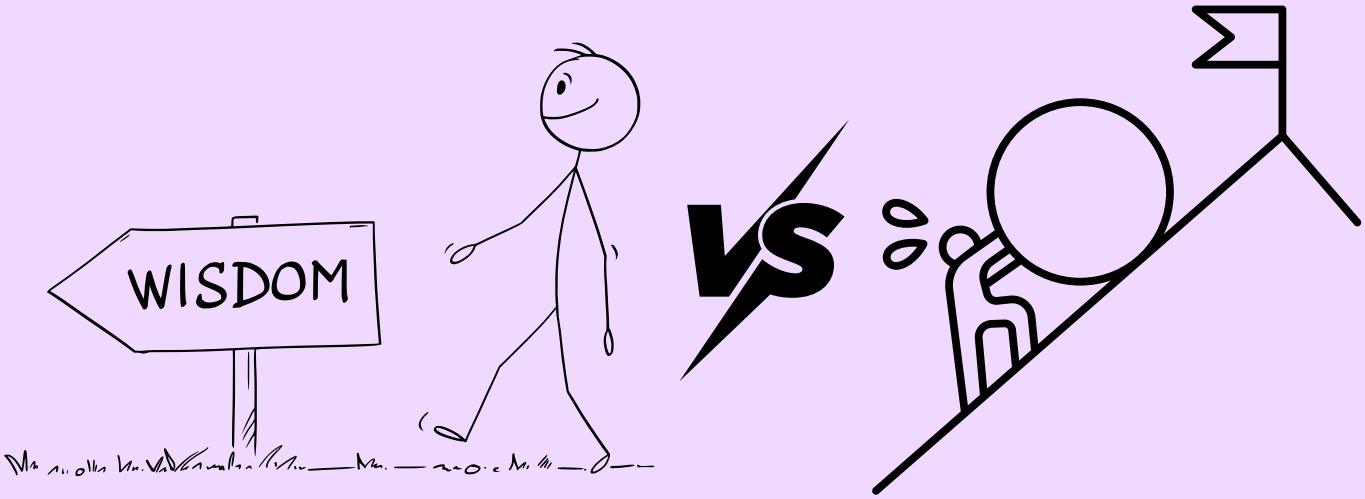


friendship

After Maya's close friendship with Lena ended, Maya felt as though she had lost her entire support system. She missed Lena, but she also depended on the friendship to feel valued and secure. Because Maya had not yet learned how to comfort herself or express her needs openly, she became stuck in feelings of rejection and self-blame. She replayed old conversations, wondering what she could have done differently, and found it difficult to focus on everyday life. Her grief remained unresolved because she was mourning not only the relationship, but also the sense of worth and belonging she had placed in it. With time, reflection, and support, Maya began to recognize her own needs, take responsibility for her healing, and rebuild a sense of connection within herself and with others.



Frank was grieving deeply after the death of his beloved wife, Beth. He had loved her wholeheartedly, and he missed her terribly. He missed her laughter, her joy, her compassion, and her sense of wonder. Most of all, he missed Beth as a person and the life they had shared together. Frank's grief was different from Maya's because it was rooted in love and loss rather than regret or emotional dependence. He felt his grief in waves and allowed himself to cry when the sadness came. After each wave passed, he was able to return to his daily life. Beth had been deeply important to Frank, but she had not been the source of his identity or sense of worth. He had developed a caring inner strength and remained connected to a spiritual source of love and wisdom. Frank understood that he was responsible for caring for his own emotional wellbeing, while still honoring the love and gratitude he felt for the time he and Beth had shared.



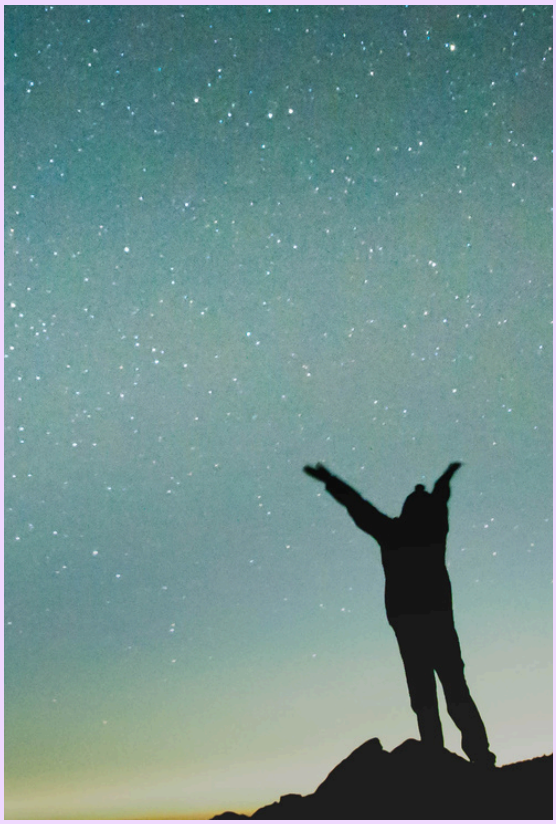
Frank's sense of love and wisdom came from within himself and through his spiritual connection, not from Beth. He took responsibility for his own emotions, wellbeing, joy, and pain instead of expecting Beth to manage them. Because he stayed connected to his own needs and sense of self, he could miss Beth and grieve her loss without feeling completely abandoned, helpless, or alone.

Maya continued to struggle deeply, even after expressing her sadness, because Lena had become her primary source of love, security, and emotional connection. Maya had relied on the friendship to define her sense of self, so when it ended, she felt completely abandoned. She had placed responsibility for her emotional needs and vulnerable feelings in Lena's hands. Without Lena, Maya felt frightened and helpless, as though her main source of love and belonging had disappeared. Her grief was intensified by the belief that she had lost not only Lena, but also the foundation of her identity, self-worth, and emotional wellbeing.

Because Frank knew how to love himself, he knew how to love others. Within a couple of years, Frank was in another loving relationship.

Maya entered another close friendship within six months of losing Lena, but six months later, that friendship had also ended. Until Maya learns to take responsibility for her own feelings and needs, she may continue moving from one relationship to another while feeling like a victim of the people in her life. Healing will become more possible as she develops self-trust, communicates her needs openly, and builds a stronger sense of emotional security within herself.

We will remember with gratitude the gift of having known their love;



rather than

sorrow.

Chapter 05

Dealing with depression



Grief support

Depression is a mental state that can seriously affect a person's behavior and disrupt emotional stability. When left unmanaged, it can interfere with daily activities and lead to significant biological and metabolic changes.

Depression is a condition that has challenged people throughout history as they strive to navigate life. One of the most difficult aspects of treatment is identifying the deeply rooted causes behind this complex mental experience, which can vary greatly from person to person.

Attributing the causes of depression can be difficult. It cannot always be explained by the hardships and challenges of life, nor can it be attributed solely to a person's living circumstances. In some cases, even a state of mental emptiness may contribute to depression.

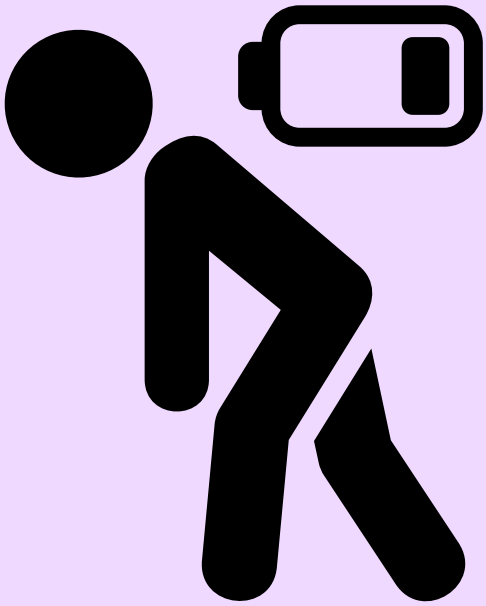
The emotional symptoms of depression are as diverse as it can be. In a depressed state, one would have least interest to do even his routine activities.



> Grief is not always about healing; sometimes it's about survival.

Some days feel heavier

He wakes with little energy. Everyday tasks feel difficult, even when he is trying his best.



Sleep has become unsettled. Some nights he can not rest; on others, he sleeps for hours and still feels tired. His thoughts are harder to organize, and concentrating at work or home takes more time than it once had.

Motivation also comes and goes. Activities he once enjoyed feel distant, and small decisions feel overwhelming. He began taking things one step at a time, allowing room for rest and speaking honestly with people he trusted.



Depression can affect people of many ages and may have more than one contributing factor, including health, stress, relationships, or life changes. It is a real health concern, not a personal weakness. Support from trusted people and a qualified professional can make a meaningful difference, and recovery can happen gradually.

When depression is recognized and addressed early, people are more likely to receive the support they need before their symptoms become more severe. During this difficult time, the care of family, friends, and the wider community can make a meaningful difference. Compassion, understanding, and steady encouragement can help a person regain stability, reconnect with daily life, and move toward healing.

Friends and relatives can support someone experiencing depression by listening with empathy, reminding them that their life has value, and encouraging them to seek appropriate help. Gentle, consistent support can help the person face challenges without feeling judged or pressured. Counseling and other professional care can also help restore emotional balance, inner peace, and a stronger connection with everyday life.

Relaxation practices can support mental health by helping people calm their minds and manage stress. Family and close friends can encourage these habits with patience and care, while technology can provide access to helpful resources and guidance. Professional support, including counseling and other evidence-based treatments, can also help people cope with depression and begin to feel better.

Depression can feel complex, especially when it continues without support. That is why early care matters: with compassion, understanding, and appropriate professional help, people can address difficult thoughts and feelings and move toward recovery.



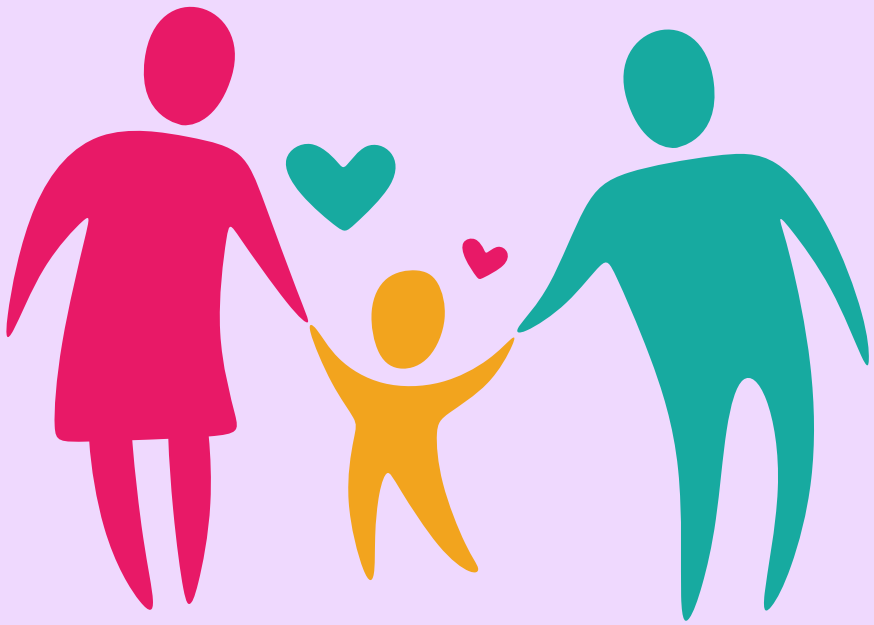
Moving forward does not erase the past.....



It means accepting what happened while continuing to find meaning in life.

Chapter 06

Loss of a parent



chapter five

DEALING WITH LOSS OF A PARENT

Grief is the deep emotional pain that can follow the loss of someone we love. Accepting that a person who mattered deeply to us is no longer here can be incredibly difficult, and the pain may feel overwhelming. Losing a parent, child, spouse, or another loved one can profoundly affect our sense of safety and connection. The bond between parents and children is often especially strong, as children look to their parents for guidance, comfort, and support. Even in adulthood, many people continue to rely on their parents in meaningful ways.

Parents and children often share everyday experiences, hopes, and dreams. Talking with a parent can help a child feel understood and less alone. Because this connection runs so deep, losing a parent can have lasting emotional effects and change many parts of a person's life.



Childhood loss can affect emotional growth and belonging. Support helps children heal.

After losing a parent, children may lack consistent care, which can affect their emotional development and sense of security. The pain of this loss can make it hard to think clearly or manage everyday life. Parental loss can also happen in adulthood, since many parents die before their children. As adults, children may come to accept loss as a natural part of life while giving themselves time, support, and space to grieve.

Watching a parent lose memories, grow frail, or change with age can be deeply painful. Children may struggle to accept that their shared time is changing. They often want to keep sharing thoughts and everyday moments, so realizing those moments may become limited can bring profound sadness and grief.

Losing a parent can bring profound emotional pain. Over time, grief may feel overwhelming and affect how a person thinks, feels, and manages daily life. When grief becomes difficult to carry, it can help to remember that life includes uncertainty and that loss is a natural part of being human. Rather than denying the pain, allow yourself to acknowledge it and move through it at your own pace. Difficult thoughts and emotions may arise unexpectedly, so gently turning your attention toward supportive, hopeful, and meaningful parts of life can offer comfort.

Losing a parent is beyond our control and is a reality many people will eventually face. During this difficult time, support from qualified professionals can help ease emotional distress and provide comfort.


I focus on my blessings
and memories

Chapter 07

Life trumps death



life trumps death

Do you ever find yourself wondering what life means and why we are here? These questions can surface when we receive news we'd rather not hear—the death of an uncle, a beloved aunt, or a friend's spouse whose life ended in tragic circumstances. I'm not sure I can fully accept the idea that such losses are simply part of the circle of life.

I don't often read obituaries, but sometimes I pause over the lives of people I never knew. Many lived long, meaningful lives, served their communities, and left a lasting mark on the world around them.

I think how proud their family must be, I also imagine the hurt and grief they are experiencing. I read about the 42-year old father who has succumbed to cancer and leaves behind a wife and two children and I wonder how this is fair.

My heart aches when I read about the young child tragically killed in an accident as my eyes fill with tears. I'm no stranger to death. It scares me and I don't deal well with it. I find death emotionally overwhelming. It is hurt, compassion, sadness, pain, empathy, love all rolled together that hits like a tsunami.

I've lost friends due to



accidents, drugs, and disease. Like so many others, I have said goodbye to relatives only after they have gone.

I don't know why I'm so impacted by death. It's not that I think about it all the time. Maybe I subconsciously fear the loss of a parent, a sibling, a family member. Perhaps I'm selfish, a coward who doesn't want to die. Young people seldom think of death, they are to busy living life as if they are invincible. Old people tend to prepare for death and accept the event as a natural and inevitable occurrence. Experience and reality have tempered their emotions. The grief and hurt is still there, so is the reflection on the positive aspects of the individual's life. For some, their biggest worry is if they will outlive their friends, who will attend their funeral.

Maybe this aging process will help me to become less sensitive to the loss of not only those I love, but to those I have only read about in the newspaper. I am thankful my fear of death is more than offset by my passion for life. So, it should be.

So, where does this discussion of death take us? It could be to the end of a journey, or the beginning of a new one depending on your beliefs. If you were to have a tombstone, what would it read? Here we are back to the question, what is our mission, our purpose, our goal?

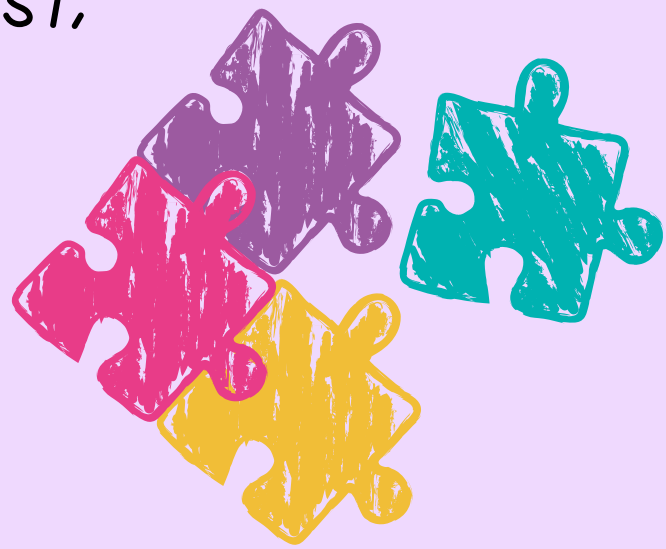
One accolade might read, "Here lays an honest person who cared about the people around her, respected others and made a positive difference in the lives of everyone she encountered."

If we envision how we want others to remember us, it might provide a valuable compass to aid us down the path of life. In a perfect world, perhaps caring and understanding might extend well beyond our community and our country. Imagine a common bond based on a desire for truth, justice, peace, and mutual respect. We can't do a lot about death. We can very much impact life - our own and others.

What we have loved and

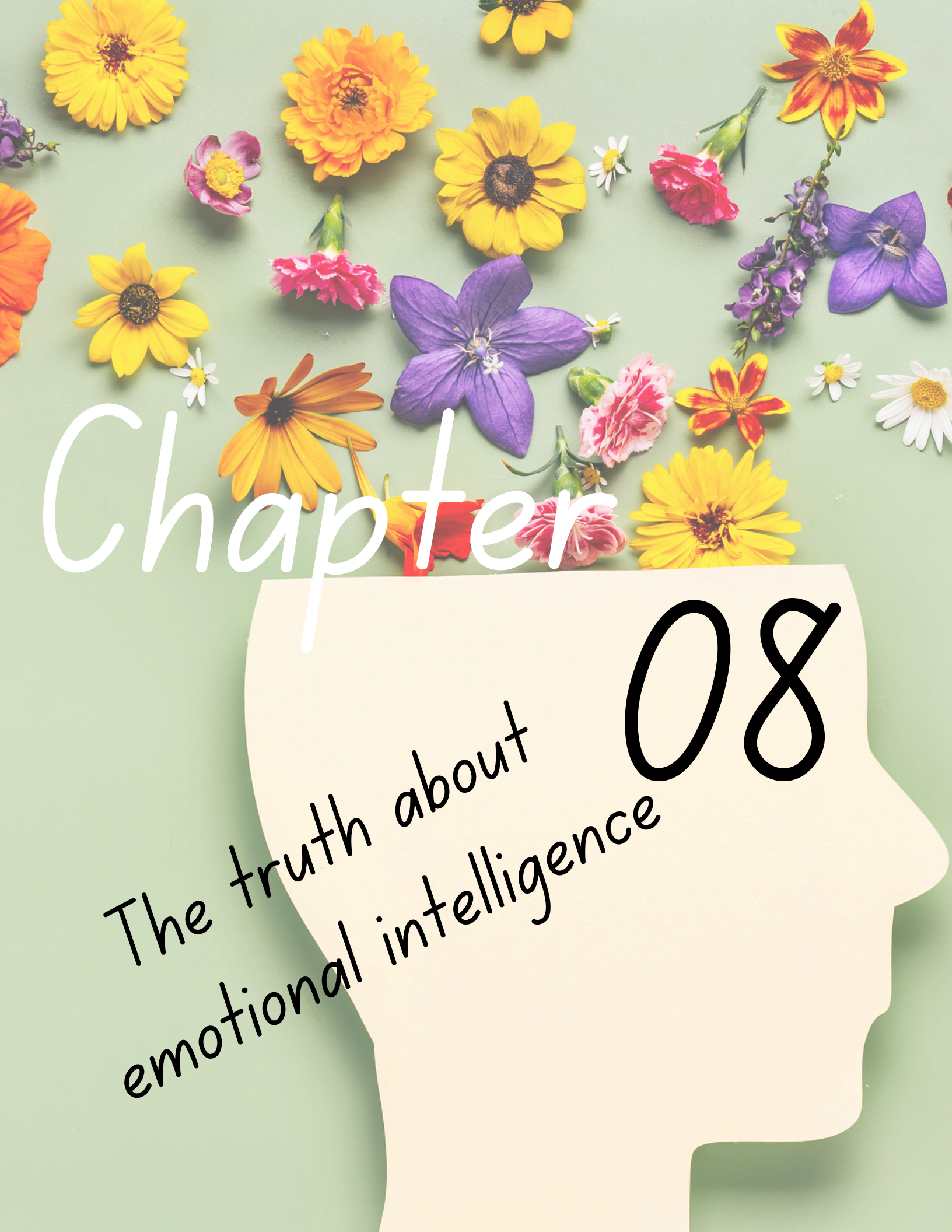
valued deeply is never

truly lost;



it becomes part of

who we are.


Chapter
08
The truth about
emotional intelligence

The Truth About Emotional Intelligence

There is so much emphasis on emotional intelligence these days that it appears that people are suppressing their emotions and problems in an effort to "fit in," to keep their jobs, and using "positive self-talk" to muscle through the rough spots in their lives..

Recently, I had a friend over who has suffered enormous job stress during a time when his wife's father was dying of cancer. Of course, quitting his job didn't seem like an option during this difficult period, particularly since his wife returned to her parental home for many months to say good-bye to her dying father. That left him at home to take care of their children, pay the bills, and so on. Who can forge positively into a new job-search with all that going on?

After his father-in-law passed away his wife returned home, and he lost his job - as did many of his colleagues - and his wife decided she no longer wanted to remain married. What else could go wrong? OH! Of course! His father could be diagnosed with cancer: He was. Now he is living a complete hell, with all of this turmoil, and two sweet children looking to him for stability. Is it any wonder that people are cracking under the strain?

He is all alone and he tries to be "emotionally together" but that only causes more harm than good. We (society), in our need for order and stability, don't want people with all these problems in our lives. We don't want them working in our office. They're broken!

Well, the truth is, our (society) expectations around emotional intelligence, and together, full-functioning adults, is what is breaking them. I spent three hours with him the other night, acknowledging his horrific circumstances, his emotional turmoil, and gave him permission to embrace it all.

He's not broken, he's experiencing emotional pain and it needs to be expressed, embraced, and worked through (processed.) It's not enough that he embraces it either. Community is required to surround, love, heal, and regenerate.

So, when we see hurting people, don't look at them as broken people who haven't got their act together. Look at them as someone who needs a bit of kindness, generosity, and loving support. Watch the power those simple things can have in their life.

This does not condone people remaining disempowered victims for the rest of their lives. Our role is to embrace and still to empower, leaving the "wounded one" to take responsibility for their recovery. Embrace, love, and challenge



You're not

forgetting it.

You're not

overcoming it.

You're coming to

terms with it.

Chapter 09

Overcoming worry & fear





Chapter Eight

OVERCOMING WORRY & FEAR

If you ask most people why they have not achieved their goals or the level of success they desire, they will usually respond with some built in excuse (negative belief) that is holding them back. Underlying this excuse or negative belief is usually a fear or worry. How many times have you attempted something new, only to stop before you ever got started because you were afraid of what others may think? Or you don't think you have the time or money or both? Or because you believe are inexperienced or lack the knowledge to succeed?

Someone once defined F.E.A.R. as False Evidence Appearing Real, which means we have chosen to believe in something that is not really true. But because it is our belief, it is our reality. Worry is nothing more than a sustained fear caused by indecision. Sometimes we need to ask some tough questions to determine the cause of these worries or fears. Once the fear is identified, a simple formula can be used to overcome that fear.



It's okay to not be okay. Grief is a journey, everyone travels at their own pace.

The first step is to clearly define what you are afraid of or worried about. Write in down. Put in on paper. Half of your worries and fears will be solved the instant you can define them clearly by putting them on paper. What once seemed big in your mind will look small and insignificant on paper.

For the other half, you need to move on to step two. Ask yourself, what is the worst possible thing that can happen if this fear or worry becomes true? Make a list, yes, write it down on paper underneath your clearly defined worry.

Keep writing down everything that comes to mind until you have identified the worst possible outcome. Do you realize that 90% of what we worry about never happens? Think about how much time you spend on worrying about stuff that never will happen. This list will help you see that.

Once you have completed your list, resolve in your mind that you will accept the worst possible thing that can happen. Since 90% of those things will never occur and generally the other 10% will not kill you, realize you will survive.



Accept the worst possible thing by telling yourself, I can handle it, over and over again. This will start to turn things around.

Finally, begin now to make sure the worst never happens. Put together an action plan of exactly what you need to do to turn things around. By focusing on positive changes and implementing your action plan, your focus will shift to the positive outcomes and away from your fears.

You will begin to feel better because now you can DO SOMETHING! Positive action is the only cure for fear and worry. Try this formula today and see if it will work for you. It has worked for me.

Understanding

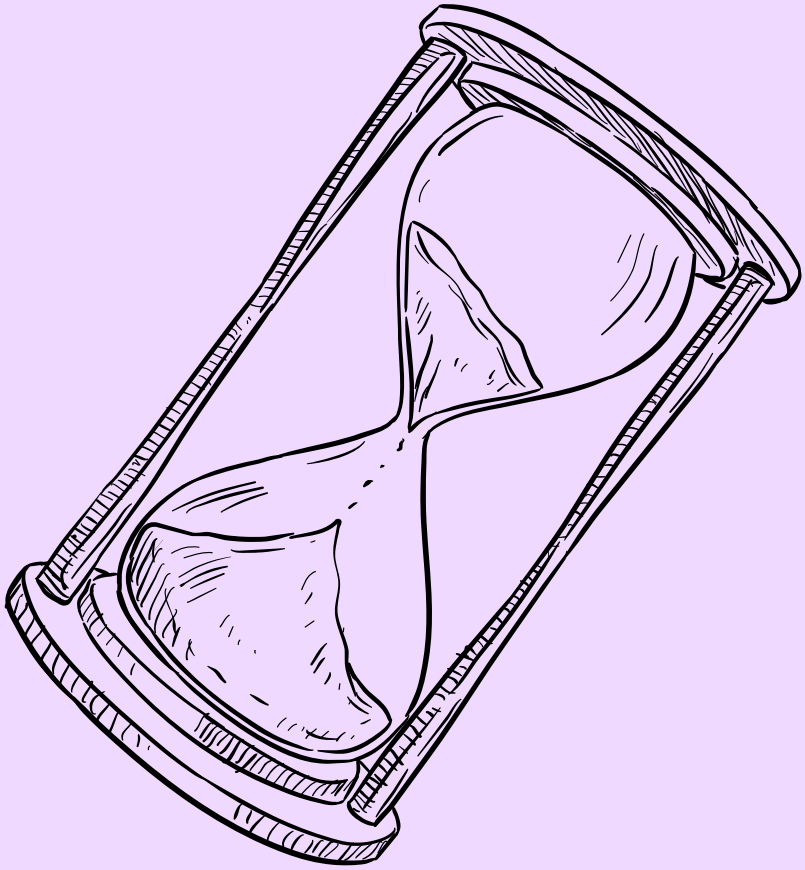
Grief

HOW TO COPE WITH THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

GRIEF RECOVERY TIMELINE

It is often helpful to create a timeline that highlights your relationship with your lost loved one. Fill in the most important points using the timeline below.

Example: met in 1990, married in 2005.



GRIEF RECOVERY ROADBLOCKS

Sometimes words remain unspoken or conflicts go unresolved before someone we love dies. These unfinished feelings can make the grieving process more difficult. Respond to the following:

1 If you could speak with your loved one again, what would you like to say?

2 What unresolved issues do you have that need to be addressed to be at peace.

3 If it would be helpful, write a letter expressing your feelings and/or thoughts. Read it aloud to yourself, another person, or an empty chair.

farewell, my dear

1 I'm saying goodbye because...

2 It makes me feel..

3 I remember a time when we..

4 Something I want you to know is..

GRIEF RECOVERY ASSESSMENT

Check all that apply.

- I have someone that I can talk with about my feelings.
- I can express my feelings openly.
- The loss has become a reality now.
- I am sleeping enough at this time.
- I am not self-medicating with alcohol.
- My appetite is back to normal.
- I do not avoid people or isolate myself for extended periods of time. As time passes, I am coping better.
- I am not concerned about where I am in the grieving process.
- I have made peace with my loss.
- I am no longer angry about my loss.
- My sadness lifts at times.
- I can remember the good times with my lost loved one.
- I want to move forward but never forget.
- I feel hopeful about the future.

SCORING

Count the number of check marks. Your responses will vary at different stages of the grief process.

10-15 You are coping and managing your grief well.
5-9 Things are still pretty difficult for you – let's talk.

below 5, we need to talk about how things are going for you.

MY EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Who	Why is this person special?

Letting Go

In order to fully mourn my loss, I need to let go of these thoughts:
For example: I can't manage without him/her.

In order to fully mourn my loss, I need to let go of this guilt:

In order to fully mourn my loss, I need to let go of these plans for the future:

In order to fully mourn my loss, i let of these painful memories:

In order to fully mourn my loss, I need to let go of these unspoken words:

In order to fully mourn my loss, i let go of these lost opportunities:

Healthy Coping

List some ways to actively embrace and cope with each stage of the grief process.

During the initial stage of shock and numbness, I will:

To cope with my anger, I will:

During the bargaining stage, I will:

To cope with my depression, I will

As I work toward acceptance, I will:

positive memories

It can be helpful in the grieving process to recall fond memories of your loved one. Use the following prompts to list the details of as many positive memories as possible.

I remember the first time we. . .

Our first. .

Our favorite place was. . .

Our favorite meal was. .

The most exciting thing we did together was. . .

positive memories

Our favorite vacation spot was...

S/he loved the music...

We found the best place to...

Our home was...

His/Her hobby was...

positive memories

S/he always wanted to...

We talked about...

We loved...

His/Her dream was..

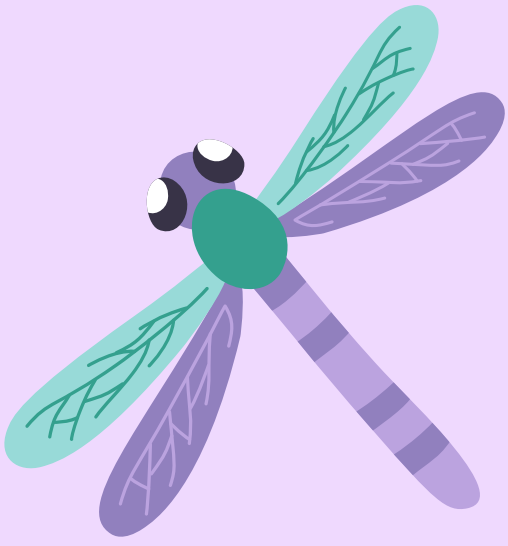
My favorite gift was...

positive memories

His/Her favorite authors were..

His/Her favorite movies/shows were..

We always tried to...



SELF CARE WHILE grieving

It is critical to take care of yourself in every way when mourning the loss of a loved one. Use the space below to identify some ways you can do this.

To care for my physical well being, I can:

To care for my spiritual well being, I can:

To care for my emotional well being, I can:

To care for my mental well being, I can:

SELF CARE WHILE grieving

WHAT CAN I DO TODAY TO IMPROVE?

Spend time outdoors

Eat healthily

Exercise

Focus on my hobbies

Daily Reflection

How am I feeling right now?

Today I am missing...

Today I am having a hard time with..

A simple activity I can do today to show compassion to myself is..

What am I grateful for today?

Good things about today?

What made me smile today?

UNDERSTANDING MY GRIEF

What has been confusing for me?

What has been surprising for me?



What to be thankful for during my grief?

Meaningful quote during my grief?

TREASURED MEMORIES

What I miss the most about the person I lost..

My favorite memories with the person I lost..

Love Letters

Unsent letters to the person I lost..

DATE:

DAILY CHECK IN

DREAM LOG



Hours of sleep:
Sleep quality:

TOP 5 MOMENTS OF TODAY	DAILY ACHIEVEMENT	DAILY GRATITUDE

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	SNACKS	DINNER	WATER
					OZ.
CAL.	CAL.	CAL.	CAL.	CAL.	TOTAL

EXERCISES	TOP TO-DO LIST

WEEKLY EMOTIONS

DATE: WEEK:

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

SUMMARY OF THE WEEK

DATE:

MOOD Tracker



WAS TODAY ENOUGH OF:

	YES	NO
SLEEP REST	○	○
WORK	○	○
EXERCISE	○	○
VITAMINS	○	○
MEDICINE	○	○
FOOD	○	○
FRESH AIR	○	○
SELF-CARE	○	○

TODAY'S Affirmations

TODAY'S CHALLENGES

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS