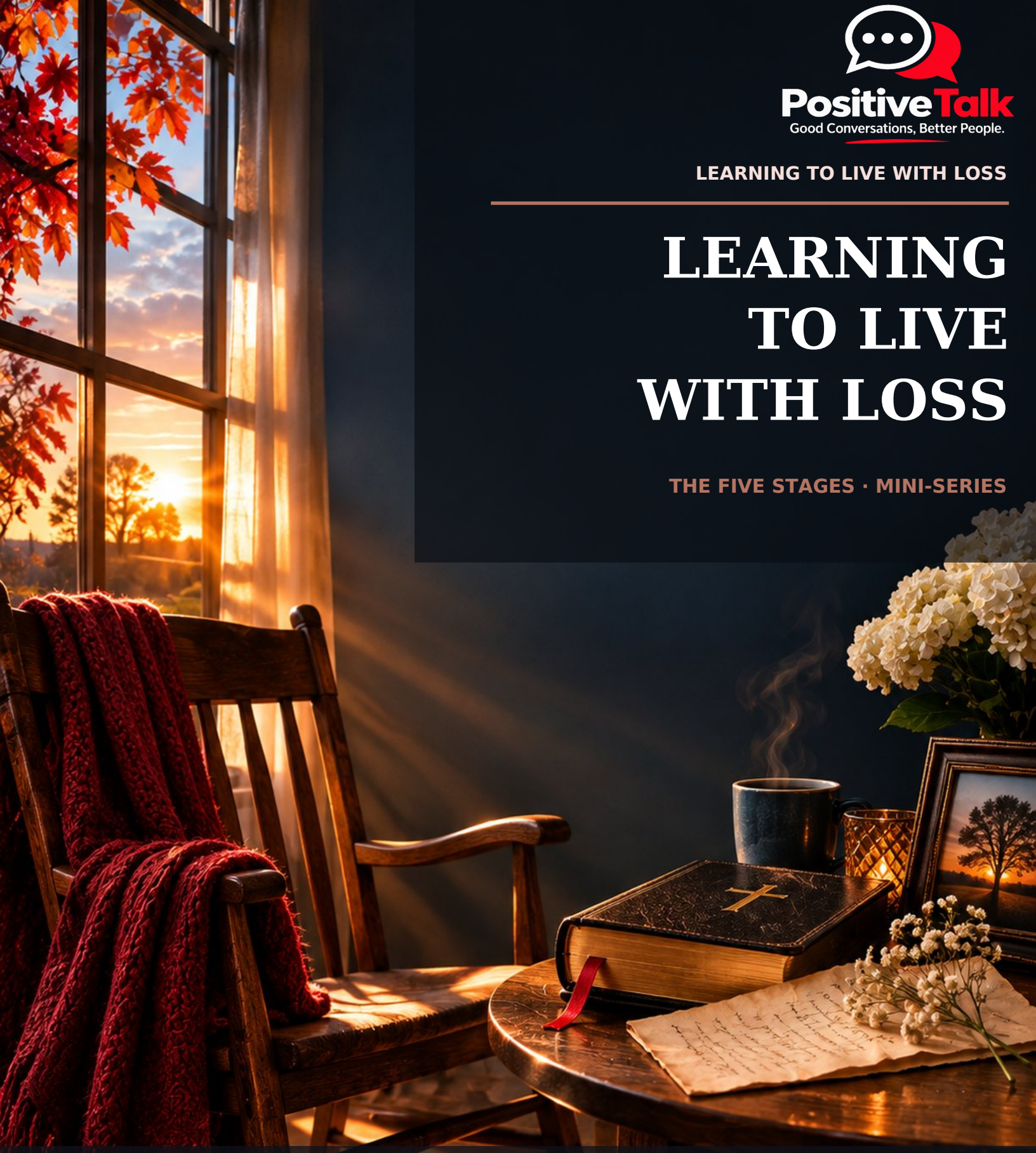


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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

THE FIVE STAGES · MINI-SERIES

Five gentle booklets, one compassionate collection

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

INTRODUCTION

BOOKLET



A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

THE COMPLETE FIVE-PART MINI-SERIES

Learning to Live With Loss

Five grief lenses. Many human experiences. No required order.

THE FIVE-STAGE MODEL IS A LENS, NOT A TIMELINE. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross originally described common responses among people facing death. The framework was later widely applied to bereavement. Grief does not follow a required order, a fixed schedule, or five mandatory feelings. You can experience several responses together, repeat them, or not recognize any particular stage. These booklets are invitations to reflect, not tests to pass.

We created this collection because a single workbook can sometimes feel too big to open in a painful season. You can read just the booklet that speaks to your present experience. You may return later to another, or repeat the same booklet whenever you wish. The five titles organize recognizable feelings, not stages of success.

How to approach the series

- Begin anywhere. The numbering is for organizing files, not a requirement.
- Read one section, then stop if you need to. Small amounts count.
- Use the journal lines without pressuring yourself to explain everything.
- Invite a trusted person, a counselor, or a spiritual leader into the process when helpful.
- Notice when an exercise stirs more distress than you can manage. Pause and seek support.

A gentle reminder

A person can feel numb one morning, angry that afternoon, and grateful for a memory that night. This is not evidence of failure. The aim is to offer language, kindness, practical care, and honest faith for whatever your experience may be.

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The Five Booklets

01 When It Does Not Feel Real

DENIAL & NUMBNESS · Making room for shock, disbelief, and the small steps of today

02 When Grief Feels Unfair

ANGER · Honoring what hurts without allowing anger to cause harm

03 The Weight of What If

BARGAINING & REGRET · Living with unanswered questions and learning the difference between love and control

04 When the Silence Gets Heavy

DEEP SADNESS · Caring for yourself when sadness, fatigue, and loneliness grow strong

05 Love Still Has a Place

ACCEPTANCE & CONTINUING LOVE · Living with the reality of loss while keeping meaningful connection

After the five booklets

A 30-invitation companion journal, memory and support planning, and a compassionate closing prayer.

A NOTE ON FAITH & GRIEF

Sorrow Is Not a Spiritual Failure

The Bible includes lament, protest, tears, silence, questions, compassion, and promises of hope. A reader does not have to choose between naming grief truthfully and exploring faith. Psalm 13 begins with questions. John 11 describes Jesus weeping. Romans 12:15 invites believers to weep with those who weep. These passages do not offer a countdown clock for sorrow. They invite presence, humility, and care.

When you pray, you can use your own words. A prayer as simple as “God, I miss them” is enough for today. When you do not want to pray, you can rest, receive company, or simply breathe. Nothing in these pages requires you to prove faith by suppressing grief.

If you are supporting someone else

Ask what kind of support would help rather than deciding which stage the person must be in. Avoid comparing timelines or promising that sorrow will disappear. Offer practical help, listen without rushing to explain, and respect the person’s beliefs. Compassion is stronger than a formula.

Personal safety and professional support

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

WHEN IT DOES NOT FEEL REAL

BOOKLET

A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

BOOKLET 01 / THE FIVE GRIEF LENSES

When It Does Not Feel Real

Making room for shock, disbelief, and the small steps of today

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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You may start with any booklet. None is a level you must pass before opening another. If an exercise feels too intense, skip it, take a break, or do it with a trusted support person. The Scripture references invite reflection rather than promise a schedule for recovery.

READ IN YOUR OWN TIME

Keep a pen nearby. Circle what resonates. Leave blank what does not. You may revisit a page months or years from now and find different words. That does not mean you have returned to the beginning; it means you are a person whose love and circumstances continue to change.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Psalm 34:18; John 11:35; Isaiah 43:2

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Read the three brief teachings without rushing.
- Try one gentle exercise, not necessarily every exercise.
- Use the journal pages for your own words.
- Choose one act of care, connection, or remembrance.

DENIAL & NUMBNESS

A Gentle Beginning

There are moments when the mind knows someone is gone but the heart reaches for the familiar sound of their voice. A person may keep checking a phone, set an extra place out of habit, or feel almost nothing at all. None of these responses makes love less genuine. Shock can create space between information and emotion; the distance can feel confusing or even embarrassing. This booklet is about meeting that distance with patience rather than shame.

Before the Reading

What brought you to this particular part of the series today? You can answer with a single word, a sentence, a memory, or a blank page. There is no correct amount of sharing.

TEACHING 1 / DENIAL & NUMBNESS

When the facts arrive before your feelings

Loss can make ordinary details feel unreal. You may understand the facts enough to arrange a funeral, sign forms, or tell a neighbor what happened, then reach for your phone to call the person who died. That moment does not mean you have failed to comprehend reality. Familiar routines were built through hundreds of repetitions; they often continue for a while after life has changed. The mind, body, and relationships do not necessarily catch up with one another in a straight line.

One danger is measuring yourself against another person. A sibling may cry openly while you organize paperwork. A friend may want to retell stories while you need quiet. Different responses can coexist in the same family. Rather than declaring which one is proper, consider asking, “What is necessary today, and what can wait?” This small question makes room for your actual capacity. It also protects you from making large decisions while you feel disoriented.

In John 11:35 Jesus weeps at the death of Lazarus. The scene is not a demand for tears on command; it is evidence that sorrow does not make a person spiritually defective. Read the surrounding passage and notice that care arrives within a real human story. You do not need to produce a particular emotion to be worthy of care.

Pause and Reflect

After reading When the facts arrive before your feelings, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 2 / DENIAL & NUMBNESS

Numbness can be a response, not a verdict

Some people feel guilty because they have not cried. Others feel frightened when tears arrive weeks later, or when their body suddenly becomes tired. A period of emotional quiet can be one way a person responds to overwhelming change. If a feeling is absent today, you do not need to chase it. If a feeling arrives unexpectedly, you do not have to turn it into a performance. Let the moment be what it is.

Try describing your experience without judging it: “Today the house feels strangely normal,” “I am exhausted,” or “I do not know what I feel.” These statements are not permanent conclusions. The purpose is to speak truthfully enough to choose a caring next step. You might drink water, take a walk, eat with someone, or pause a difficult conversation. Sometimes it is wise to ask a trusted person to help with a task that involves too many decisions.

Psalm 34 speaks about God being near to those whose hearts are broken. Do not read nearness as a promise that your emotions must immediately improve. A quiet or confused day can still include prayer, support, rest, and practical care.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Numbness can be a response, not a verdict, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 3 / DENIAL & NUMBNESS

Gently naming what has changed

It is possible to acknowledge loss without forcing yourself to tell the whole story in one sitting. Try using two columns: WHAT IS DIFFERENT and WHAT REMAINS. The first may include absence, changed routines, unfinished plans, and practical responsibilities. The second might include values you learned, memories, photographs, a family tradition, a friendship, or the ongoing love you carry. Both columns can be true at the same time.

When you feel ready, you can speak one clear sentence about the loss. For example: “My father died, and I miss our conversations.” Then breathe. That may be enough for today. If the sentence overwhelms you, return to the present by placing both feet on the floor, noticing what you can see, and contacting someone safe. No worksheet should pressure you beyond what you can manage.

Faithful acknowledgment is not the same thing as rushing toward closure. In Isaiah 43:2, the image is of passage through difficult waters rather than instant removal of those waters. Let the text remind you that you can seek company and steadiness while learning to live with a changed reality.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Gently naming what has changed, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

A Story from Ordinary Life

Room for a Human Story

After his aunt died, Marcus helped everyone else make arrangements. He kept expecting to see her name on his phone. When the funeral ended he wondered why he felt so blank. A cousin said, “You must be the strong one.” Instead of agreeing, Marcus answered, “I am doing what I can, but I do not know what I feel yet.” That sentence helped him ask for a quiet evening rather than more responsibilities.

Faith and Honesty

Read Psalm 34:18; John 11:35; Isaiah 43:2. These references are invitations to encounter the passages in context. They do not claim that faith makes grief predictable or painless. Consider where compassion, patience, honesty, or hope appears in what you read.

What would you say to someone living this story?

YOUR REFLECTION

Four Questions Worth Sitting With

1. What feels especially unreal or hard to name right now?

2. Which routines still expect the person or life that is no longer here?

3. Where have I judged myself for feeling too much or too little?

4. What is one small way I could receive help today?

GUIDED EXERCISE

A Gentle Reality Map

Write three facts about what changed, using simple language. Next to each, write one support or practical step that may help you face it. Leave any line blank if you need to. End with one memory or value you wish to carry.

PRIVATE LETTER

Words You May Never Need to Send

If you could speak to the person you miss without needing to explain yourself, what ordinary detail would you tell them about today?

This page belongs to you. You do not have to share it, finish it, or keep it.

A QUIET PRAYER

An Honest Place to Begin

Lord, I do not have a neat way to describe this loss. Meet me in confusion, tiredness, silence, and sudden tears. Give me patience with my own response and the courage to ask for help. Guide me through one honest and manageable step today. Amen.

Three Possible Next Steps

- Name one feeling or write, “I do not know yet.”
- Ask for help with one practical responsibility.
- Create one calm place in your day, even for five minutes.

A permission slip

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CARE & SUPPORT

You Do Not Have to Do This Alone

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Getting Support

- Ask for company without advice: “Could you sit with me or take a walk?”
- Tell someone what practical help would be useful, such as a meal, errand, or phone call.
- Consider a grief support group or bereavement counselor, including community or faith-based options that respect your needs.
- If sleep, appetite, functioning, or feelings of hopelessness worry you, speak with a licensed health professional.

Sources and Further Reading

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

WHEN GRIEF FEELS UNFAIR

BOOKLET

A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

BOOKLET 02 / THE FIVE GRIEF LENSES

When Grief Feels Unfair

Honoring what hurts without allowing anger to cause harm

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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Keep a pen nearby. Circle what resonates. Leave blank what does not. You may revisit a page months or years from now and find different words. That does not mean you have returned to the beginning; it means you are a person whose love and circumstances continue to change.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Psalm 13; Ephesians 4:26; Job 7:11

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Read the three brief teachings without rushing.
- Try one gentle exercise, not necessarily every exercise.
- Use the journal pages for your own words.
- Choose one act of care, connection, or remembrance.

ANGER

A Gentle Beginning

Anger can enter grief like a sudden storm. You may resent the timing of a death, the silence of a friend, a medical decision, a sibling who seems unaffected, yourself, or even God. Anger is not proof that you loved poorly. It often signals that something valuable has been taken and that the world no longer feels fair. The work is to make room for anger without letting it become permission to wound yourself or others.

Before the Reading

What brought you to this particular part of the series today? You can answer with a single word, a sentence, a memory, or a blank page. There is no correct amount of sharing.

TEACHING 1 / ANGER

Under anger, look for what mattered

When people say that anger is a problem to eliminate, the person grieving may lose an important clue to their experience. Beneath anger there can be love, disappointment, helplessness, exhaustion, fear, or an unmet need. A missed phone call may sting more because the person you usually called is gone. A careless remark at work may feel unbearable because your emotional reserves are already thin. Anger is real, but it is not always the whole story.

Before reacting, try naming a fuller sentence: “I am angry because I feel left alone with this responsibility,” or “I am angry that I did not get more time.” This does not settle what others owe you. It helps you understand the feeling before deciding what to do with it. You can take responsibility for how you communicate while still telling the truth about what hurts.

Psalm 13 begins with difficult questions addressed to God. Its honesty challenges the idea that faithful people must pretend the world is fair. You can pray about anger, not only after it disappears. Honesty in prayer can coexist with restraint in behavior.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Under anger, look for what mattered, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 2 / ANGER

Anger is a feeling; harm is a choice

Feeling furious is different from threatening someone, driving recklessly, abusing substances, sending a cruel message, or breaking something. You are responsible for your behavior, but you do not need to be ashamed of the emotion itself. When the intensity rises, delay decisions that cannot easily be undone. Move away from an argument, drink water, take a short walk if it is safe, and return later with clearer language.

Consider a simple boundary: “I want to talk about this, but I am too upset to do it well right now. I will return to it tomorrow.” A boundary is not avoidance if you follow through. If anger regularly frightens you or people around you, involve a professional or trusted support person who can help you develop safer patterns. The goal is not to suppress every difficult emotion; it is to respond with integrity.

Ephesians 4:26 distinguishes anger from wrongdoing. Its point is not that all anger is automatically righteous, but that a person can experience anger while taking care not to let it become destructive. Read the whole passage, especially its call to truthful speech and kindness.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Anger is a feeling; harm is a choice, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 3 / ANGER

When anger is directed toward God or another person

Some grief has a clear source of disappointment: someone failed to help, a promise was broken, a healthcare system felt confusing, or a relationship remained unresolved. Other grief has no obvious person to blame. In either case, the mind can search for a target because having a target feels easier than accepting powerlessness. Pause before assigning certainty to a story you cannot verify.

Anger toward God can produce guilt in people taught that every question is rebellion. Yet Job and the Psalms contain blunt speech about suffering. You do not need to manufacture polite words to talk honestly with God. At the same time, avoid turning a temporary spiritual crisis into a reason to isolate yourself. A compassionate faith leader or counselor may be able to listen without offering simplistic explanations.

If someone truly harmed you, healthy grief work does not require excusing the wrongdoing. Accountability, boundaries, and appropriate help can be part of healing. You can reject revenge while still naming injustice and protecting yourself.

Pause and Reflect

After reading When anger is directed toward God or another person, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

A Story from Ordinary Life

Room for a Human Story

After losing a close friend, Tasha became furious whenever people said, “Everything happens for a reason.” She wanted to stop answering calls. Eventually she told one friend, “Please do not explain this to me. Just sit with me.” Her anger had pointed toward a real need: to be heard rather than instructed.

Faith and Honesty

Read Psalm 13; Ephesians 4:26; Job 7:11. These references are invitations to encounter the passages in context. They do not claim that faith makes grief predictable or painless. Consider where compassion, patience, honesty, or hope appears in what you read.

What would you say to someone living this story?

YOUR REFLECTION

Four Questions Worth Sitting With

1. When does anger visit me most often?

2. What loss, fear, or unmet need may be underneath it?

3. What response would protect my integrity when I feel overwhelmed?

4. What boundary or honest conversation might help?

GUIDED EXERCISE

The Anger-to-Need Translation

Finish four sentences: “I am angry about...”; “Under that anger I feel...”; “What I need right now is...”; “A safe action I can take is...” Do not use this page to justify contacting someone unsafe.

PRIVATE LETTER

Words You May Never Need to Send

Write an unsent letter to the unfairness of the loss. Say what was taken, what still matters, and what kind of support would help now.

This page belongs to you. You do not have to share it, finish it, or keep it.

A QUIET PRAYER

An Honest Place to Begin

God, I am angry that this loss exists. Help me tell the truth about my pain without harming others or abandoning myself. Give me wisdom about boundaries, accountability, and the words to ask for what I need. Amen.

Three Possible Next Steps

- Pause one difficult conversation until you can respond thoughtfully.
- Choose one safe physical or creative outlet for anger.
- Tell one trusted person what kind of response you need.

A permission slip

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CARE & SUPPORT

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Getting Support

- Ask for company without advice: “Could you sit with me or take a walk?”
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- Consider a grief support group or bereavement counselor, including community or faith-based options that respect your needs.
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Sources and Further Reading

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

THE WEIGHT OF WHAT IF

BOOKLET

A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

BOOKLET 03 / THE FIVE GRIEF LENSES

The Weight of What If

Living with unanswered questions and learning the difference between love and control

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SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Psalm 77:1-12; Romans 8:26; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Read the three brief teachings without rushing.
- Try one gentle exercise, not necessarily every exercise.
- Use the journal pages for your own words.
- Choose one act of care, connection, or remembrance.

BARGAINING & REGRET

A Gentle Beginning

“If only I had called.” “What if we had gone sooner?” “Maybe things would be different if I had said the right thing.” Grief often searches backward for a moment to change. Sometimes there are lessons to learn. But endless replay can place a burden on one person that no human being could carry. This booklet will help you separate responsibility from imagined control.

Before the Reading

What brought you to this particular part of the series today? You can answer with a single word, a sentence, a memory, or a blank page. There is no correct amount of sharing.

TEACHING 1 / BARGAINING & REGRET

Why the mind replays the scene

When a loss has changed the future, the mind may search for a point in the past where a different decision might have prevented it. Replaying details can feel like a way to regain control. You may reconstruct conversations, medical timelines, travel plans, or ordinary decisions. Some questions can be answered with additional information. Others remain forever uncertain. The more distressing the loss, the harder it may be to tolerate that uncertainty.

Notice the difference between “I wish things had been different” and “I had the power to guarantee a different outcome.” The first is often grief speaking. The second may assign yourself certainty you did not have. You acted with information, limits, and pressures that existed at the time. It is fair to review what you truly knew and could reasonably do. It is not fair to judge yesterday using every fact discovered afterward.

Psalm 77 shows a distressed speaker remembering, questioning, and returning to what can be held in faith. This passage does not promise that every painful event will make sense. It gives language for bringing the relentless questions into prayer rather than carrying them alone.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Why the mind replays the scene, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 2 / BARGAINING & REGRET

Responsibility without impossible standards

Occasionally grief involves real regret. You may wish you had been more patient, apologized sooner, or paid closer attention. You can acknowledge a specific mistake without making yourself responsible for an entire death or loss. Ask: What exactly did I choose? What did I know then? What was outside my control? What can I learn that might shape my life now? Be careful not to replace guilt with a sweeping denial of all responsibility; the more honest approach is specific.

If you owe someone an apology for a living relationship, consider whether a safe, respectful conversation is appropriate. But there are regrets that cannot be repaired through contact. A letter you do not send, a changed habit, an act of service, or a conversation with a counselor can help you honor what you wish had been different without pretending you can rewrite the past.

Romans 8:26 describes human weakness in prayer. The point is not that the right wording will unlock a different past, but that prayer is possible even when words fail. Give yourself permission to pray an unfinished sentence.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Responsibility without impossible standards, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 3 / BARGAINING & REGRET

Learning to live with unanswered questions

There may be no single sentence that makes the loss acceptable. Some deaths leave unresolved medical, relational, or moral questions. You do not have to treat unanswered questions as proof that you are doing grief wrong. You can preserve a question in a journal, seek appropriate information when it is available, and still choose to care for yourself today.

Try making three columns: FACTS I KNOW, QUESTIONS I CAN INVESTIGATE, and QUESTIONS I MAY HAVE TO CARRY. Include a wise next step for the middle column. For the third, write a compassionate response such as, “I wish I knew. I can live honestly while I do not know.” This is not surrendering the person you loved. It is refusing to let an unsolved thought take every moment that remains.

Ecclesiastes 3 names a range of seasons in human life. Its poetry makes space for both sorrow and care. It does not tell us why a specific death occurred. Read it as permission to live in a season without pretending you control its ending.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Learning to live with unanswered questions, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

A Story from Ordinary Life

Room for a Human Story

David kept returning to the last conversation he had with his sister. He remembered being hurried and thought he should have stayed longer. In counseling he wrote two statements: “I wish I had known that was our last conversation” and “I could not have known it then.” He kept both, allowing regret to become a lesson in attentiveness rather than a lifelong sentence against himself.

Faith and Honesty

Read Psalm 77:1-12; Romans 8:26; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. These references are invitations to encounter the passages in context. They do not claim that faith makes grief predictable or painless. Consider where compassion, patience, honesty, or hope appears in what you read.

What would you say to someone living this story?

YOUR REFLECTION

Four Questions Worth Sitting With

1. Which “if only” thought returns most often?

2. What did I actually know at the time?

3. Where am I carrying a responsibility that was never mine?

4. What is one way I can honor the relationship now?

GUIDED EXERCISE

The Three-Column What-If Page

Divide the page into facts, unanswered questions, and reasonable responsibility. Under each item, distinguish what you could influence from what you could not control. If a question needs factual guidance, list someone qualified to ask.

PRIVATE LETTER

Words You May Never Need to Send

Write a letter beginning, “I wish I had known...” and ending, “What I can choose now is...” Leave room for mixed feelings rather than forcing forgiveness.

This page belongs to you. You do not have to share it, finish it, or keep it.

A QUIET PRAYER

An Honest Place to Begin

Father, You know the questions I replay. Give me honesty about what I did and did not control. Help me learn without condemning myself for what I could not have known. Meet me in the unanswered places. Amen.

Three Possible Next Steps

- Name one unhelpful “if only” story without arguing with it.
- Speak one factual, compassionate correction to self-blame.
- Perform one small act that reflects the love or value you carry forward.

A permission slip

You are allowed to close this book today. You are allowed to laugh, cry, rest, remember, or ask for help. None of these actions erases the love that brought you here.

CARE & SUPPORT

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

WHEN THE SILENCE GETS HEAVY

BOOKLET

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BOOKLET 04 / THE FIVE GRIEF LENSES

When the Silence Gets Heavy

Caring for yourself when sadness, fatigue, and loneliness grow strong

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

THE FIVE-STAGE MODEL IS A LENS, NOT A TIMELINE. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross originally described common responses among people facing death. The framework was later widely applied to bereavement. Grief does not follow a required order, a fixed schedule, or five mandatory feelings. You can experience several responses together, repeat them, or not recognize any particular stage. These booklets are invitations to reflect, not tests to pass.

You may start with any booklet. None is a level you must pass before opening another. If an exercise feels too intense, skip it, take a break, or do it with a trusted support person. The Scripture references invite reflection rather than promise a schedule for recovery.

READ IN YOUR OWN TIME

Keep a pen nearby. Circle what resonates. Leave blank what does not. You may revisit a page months or years from now and find different words. That does not mean you have returned to the beginning; it means you are a person whose love and circumstances continue to change.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Psalm 42; Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Read the three brief teachings without rushing.
- Try one gentle exercise, not necessarily every exercise.
- Use the journal pages for your own words.
- Choose one act of care, connection, or remembrance.

DEEP SADNESS

A Gentle Beginning

Grief can be heavy without being dramatic. Sometimes the hardest part is an empty chair, a quiet evening, or waking up with no energy to do what used to be ordinary. In the popular five-stage model this response is often called “depression.” Here we call it deep sadness because grief-related low mood is not automatically a diagnosis of clinical depression. Either way, the experience deserves patience, care, and real support.

Before the Reading

What brought you to this particular part of the series today? You can answer with a single word, a sentence, a memory, or a blank page. There is no correct amount of sharing.

TEACHING 1 / DEEP SADNESS

When life becomes unusually quiet

After the immediate activity around a loss slows, other people may return to their routines. The person grieving may then feel the absence more sharply. A birthday, the first holiday, a familiar street, or the time of day when you used to talk can bring sorrow without warning. You may feel tired, irritable, unable to concentrate, or uninterested in activities you normally enjoy. These experiences can be part of grief, and they can also deserve professional attention when they are persistent, intense, or make daily life hard to manage.

One helpful response is to reduce the pressure to “be normal” and create a minimum-care plan. That might mean a simple meal, hygiene, a short walk if possible, medication taken as directed, and one person contacted. A minimum-care plan is not the complete life you want; it is the bridge through a difficult day. You are not measured by productivity while you grieve.

Psalm 42 describes a soul that longs and questions. The psalmist speaks to distress rather than pretending it is already gone. Read it slowly. The presence of a faith reference is not a command to stop feeling sorrow. It is one more place where sorrow can be given words.

Pause and Reflect

After reading When life becomes unusually quiet, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 2 / DEEP SADNESS

Loneliness needs connection, not correction

People sometimes respond to grief with advice because they do not know how to sit with pain. “Be strong,” “Everything happens for a reason,” or “You should be over this” may leave the grieving person more isolated. You can name what kind of support is helpful: a meal, company without conversation, help making a phone call, a prayer, or someone who will simply listen. Do not wait to become perfectly articulate before asking.

If you have withdrawn for weeks and find it difficult to eat, sleep, work, or remain safe, seek help from a licensed mental health professional or a medical provider. If you have thoughts of suicide or self-harm, contact emergency or crisis support immediately. Spiritual support can accompany professional care; it should never be used to replace needed treatment.

Matthew 5:4 names those who mourn as people who matter within Jesus’ teaching. The verse should not be used as a promise that sadness will disappear on a particular schedule. Rather, it offers dignity to the person whose pain has been overlooked.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Loneliness needs connection, not correction, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 3 / DEEP SADNESS

Allow moments of relief without guilt

A funny memory may make you laugh unexpectedly. A good meal may feel enjoyable. An hour with friends may ease the heaviness. Some people then feel disloyal, as though happiness means they have stopped loving the person who died. But grief does not require uninterrupted suffering as proof of devotion. Sorrow and warmth can coexist.

Try a gentle rhythm: notice when the heaviness rises; allow the feeling; choose one caring action; reconnect with someone or something meaningful. You may not feel better right away. The value is in offering your body and mind ordinary care while recognizing that your life remains worth tending.

In 2 Corinthians 1, comfort is connected with the ability to care for others. That does not mean you must become a helper before you have received help yourself. For now, you may be the one who needs someone to sit beside you.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Allow moments of relief without guilt, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

A Story from Ordinary Life

Room for a Human Story

After losing her husband, Grace found the quiet kitchen harder than the memorial service. She missed breakfast, stopped returning messages, and told herself she was weak. A neighbor began checking in on Tuesdays, and Grace scheduled time with a grief counselor. Some days remained difficult, but she no longer had to manage every morning alone.

Faith and Honesty

Read Psalm 42; Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. These references are invitations to encounter the passages in context. They do not claim that faith makes grief predictable or painless. Consider where compassion, patience, honesty, or hope appears in what you read.

What would you say to someone living this story?

YOUR REFLECTION

Four Questions Worth Sitting With

1. What times or places feel especially heavy?

2. What basic care is hardest to manage right now?

3. Which person could offer support without trying to fix the feeling?

4. What signs would tell me I need extra professional help?

GUIDED EXERCISE

The Minimum-Care Menu

Write one small option for nourishment, rest, movement, connection, and meaningful remembrance. On hard days, select only what is manageable. Include a person or service you can contact if safety becomes a concern.

PRIVATE LETTER

Words You May Never Need to Send

Write to yourself as you would write to someone you dearly love who has suffered the same loss. Avoid instructions to hurry or be strong.

This page belongs to you. You do not have to share it, finish it, or keep it.

A QUIET PRAYER

An Honest Place to Begin

God of compassion, meet me in the quiet hours. Help me care for my body, reach toward support, and receive comfort without shame. Remind me that my grief does not erase my dignity or my need for care. Amen.

Three Possible Next Steps

- Choose two items from a minimum-care menu.
- Send one honest message asking for company or practical support.
- Write a short memory that can hold sorrow and gratitude together.

A permission slip

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CARE & SUPPORT

You Do Not Have to Do This Alone

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Getting Support

- Ask for company without advice: “Could you sit with me or take a walk?”
- Tell someone what practical help would be useful, such as a meal, errand, or phone call.
- Consider a grief support group or bereavement counselor, including community or faith-based options that respect your needs.
- If sleep, appetite, functioning, or feelings of hopelessness worry you, speak with a licensed health professional.

Sources and Further Reading

American Psychological Association — Grief: Coping with the Loss of Your Loved One (apa.org/topics/death)

Cruse Bereavement Support — Understanding the Five Stages of Grief (cruse.org.uk)

NHS — Get Help with Grief after Bereavement or Loss (nhs.uk)

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Foundation — Five Stages of Grief (ekrfoundation.org)

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

LOVE STILL HAS A PLACE

BOOKLET



A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

BOOKLET 05 / THE FIVE GRIEF LENSES

Love Still Has a Place

Living with the reality of loss while keeping meaningful connection

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; John 20:11-18; Revelation 21:1-5

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Read the three brief teachings without rushing.
- Try one gentle exercise, not necessarily every exercise.
- Use the journal pages for your own words.
- Choose one act of care, connection, or remembrance.

ACCEPTANCE & CONTINUING LOVE

A Gentle Beginning

Acceptance is often misunderstood as being finished with grief. It is not forgetting, approving of what happened, or no longer missing someone. Acceptance can mean acknowledging the reality of loss and learning to make room for a changed life. A day of peace does not cancel the days of longing that may follow. Love can remain meaningful without requiring pain to stay at its highest intensity.

Before the Reading

What brought you to this particular part of the series today? You can answer with a single word, a sentence, a memory, or a blank page. There is no correct amount of sharing.

TEACHING 1 / ACCEPTANCE & CONTINUING LOVE

A changed life is not a betrayal

After loss, there may be decisions you never imagined making alone. You might rearrange a room, move, return to work, celebrate a holiday, form a new friendship, or take a trip. Any of these choices may stir guilt. You may wonder whether moving forward means leaving the person behind. Acceptance offers a different possibility: you can acknowledge that life has changed and still honor what the relationship gave you.

One way to begin is to name what remains part of your identity. Perhaps the person taught you generosity, passed along a recipe, made you laugh, challenged you to be courageous, or loved you through a hard season. You can carry those influences into tomorrow. You also have permission to discover new interests that the person never knew. Your future is not an insult to your past.

Ecclesiastes 3 holds mourning and celebration within a larger human life. The poem does not require a neat transition between them. You can experience different seasons at the same time.

Pause and Reflect

After reading A changed life is not a betrayal, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 2 / ACCEPTANCE & CONTINUING LOVE

Continuing bonds: memory with room to breathe

Some people keep a photograph, cook a favorite meal, tell stories, visit a meaningful place, or support a cause associated with the person who died. These practices can become loving connections rather than attempts to deny the loss. Other people prefer quieter remembrance and no public ritual. Neither is more faithful.

Try asking two questions: “How do I want to remember this person?” and “How do I want to live with what their life meant to me?” The answers may shift over time. A ritual should serve your values and emotional capacity, not become another performance others expect from you. You can change a tradition if it becomes too painful or no longer fits.

In John 20, Mary Magdalene grieves by the tomb before recognizing Jesus. Christians understand this story through their faith in resurrection; it should not be used to minimize the pain of ordinary bereavement or promise a particular outcome on earth. It can invite readers to honor love and grief with honesty.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Continuing bonds: memory with room to breathe, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

TEACHING 3 / ACCEPTANCE & CONTINUING LOVE

Hope without a forced happy ending

Hope can mean a decent morning, a renewed friendship, the willingness to make plans, or simply believing that a difficult anniversary can be survived with support. It does not require you to say that everything happened for the best. Sometimes the greatest growth is the capacity to hold a painful truth and keep acting with compassion.

Consider a one-year map that includes both remembrance and living: important dates, people who can support you, traditions you want to keep or change, and one goal unrelated to grief. You may revisit the map as circumstances change. Acceptance is not a finish line; it is one possible way of living with reality at a particular moment.

Revelation 21 offers Christians an image of ultimate renewal and an end to sorrow. Honor it as a statement of Christian hope, not as a deadline for the reader to stop crying. Faith can hold longing and gratitude at once.

Pause and Reflect

After reading Hope without a forced happy ending, what feels most important or difficult to hold today? You may write an insight, an objection, or a prayer.

A Story from Ordinary Life

Room for a Human Story

On her father’s birthday, Maya made his favorite meal and invited friends over. She laughed at a story about him, then cried while washing dishes. A year earlier she would have considered laughter a betrayal. Now she understood that neither the laughter nor the tears diminished her love.

Faith and Honesty

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; John 20:11-18; Revelation 21:1-5. These references are invitations to encounter the passages in context. They do not claim that faith makes grief predictable or painless. Consider where compassion, patience, honesty, or hope appears in what you read.

What would you say to someone living this story?

YOUR REFLECTION

Four Questions Worth Sitting With

1. What memory or value do I want to carry forward?

2. Which parts of life need a new rhythm after this loss?

3. Where have I mistaken a moment of joy for disloyalty?

4. What would a compassionate next chapter look like?

GUIDED EXERCISE

A Living Legacy Map

Draw three circles labeled REMEMBER, CONTINUE, and BEGIN. Fill them with memories, values, traditions, relationships, and future actions. Mark one item you can practice this month without forcing yourself to feel ready.

PRIVATE LETTER

Words You May Never Need to Send

Write a letter that begins, “What you gave me still lives in…” and ends, “Here is one way I will keep living.”

This page belongs to you. You do not have to share it, finish it, or keep it.

A QUIET PRAYER

An Honest Place to Begin

Lord, teach me to honor what was loved without living only in what was lost. Help me cherish memories, receive moments of joy, and take the next faithful step. Hold my sorrow and my hope together. Amen.

Three Possible Next Steps

- Create one remembrance ritual that fits your values.
- Make one plan for a coming anniversary or holiday.
- Choose one future-facing action that does not demand forgetting.

A permission slip

You are allowed to close this book today. You are allowed to laugh, cry, rest, remember, or ask for help. None of these actions erases the love that brought you here.

CARE & SUPPORT

You Do Not Have to Do This Alone

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Getting Support

- Ask for company without advice: “Could you sit with me or take a walk?”
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- If sleep, appetite, functioning, or feelings of hopelessness worry you, speak with a licensed health professional.

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LEARNING TO LIVE WITH LOSS

COMPANION JOURNAL

BOOKLET



A guided journey of remembrance and hope

GRIEF IS NOT A CHECKLIST. YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR OWN WAY THROUGH.

30 DAYS · 30 OPTIONAL INVITATIONS

A Companion Journal

These prompts are not a program to finish and not a path through five ordered stages. Use them on any day and in any sequence. Skip any prompt that does not help. Repetition is welcome.

You can write a sentence, a page, a prayer, or nothing. The goal is permission to pay attention, not pressure to heal on schedule.

REFLECTION 01 OF 30

Name the day

What does today feel like, without naming it good or bad? What would kindness toward yourself look like?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 02 OF 30

Remember an ordinary moment

What small, everyday memory returns when you least expect it?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 03 OF 30

A body check-in

Where do you notice tension or tiredness? What gentle support could you offer your body?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 04 OF 30

The unsaid sentence

What would you say if you knew no one would correct you?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 05 OF 30

Reach out

Who is safe to contact? What would be the simplest possible request?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 06 OF 30

Permission to pause

Which expectation can wait? What actually needs attention?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 07 OF 30

A meaningful object

Is there an object, place, photograph, or song connected to this loss?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 08 OF 30

Make room for anger

What feels unfair, and what is a safe way to express that truth?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 09 OF 30

Notice a support

Who has shown care, even in a small imperfect way?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 10 OF 30

The what-if thought

Which regret can you name without treating it as a verdict?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 11 OF 30

An unfinished question

What question remains unanswered? Can you let it remain open for today?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 12 OF 30

A memory that makes you smile

What moment can carry warmth and sadness at once?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 13 OF 30

A small care plan

What are two manageable steps that would help with nourishment, rest, or connection?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 14 OF 30

Speak to God honestly

If you pray, what unedited sentence would you bring to God today?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 15 OF 30

A half-way reflection

What has surprised you about your own grief experience?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 16 OF 30

Name a boundary

What comment, situation, or demand would you like to handle differently?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 17 OF 30

An inherited value

What value, phrase, recipe, or habit do you want to carry forward?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 18 OF 30

Choose a compassionate story

If self-blame is visiting, what facts or limits might your harshest thought be missing?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 19 OF 30

Care for a hard date

What would support look like on the next birthday, holiday, or anniversary?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 20 OF 30

Take a break from explaining

What helps you feel safe without having to put your sorrow into words?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 21 OF 30

Someone who listens

Who understands that you need presence rather than a lesson?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 22 OF 30

Make room for joy

If you feel a moment of relief or pleasure, can you let it happen without guilt?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 23 OF 30

The changed rhythm

Which routine is hardest to navigate? What adjustment might make it easier?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 24 OF 30

Remember by creating

What simple ritual of writing, cooking, music, or service fits your values?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 25 OF 30

Notice what remains

Which parts of love, learning, and connection remain with you?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 26 OF 30

Ask for one concrete thing

What specific task could someone help you complete?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 27 OF 30

Choose one gentle step

What action toward your own life would be meaningful and manageable?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 28 OF 30

Hold mixed emotions

Which two different emotions have shared the same day?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 29 OF 30

A compassionate future

What might you hope for without promising yourself a certain outcome?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

REFLECTION 30 OF 30

Carry love forward

What is one way you can remember, receive help, and keep living?

Optional closing thought: What kind of care would help me now?

A PERSONAL SUPPORT MAP

People and Practices I Can Turn Toward

One person who can listen without rushing me:

One place or group where I feel welcome:

One professional or service I can contact for more support:

One calming practice that is safe and manageable:

One practical task I could ask someone to help with:

A GENTLE CLOSING

Living With Loss Is Still Living

This series was never meant to turn love into a checklist. Some days you may feel as though you are beginning again. Other days you may surprise yourself with laughter, courage, or a new ordinary moment. Neither experience takes anything away from the person or life you miss.

You are allowed to remember. You are allowed to ask for help. You are allowed to care for your body and make plans. You are allowed to keep a treasured tradition and to begin a new one. Grief and meaning can share the same life.

A Prayer for the Road Ahead

God, accompany me through memories I cherish and moments I wish were different. Help me tell the truth without condemning myself, set boundaries without losing compassion, and accept support without shame. Let love shape the way I live today, even while sorrow remains. Amen.

Remember

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