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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



Grief sometimes comes in waves, like the tide with a ferocious undertow. Other times it can cover you like a veritable tidal wave. You look up and realize it's suddenly upon you, with nowhere to run and hide. When it feels as though the walls are caving in, it's important to remember a few things that just may offer solace and shelter in an otherwise unsteady time. The first thing to keep in mind is that no matter how merciless a day may feel as you're journeying through it, grief, like everything else, is a passing season. There are ways we can help the season pass more quickly, or at least, we can try.

Don't be afraid to call for help. This doesn't have to be in the form of an SOS. Sometimes the only help needed is a simple distraction from a spiraling thought process. Lunch or coffee with a friend just may be enough to do the trick. The people who love you know that you are hurting now, and often they are just waiting for a signal from you that they can do something.

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Get out of the house. Perspective just may change with some different scenery. Something as simple as taking a walk by yourself may completely alter your outlook. After my mother died I found that running was a great way to expend my grief energy. I started slowly, running for perhaps thirty seconds and then taking breaks to recover by walking for a minute or two. There are many APPS out there that are designed to lead you through this process. Before long I found that I could run for five minutes without stopping to recuperate. Soon after that, it was a

straight mile, then two. If the thought of exercise turns your stomach, find a place you can sit quietly and enjoy some peace, such as a bench or even under a tree. There you may find it easier to meditate away your tidal wave.

Bury your head in someone else's story. Books and movies were born to offer us a chance to leave our world for a while and enter another. Comedies are especially made for times such as these. Although it may seem strange, some people actually find stories with a melancholic tone more soothing. If you are one of these people, maybe curling up

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JANUARY
2019



**GRIEF DOES NOT CHANGE YOU...
IT REVEALS YOU.**

— John Green, *The Fault in Our Stars*

...continued from front

on the couch and watching something sad will actually make you feel better.

Call in your head-cheerleader. It seems most of us have at least one person we can always count on to cheer us into the end zone. This is someone who sees the light in our darkness and seems to always know just what to say. It's all right to let your cheerleader know that you are struggling. Right now, someone with the gift of encouragement may be just what you need.

Get lost in song. Music is biologically woven into most of us, bringing us easily into new and old realms. If certain

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music seems to be a bitter reminder of what you're going through right now, perhaps it's time to make a new playlist. Thankfully, there is an endless variety of music out there to choose from.

In the midst of grief, sometimes the walls feel like they're caving in, but there are always things we can find to distract us from being overwhelmed. There will come a day when you won't feel as though you need to be preoccupied in order to get through the day. The season of grieving will pass, as every other season does. In the meanwhile, remember to be kind to yourself as you journey through it.

Paulette LeBlanc, who is trained in family counseling, is a published author, editor and freelance writer, who currently resides on the Gulf Coast of Florida.

* footnotes

Take good
care of
your
physical
well-being



by Bill Hoy

Bereavement is highly stressful and can most certainly take an exacting toll on your body. Eating a well-balanced diet filled with fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meat, poultry, and fish along with plenty of water are essential to good nutrition. Moreover, make sure you walk, play a sport, or get other regular exercise to strengthen your bones, muscles, and cardio-vascular system. If your mobility is limited, a physical therapist can advise you on adaptive exercises that will help increase your physical fitness within your limitations. And by all means, consult your health professional before you make changes to your diet and exercise routines.

While characterized by sadness, winter grief can be filled with opportunities for self-reflection, hope, and positive growth. Remember that while none of us chose the grief-path we now walk, we do make the choices that can transform our bereavement into opportunities for personal growth leading to a more fulfilled life.

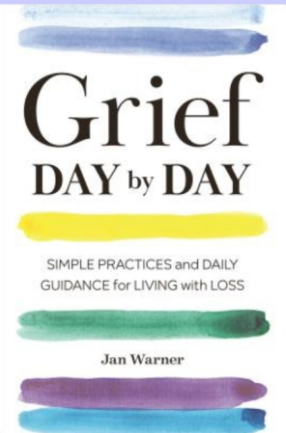
* Dr. Bill Hoy teaches at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He is widely regarded as an authority on the sociocultural history of funeral rites, the topic of his most recent book: *Do Funerals Matter: The Purposes and Practices of Death Rituals in Global Perspective* (Routledge, 2013).

Grief Day By Day: Simple Practices and Daily Guidance for Living with Loss

by Jan Warner



Grief Day by Day offers supportive readings and exercises to help you move through life after loss, one day at a time.



Grief is complex. It is ever changing and may come to us differently on any given day. *Grief Day by Day* offers reflections and practices that address the day-to-day feelings that accompany the ever-changing process of grief.

In *Grief Day by Day*, Jan Warner draws on her own extensive experience and the experiences of the 2 million followers on her “Grief Speaks Out” Facebook page to offer hope in its most practical form. This book does not look to offer a solution to grief. Rather, it provides supportive, useful guidance to help you create a life in which peace, and even gratitude, can coexist with your grief.

Amazon Review

yagottalaugh

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“Refusing to go to the gym is not
the same thing as resistance training.”

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