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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



Who Am I?

now that you're gone

By Paulette LeBlanc

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Paulette LeBlanc is an editor and award-winning author who lives on Florida's Gulf Coast

Are you still married if your spouse has died? Do you remain a sibling, if all your siblings are gone? Our identity is often wrapped up in the labels of a multitude of other people and our relationships with them, so it is normal to believe that if they are gone, you have now ceased to be whoever you were.

For some it may be easier to simply move on, behaving as though the relationship no longer exists because there are no longer two contributing parties. For others, moving on may seem impossible. You may find that you are unable to take off your wedding band, or touch the deceased person's belongings. People who have lost children should always consider themselves parents, even if they never parent another child. Likewise, you remain your parent's child after they're gone, even if you feel orphaned. An important thing to remember is that there is no "normal" reaction to grief and loss.

People in your life, though often well meaning, may urge you to move on from the relationship, especially if it was romantic in nature. They may

assume that healing can only come from replacing the relationship you've lost with one that seems similar. It is important not to confuse someone else's need to see us happy again with our own readiness to move on. Comfort and healing find us in many different ways, and every relationship is as unique as the people contained within it.

While we may choose to marry again one day after losing a spouse, a parent, child or sibling relationship is irreplaceable. However, even if you are the last living member of your immediate family, the relationships you shared with your deceased family members have no less validity. The contribution these loved ones have made to your life is still passed down through generations or even springing outward through non-familial relationships.

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The question of who you are after a loved one has passed can be answered by way of the intricate pattern woven into your life as a result of the relationship you shared with that person. For example, siblings who share a close emotional bond would not be the people they are, had they been only children. Losing a sibling, at any age, can feel as though you've lost a best friend or someone who knew

continued...

**NOVEMBER
2023**

**Gratitude is when memory is stored
in the heart and not in the mind.**

—Lionel Hampton

**The person
you are
does not
cease to be,
in anyone's
absence.**

...continued from front

you better than anyone, as siblings often do. The nature of a relationship with a grandparent almost assuredly dictates loss, as they are two generations ahead of us.

Because we assume that we will one day lose a grandparent, does not mean we are any better prepared for the loss.

Non-familial loss can be just as devastating as losing a family member, and should not be discounted simply because of the nature of the relationship. After all, it is said that friends are simply the family that we choose. If you seem to be more damaged by the loss of a friend than their immediate family members, it's simply an indication that the relationship was deeply meaningful to you. Conversely, this does not mean that they are not grieving in their own way. It is sometimes difficult to imagine that those who differ from us react differently in this situation, but no two people experience anything the same way and loss is no different.

So, who are you, now that your loved one is gone? Simply answered, you remain a wife, husband, brother, sister, mother, father, grandchild, aunt, uncle, cousin, friend. The person who has passed away has left an irreplaceable void, no matter who they were to you. The person you are does not cease to be, in anyone's absence.

bookmark

Didn't See That Coming: Putting Life Back Together When Your World Falls Apart

by Rachel Hollis

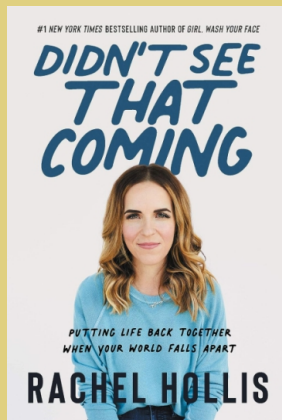
Fear. Grief. Loss. Betrayal. Rachel Hollis has felt all those things, and she knows you have too. Now, she takes you to the other side.

With her signature humor, heartfelt honesty, and intimate true-life stories, #1 New York Times bestselling author Rachel Hollis shows readers how to seize difficult moments for the learning experiences they are and the value and growth they provide.

When it comes to the "hard seasons" of life—the death of a loved one, divorce, loss of a job—transformation seems impossible when grief and uncertainty dominate your days. Especially when, as *Didn't See that Coming* reveals, no one asks to have their future completely rearranged for them. But, as Rachel writes, it is up to you how you come through your pain—you can come through changed for the better, having learned and grown, or stuck in place where your identity becomes rooted in what hurt you.

To Rachel, a life well-lived is one of purpose, focused only on the essentials. This is a small book about big feelings: inspirational, aspirational, and an anchor that shows that darkness can co-exist with the beautiful.

—Amazon Book Review



**Sometimes the
best advice is a
break from advice.
Enjoy your
favorite beverage
and these tidbits
of this & that.**



• **November's traditional birth stone is the topaz**, usually a yellow to amber color. The ancient Greeks believed that topaz could make a wearer invisible. A symbol of honor and strength, topaz was also believed to bring longevity and wisdom.

• **November's birth flower is the chrysanthemum**. Generally, chrysanthemums represent cheerfulness. A red one conveys "I love you." White symbolizes truth or pure love. A yellow one indicates slighted love.

• Spiritually, November is the sacred warrior and acts as a mirror to remind us that we are fighting the real battles with ourselves. It is a month in which we are recommended to realign, to refocus and to **regain our inner strength**.

• November born are usually very social. But the uniqueness they hold is that, being social too, **they are private people**. They tend to mingle with everyone, but they also tend to keep their talks to themselves. They take their time to trust people.

• **The first Thanksgiving** was celebrated in 1621 over a three day harvest festival. It included 50 Pilgrims, 90 Wampanoag Indians, and lasted three days. It is believed by historians that only five women were present.

• Turkey wasn't on the menu at the first Thanksgiving. **Venison, duck, goose, oysters, lobster, eel, and fish were likely served**, alongside pumpkins and cranberries (but not pumpkin pie or cranberry sauce!).

**Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold,
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.**

—Robert Frost

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