

Grief & Loss Resources

Websites:

- Grief Share
 - <https://www.griefshare.org/>
- Dougy Center – National Center For Grieving Children and Families
 - <https://www.dougy.org/>
- What's Your Grief?
 - <https://whatsyourgrief.com/>
- Mindfulness & Grief
 - <https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/>

Videos:

- Nora McInerny – “We Don’t Move On From Grief. We Move Forward With It”
https://www.ted.com/talks/nora_mcinerny_we_don_t_move_on_from_grief_we_move_forward_with_it
- Jason Rosenthal – “The Journey Through Loss and Grief”
https://www.ted.com/talks/jason_b_rosenthal_the_journey_through_loss_and_grief
- Lucy Kalanithi – “What Makes Life Worth Living in the Face of Death”
https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_kalanithi_what_makes_life_worth_living_in_the_face_of_death
- Alyssa Monks – “How Loss Helped One Artist Find Beauty in Imperfection”
https://www.ted.com/talks/alyssa_monks_how_loss_helped_one_artist_find_beauty_in_imperfection

Podcasts:

- Nora McInerny’s “Terrible, Thanks For Asking” – <https://www.ttfa.org/>
- What's Your Grief – <http://whatsyourgrief.libsyn.com/>
- Mindfulness & Grief – <https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/category/podcast/>

▪ Books for Kids:

Something Very Sad Happened: A Toddler’s Guide to Understanding Death by Bonnie Zucker -- When a loved one dies, it can be hard to know how to explain it to a young child, particularly if you are grieving the loss yourself. *Something Very Sad Happened* is intended to be read to two- and three-year-old children to help them understand death and process the loss of a loved one. Written at a developmental level that is appropriate for two- and three-year-olds, the story explains death; lets children know that it is okay to feel sad; and reassures children that they can still love the person who died, and the person who died will always love them. Since the two- to three-year-old child cannot read, this story is intended to be personalized; certain words are color-coded in red to cue to you to substitute with the appropriate names and pronouns for the person who died. Includes an extensive Note to Parents and Caregivers with more information about talking to children about death, guidelines for answering a child’s questions, advice for attending funerals and visiting cemeteries, and ideas for commemorating the loved one.

Fall of Freddie the Leaf by Dr. Leo Buscaglia -- This story by Leo Buscaglia is a warm, wonderfully wise and strikingly simple story about a leaf names Freddie. How Freddie and his companion leaves change

with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow, is an inspiring allegory illustrating the delicate balance between life and death.

When Dinosaurs Die by Laurie Krasny Brown -- No one can really understand death, but to children, the passing away of a loved one can be especially perplexing and troublesome. This is true whether the loss is a classmate, friend, family member, or pet. Here to offer advice and reassurance are the wise dinosaurs from *Dinosaurs to the Rescue*, *Dinosaurs Divorce*, *Dinosaurs Travel*, and *Dinosaurs Alive and Well*. This succinct and thorough guide helps dispel the mystery and negative connotations associated with death. This helpful book provides answers to kids' most-often asked questions and also explores the feelings we may have regarding the death of a loved one, and the ways to remember someone after he or she has died.

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst -- Recommended and adopted by parenting blogs, bereavement support groups, hospice centers, foster care and social service agencies, military library services, church groups, and educators, *The Invisible String* offers a very simple approach to overcoming loneliness, separation, or loss with an imaginative twist that children easily understand and embrace, and delivers a particularly compelling message in today's uncertain times. This special paperback edition includes vibrant new illustrations and an introduction from the author.

The Sad Dragon by Steve Hermann: Having a pet dragon is very fun! He can sit, roll over, and play... He can candle a birthday cake, lit a campfire, or so many other fun things that will make you laugh... But sometimes, not every story is a happy one... What if your dragon is suffering from a loss of a loved one? What if he's sad, angry, and heartbroken because his loved one passed away, and he cries and cries and cries? What should you do? You teach him about Grief and Loss. You explain death to him, and help him get through this difficult time!

Where Are You? By Laura Olivieri -- *Where Are You: A Child's Book About Loss* is a kind and supportive text with beautiful illustrations designed to help children of all ages cope with the loss of a loved one. It is created with love and care so that even the youngest readers will find comfort during this stressful and difficult time.

I Miss You: A First Look at Death by Pat Thomas -- When a close friend or family member dies, it can be difficult for children to express their feelings. This book helps boys and girls understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have following a loved one's death. Titles in this sensitively presented series explore the dynamics of various relationships experienced by children of preschool through early school age. Kids are encouraged to understand personal feelings and social problems as a first step in dealing with them. Written by psychotherapist and counselor Pat Thomas, these books promote positive interaction among children, parents, and teachers. The story lines are simple and direct--easily accessible to younger children. There are full-color illustrations on every page.

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

▪ Books for Teens/Young Adults:

Modern Loss: Candid Conversation About Grief -- Let's face it: most of us have always had a difficult time talking about death and sharing our grief. We're awkward and uncertain; we avoid, ignore, or even deny feelings of sadness; we offer platitudes; we send sympathy bouquets whittled out of fruit. Enter Rebecca Soffer and Gabrielle Birkner, who can help us do better. Each having lost parents as young adults, they co-founded Modern Loss, responding to a need to change the dialogue around the messy experience of grief. Now, in this wise and often funny book, they offer the insights of the Modern Loss community to help us cry, laugh, grieve, identify, and—above all—empathize. Soffer and Birkner, along with forty guest contributors including Lucy Kalanithi, singer Amanda Palmer, and CNN's Brian Stelter, reveal their own stories on a wide range of topics including triggers, sex, secrets, and inheritance. Accompanied by beautiful hand-drawn illustrations and witty "how to" cartoons, each contribution provides a unique perspective on loss as well as a remarkable life-affirming message.

The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly -- *The Book of Lost Things* is a fantasy novel by John Connolly. The book follows David, a twelve-year-old boy who struggles with his mother's death and his father's remarriage. When a World War II bomber plane crashes into his garden, he finds himself in the fantasy world of his books; he must find the King, who can return him to his home. The novel takes a fresh look at traditional fairy tales, following a child's journey into adulthood.

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson -- Jess Aarons has been practicing all summer so he can be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. And he almost is, until the new girl in school, Leslie Burke, outpaces him. The two become fast friends and spend most days in the woods behind Leslie's house, where they invent an enchanted land called Terabithia. One morning, Leslie goes to Terabithia without Jess and a tragedy occurs. It will take the love of his family and the strength that Leslie has given him for Jess to be able to deal with his grief.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell -- Here, in the early 1800s, according to history, an Indian girl spent eighteen years alone, and this beautifully written novel is her story. It is a romantic adventure filled with drama and heartache, for not only was mere subsistence on so desolate a spot a near miracle, but Karana had to contend with the ferocious pack of wild dogs that had killed her younger brother, constantly guard against the Aleutian sea otter hunters, and maintain a precarious food supply. More than this, it is an adventure of the spirit that will haunt the reader long after the book has been put down. Karana's quiet courage, her Indian self-reliance and acceptance of fate, transform what to many would have been a devastating ordeal into an uplifting experience. From loneliness and terror come strength and serenity in this Newbery Medal-winning classic.

Girl in Pieces by Kathleen Glasgow -- Charlotte Davis is in pieces. At seventeen she's already lost more than most people do in a lifetime. But she's learned how to forget. The broken glass washes away the sorrow until there is nothing but calm. You don't have to think about your father and the river. Your best friend, who is gone forever. Or your mother, who has nothing left to give you. Every new scar hardens Charlie's heart just a little more, yet it still hurts so much. It hurts enough to not care anymore, which is sometimes what has to happen before you can find your way back from the edge. A deeply moving portrait of a girl in a world that owes her nothing, and has taken so much, and the journey she undergoes to put herself back together. Kathleen Glasgow's debut is heartbreakingly real and unflinchingly honest. It's a story you won't be able to look away from.

We Are the Ants by Shaun David Hutchinson -- Henry Denton has spent years being periodically abducted by aliens. Then the aliens give him an ultimatum: The world will end in 144 days, and all Henry has to do to stop it is push a big red button. Only he isn't sure he wants to. After all, life hasn't been great for Henry. His mom is a struggling waitress held together by a thin layer of cigarette smoke. His brother is a jobless dropout who just knocked someone up. His grandmother is slowly losing herself to Alzheimer's. And Henry is still dealing with the grief of his boyfriend's suicide last year. Wiping the slate clean sounds like a pretty good choice to him. But Henry

is a scientist first, and facing the question thoroughly and logically, he begins to look for pros and cons: in the bully who is his perpetual one-night stand, in the best friend who betrayed him, in the brilliant and mysterious boy who walked into the wrong class. Weighing the pain and the joy that surrounds him, Henry is left with the ultimate choice: push the button and save the planet and everyone on it...or let the world—and his pain—be destroyed forever.

The Last to Let Go by Amber Smith -- *How do you let go of something you've never had?* Junior year for Brooke Winters is supposed to be about change. She's transferring schools, starting fresh, and making plans for college so she can finally leave her hometown, her family, and her past behind. But all of her dreams are shattered one hot summer afternoon when her mother is arrested for killing Brooke's abusive father. No one really knows what happened that day, if it was premeditated or self-defense, whether it was right or wrong. And now Brooke and her siblings are on their own. In a year of firsts—the first year without parents, first love, first heartbreak, and her first taste of freedom—Brooke must confront the shadow of her family's violence and dysfunction, as she struggles to embrace her identity, finds her true place in the world, and learns how to let go.

▪ Books About Grief (general):

Bearing the Unbearable by Joanne Cacciatore -- When a loved one dies, the pain of loss can feel unbearable—especially in the case of a traumatizing death that leaves us shouting, “*NO!*” with every fiber of our body. The process of grieving can feel wild and nonlinear—and often lasts for much longer than other people, the nonbereaved, tell us it should. Organized into fifty-two short chapters, *Bearing the Unbearable* is a companion for life's most difficult times, revealing how grief can open our hearts to connection, compassion, and the very essence of our shared humanity. Dr. Joanne Cacciatore—bereavement educator, researcher, Zen priest, and leading counselor in the field—accompanies us along the heartbreaking path of love, loss, and grief. Through moving stories of her encounters with grief over decades of supporting individuals, families, and communities—as well as her own experience with loss—Cacciatore opens a space to process, integrate, and deeply honor our grief.

Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief by Pauline Boss -- When a loved one dies we mourn our loss. We take comfort in the rituals that mark the passing, and we turn to those around us for support. But what happens when there is no closure, when a family member or a friend who may be still alive is lost to us nonetheless? How, for example, does the mother whose soldier son is missing in action, or the family of an Alzheimer's patient who is suffering from severe dementia, deal with the uncertainty surrounding this kind of loss? In this sensitive and lucid account, Pauline Boss explains that, all too often, those confronted with such ambiguous loss fluctuate between hope and hopelessness.

It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine -- When a painful loss or life-shattering event upends your world, here is the first thing to know: *there is nothing wrong with grief*. “Grief is simply love in its most wild and painful form,” says Megan Devine. “It is a natural and sane response to loss.” So, why does our culture treat grief like a disease to be cured as quickly as possible? In *It's OK That You're Not OK*, Megan Devine offers a profound new approach to both the experience of grief and the way we try to help others who have endured tragedy. Having experienced grief from both sides—as both a therapist and as a woman who witnessed the accidental drowning of her beloved partner—Megan writes with deep insight about the unspoken truths of loss, love, and healing.

Necessary Losses by Judith Viorst -- From grief and mourning to aging and relationships, poet and *Redbook* contributor Judith Viorst presents a thoughtful and researched study in this examination of love, loss, and letting go. Drawing on psychoanalysis, literature, and personal experience, *Necessary Losses* is a philosophy for understanding and accepting life's inevitabilities.

Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief by Martha Whitmore

Hickman -- For those who have suffered the loss of a loved one, here are thoughtful words to strengthen, inspire and comfort.

Comforting Thoughts About Death That Have Nothing to Do with God by Greta Christina --

Accepting death is never easy, but we don't need religion to find peace, comfort, and solace in the face of death. In this inspiring and life-affirming collection of short essays, prominent atheist author Greta Christina offers secular ways to handle your own mortality and the death of those you love.

The Mourning Handbook by Helen Fitzgerald -- Even with the help of friends and family, grieving the death of a loved one can be a complex, sometimes overwhelming, process. *The Mourning Handbook* is written as a companion to those mourners in need of practical and emotional assistance during the trying times before and after the death of a loved one. Having counseled thousands of people who have experienced loss, Helen Fitzgerald gives special attention to the complex emotions that can accompany especially traumatic situations, such as when a loved one has been murdered, when there have been multiple deaths, when a body has not been recovered, or when the mourner has been the inadvertent cause of death. Designed to conform to the special needs of the bereaved, *The Mourning Handbook* is written and organized in an accessible style punctuated by real stories of people who have experienced every kind of loss. With many subchapters and cross references, it can be consulted for a specific problem or read at length.

▪ Books for Sibling Loss:

Surviving the Death of a Sibling by T.J. Wray -- When T.J. Wray lost her 43-year-old brother, her grief was deep and enduring and, she soon discovered, not fully acknowledged. Despite the longevity of adult sibling relationships, surviving siblings are often made to feel as if their grief is somehow unwarranted. After all, when an adult sibling dies, he or she often leaves behind parents, a spouse, and even children—all of whom suffer a more socially recognized type of loss.

The Empty Room: Surviving the Loss of a Sibling at Any Age by Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn --

The younger sister of a boy who died in his teens of a rare autoimmune disease describes the loving bond they shared and draws on interviews with more than two hundred sibling survivors to consider the complex emotional impact of losing a brother or sister.

▪ Books for Spousal Loss:

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion -- From one of America's iconic writers, a stunning book of electric honesty and passion. Joan Didion explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage--and a life, in good times and bad--that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband or wife or child.

Widow to Widow by Genevieve Davis Ginsburg -- In this remarkably useful guide, widow, author, and therapist Genevieve Davis Ginsburg offers fellow widows--as well as their family and friends--sage advice for coping with the loss of a husband. From learning to travel and eat alone to creating new routines to surviving the holidays and anniversaries that reopen emotional wounds, Ginsburg give guidance on dealing with anger and guilt, maintaining family relationships, dating after widowhood, handling money, and responding to others' support.

Widower to Widower by Fred Colby -- In this book, the reader watches the grief process unfold through thirty blogs Fred wrote during his first year of grieving the loss of his wife of 45 years. His first non-fiction book blends these blogs together with observations, lessons learned, and information he gathered from others during his grieving process.

M Train by Patty Smith -- *M Train* begins in the tiny Greenwich Village café where Smith goes every morning for black coffee, ruminates on the world as it is and the world as it was, and writes in her notebook. Through prose that shifts fluidly between dreams and reality, past and present, we travel to Frida Kahlo's Casa Azul in Mexico; to the fertile moon terrain of Iceland; to a ramshackle seaside bungalow in New York's Far Rockaway that Smith acquires just before Hurricane Sandy hits; to the West 4th Street subway station, filled with the sounds of the Velvet Underground after the death of Lou Reed; and to the graves of Genet, Plath, Rimbaud, and Mishima. Woven throughout are reflections on the writer's craft and on artistic creation. Here, too, are singular memories of Smith's life in Michigan and the irremediable loss of her husband, Fred Sonic Smith. Braiding despair with hope and consolation, illustrated with her signature Polaroids, *M Train* is a meditation on travel, detective shows, literature, and coffee. It is a powerful, deeply moving book by one of the most remarkable multiplatform artists at work today.

The Light of the World by Elizabeth Alexander -- In *The Light of the World*, Elizabeth Alexander finds herself at an existential crossroads after the sudden death of her husband. Channeling her poetic sensibilities into a rich, lucid prose, Alexander tells a love story that is, itself, a story of loss. As she reflects on the beauty of her married life, the trauma resulting from her husband's death, and the solace found in caring for her two teenage sons, Alexander universalizes a very personal quest for meaning and acceptance in the wake of loss.

Hot Young Widows Club by Nora McInerny -- In the span of a few weeks, thirty-something Nora McInerny had a miscarriage, lost her father to cancer, and lost her husband due to a brain tumor. Her life fell apart. What Nora discovered during this dark time is that, when you're in these hard moments, it can feel impossible to feel like even a shadow of the person you once were. People will give you all sorts of advice of how to hold onto your sanity and sense of self. But *how* exactly? How do you find that person again? Welcome to *The Hot Young Widows Club*, Nora's response to the toughest questions about life's biggest struggles. *The Hot Young Widows Club* isn't just for people who have lost a spouse, but an essential tool for anyone who has gone through a major life struggle.

▪ Books for Sudden/Unexpected Loss:

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye by Brook Noel & Dr. Pamela Blair -- Each year about eight million Americans suffer the unexpected death of a loved one. For those who face the challenges of sudden death, the classic guide *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* offers a comforting hand to hold, written by two authors who have experienced it firsthand. Acting as a touchstone of sanity through difficult times, this book covers such difficult topics as the first few weeks, suicide, death of a child, children and grief, funerals and rituals, physical effects, homicide, and depression.

Grieving a Suicide by Albert Hsu -- "Albert," the neighbor said, "your mom needs you to come home." That's how it began for Albert Hsu when his father died. Anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide experiences tremendous shock and trauma. What follows is a confusing mix of emotions—anger, guilt, grief, and despair. Suicide raises heartrending questions: Why did this happen? Why didn't we see it coming? Could we have done anything to prevent it? How can we go on? After his father's death, Hsu wrestled with the intense emotional and theological questions surrounding suicide. While acknowledging that there are no easy answers, he draws on the resources of the Christian faith to point suicide survivors to the God who offers comfort in our grief and hope for the future.

▪ Books for Loss of a Child:

Beyond Tears: Living After Losing a Child by Ellen Mitchell -- Meant to comfort and give direction to bereaved parents, *Beyond Tears* is written by nine mothers who have each lost a child. This revised edition includes a new chapter written from the perspective of surviving siblings. The death of a child is that unimaginable loss no parent ever expects to face. In *Beyond Tears*, nine mothers share their individual stories of how to survive in the darkest hour.

Shattered: Surviving the Loss of a Child by Gary Roe -- Bestselling author, hospice chaplain, and grief specialist Gary Roe uses his three decades of experience interacting with grieving parents to give us this heartfelt, easy-to-read, and intensely practical book. In *Shattered*, Roe walks the reader through the powerful impact a child's death can have - emotionally, mentally, physically, relationally, and spiritually.

The Unspeakable Loss: How Do You Live After a Child Dies? By Dr. Nisha Zenoff -- Nisha Zenoff lost her son in a tragic accident when he was just seventeen years old. Now, with decades of experience as a grief counselor and psychotherapist, she offers support and guidance from her own journey and from others who have experienced the death of a child. *The Unspeakable Loss* helps those who mourn to face the urgent questions that accompany loss: "Will my tears ever stop?" "Who am I now without my child?" "How can I help my other children cope?" "I lost my only child, how do I live?" "Will my marriage survive?" "Will life ever feel worth living again?"

▪ Books for Loss of a Parent:

Motherless Daughters by Hope Edelman -- Although a mother's mortality is inevitable no book has discussed the profound lasting and far reaching effects of this loss until *Motherless Daughters*, which became an instant classic. More than twenty years later, it is still the go-to book that women of all ages look to for comfort, help, and understanding when their mother dies. Building on interviews with hundreds of mother loss survivors, Edelman's personal story of losing her mother, and recent research in grief and psychology, *Motherless Daughters* reveals the shared experiences and core identity issues of motherless women: Why the absence of a nurturing hand shapes a woman's identity throughout her lifespan, How present day relationships are defined by past losses, How a woman can resolve past conflicts and move toward acceptance and healing, Why grief really is not a linear passage but an ongoing cyclical journey, and How the legacy of mother loss shifts with the passage of time.

Bettyville: A Memoir by George Hodgman -- When George Hodgman leaves Manhattan for his hometown of Paris, Missouri, he finds himself—an unlikely caretaker and near-lethal cook—in a head-on collision with his aging mother, Betty, a woman of wit and will. Will George lure her into assisted living? When hell freezes over. He can't bring himself to force her from the home both treasure—the place where his father's voice lingers, the scene of shared jokes, skirmishes, and, behind the dusty antiques, a rarely acknowledged conflict: Betty, who speaks her mind but cannot quite reveal her heart, has never really accepted the fact that her son is gay. As these two unforgettable characters try to bring their different worlds together, Hodgman reveals the challenges of Betty's life and his own struggle for self-respect, moving readers from their small town—crumbling but still colorful—to the star-studded corridors of *Vanity Fair*. Evocative of *The End of Your Life Book Club* and *The Tender Bar*, Hodgman's *New York Times* bestselling debut is both an indelible portrait of a family and an exquisitely told tale of a prodigal son's return.

H is for Hawk by Helen McDonald -- The instant *New York Times* bestseller and award-winning sensation, Helen Macdonald's story of adopting and raising one of nature's most vicious predators has soared into the hearts of millions of readers worldwide. Fierce and feral, her goshawk Mabel's temperament mirrors Helen's own state of grief after her father's death, and together raptor and human "discover the pain and beauty of being alive" (People). *H Is for Hawk* is a genre-defying debut from one of our most unique and transcendent voices.

▪ Books for Miscarriage/Stillbirth:

(Mis)carriage: A Mother's Story of Why Pregnancy Loss Matters by Regan Parker -- "This was supposed to be an exciting moment, the announcement that my baby was coming. I realized that I was going through labor, but at the end of it, I would have nothing." (Mis)carriage is one woman's honest, intimate journey through the loss of her child after eight weeks of pregnancy. Her candid account of loss, grief, and new beginnings shines as comforting proof that hope awaits in the aftermath, and that the loss of her baby matters.

Empty Arms by Pam Vredevelt -- With the warmth and compassion of a Licensed Professional Counselor and writing as a mother who has suffered the loss of a baby and a sixteen-year-old son, Pam Vredevelt offers sound answers and advice. As an expert in love and loss, Pam gives reassuring comfort to any woman fighting to maintain stability and faith in the midst of devastating heartbreak.

Not Broken by Dr. Lora Shahine -- Not Broken is a comprehensive, evidence-based but easy-to-read guide for anyone who wants to understand all aspects of miscarriage and recurrent pregnancy loss. Whether you are a patient struggling with miscarriages or a medical provider caring for patients with recurrent pregnancy loss, you will learn something from this resource. Dr. Shahine explains not only a typical Western medicine approach to evaluation and treatment for miscarriage but also includes Eastern approaches to care, lifestyle factors that will decrease your risk of miscarriage, and the emotional impact of recurrent pregnancy loss.

Almost a Mother by Christy Wopat -- Christy, a fourth-grade teacher, and her husband, Brian, are raising two adorable children ages 5 and 8 in Wisconsin. But Christy has two other children--twins--who died shortly after being born at 21 weeks. Christy's captivating memoir about her hopes, her dreams, her loss, her grief, and ultimately, her healing, is a poignantly powerful and brutally honest account of what happens when tragedy hits.

▪ **Books About Hospice/Terminal Illness/Dying:**

Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief by Pauline Boss -- When a loved one dies we mourn our loss. We take comfort in the rituals that mark the passing, and we turn to those around us for support. But what happens when there is no closure, when a family member or a friend who may be still alive is lost to us nonetheless? How, for example, does the mother whose soldier son is missing in action, or the family of an Alzheimer's patient who is suffering from severe dementia, deal with the uncertainty surrounding this kind of loss? In this sensitive and lucid account, Pauline Boss explains that, all too often, those confronted with such ambiguous loss fluctuate between hope and hopelessness.

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The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch -- A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi -- At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. *When Breath Becomes Air* chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from a naïve

medical student “possessed,” as he wrote, “by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life” into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality. What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.

Tuesdays With Morrie by Mitch Albom -- Maybe it was a grandparent, or a teacher, or a colleague. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound advice to help you make your way through it. For Mitch Albom, that person was Morrie Schwartz, his college professor from nearly twenty years ago. Maybe, like Mitch, you lost track of this mentor as you made your way, and the insights faded, and the world seemed colder. Wouldn't you like to see that person again, ask the bigger questions that still haunt you, receive wisdom for your busy life today the way you once did when you were younger? Mitch Albom had that second chance. He rediscovered Morrie in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final “class”: lessons in how to live.

***Note: All summaries come from each book’s Amazon profile and are not the words of Meghan O’Nyon or Adaptations Counseling**